

PLSC 471: American Constitutional Law

Course Paper Description

In this class, you may elect to write a course paper. The paper will be a research effort of no fewer than twelve typed, double-spaced pages, addressing an issue of relevance to the course.

The paper will constitute 40% of your grade for this course, distributed as follows: Proposal, 4%; Bibliography, 6%; First draft, 10%; Final paper, 20%.

Paper Schedule

- **September 23, 2025: Paper proposals due.** This should be a one paragraph description of the topic your paper will discuss. Also on that date, you will schedule an appointment to meet with me to discuss your paper topic.
- **REVISED: October 30, 2025: Annotated bibliography due.** You will submit a list of *no fewer than eight* sources that will be used in your paper, including a full citation and brief (2-3 sentence) description of the contents of each. For internet cites, be sure to include the URL.
- **REVISED: First Drafts.** Completed first drafts of your paper may be submitted any time on or before 11:59 p.m. ET on **December 11, 2025**. I will read and critique your rough draft, and return to you for revision.
- **REVISED: December 17, 2025: Final draft due.** You will submit the final draft of your research paper, via email, to `zorn@psu.edu`.

Three Helpful Hints

- *Turn in proposals, etc. on time.* Each part of the paper process (proposal, bibliography, first draft, final paper) will be graded separately; grades on any part will be reduced by one full letter for each day they are late.
- *Talk to the instructor.* I will be happy to discuss any stage of the paper process with you at any time, including help with selecting a topic, finding resources, and outlining a paper plan. Also, if you wish to do more than one rough draft, I will read and give comments on any version of your paper, no matter how preliminary, at any time it is presented to me.
- *Do not wait until the last minute.* Procrastination is a killer on assignments such as this. I can and will recognize a paper thrown together the night before a deadline.