

POS 420 – National Security Issues and the U.S. Constitution **Fall 2007**

Dr. Pinky S. Wassenberg

Office Hours: by appointment

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Course Objectives

As a result of successful completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- their knowledge of the basic legal issues and approaches to constitutional controversies that arise in connection with national security issues,
- an understanding of the content and development of precedents in relevant areas of the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments,
- the ability to analyze the legal and political issues clearly distinguishing individual opinion, ideological orientation and applicable law,
- the ability to explain how institutional relations among the branches of the federal government influence the development of law in this area, and,
- the ability to identify partisan and ideological agendas at work in debates in the area.

Required Reading

Louis Fisher, 2005. *Military Tribunals and Presidential Power: American Revolution to the War on Terrorism*. ISBN: 978-07006-1376-2

Eric Posner and Adrian Vermeule, 2007. *Terror in the Balance*. ISBN: 0-19-531025

Geoffrey Stone, 2005. *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime*. ISBN: 0393327450

Course Approach

Our weekly online class sessions will consist of a combination of audio lectures with PowerPoint presentations and use of the Discussion Board for discussions and debates. Most of the lectures are lectures I have prepared and recorded. However, some audio recordings of presentations by noted individuals with expertise on our topic. The assignment schedule will direct you to the site where you can listen to the audio. All students will be asked to post contributions to a Blackboard discussion forum once every two weeks. In these postings, you have the obligation to demonstrate your grasp of both the reading and lecture material covered in class to that point. These required postings will be graded. In addition, you are expected to react regularly to the postings of your classmates. These reaction postings will be the basis for your participation grade. This course will work well only if you read the assigned readings and listen to the lectures on schedule.

Course Grades

Your grade for the course will be based on the number of points you accumulate from the following sources:

Discussion Board required postings (6)	120 possible
Midterm exam	100 possible
Class participation	30 possible
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>100 possible</u>
Total points	350 possible

Final grades will be awarded based on this scale:

93-100% = A	80-82% = B-	67-69% = D+
90-92% = A-	77-79% = C+	60-66% = D
87-89% = B+	73-78% = C	59% or less = U
83-86% = B	70-72% = C-	

Lectures & Reading Assignments

The assignment schedule lists new readings for the beginning of each class week (except exam & paper weeks). Most reading assignments are about 75-90 pages a week. Some weeks, the reading is a little longer because of the pagination of chapters in a particular text. Once in a while, the reading is a little shorter.

A new set of lectures will be posted each week (except exam weeks) by noon on Tuesday. I recommend that you print the PowerPoints so you can use them to structure the notes you take while listening to the lectures. Please make sure you have done all the reading for each week by the time you log on and listen to the lectures. The lectures are created assuming you know the material that appears in the assigned readings. Individual lectures I record are 15-20 minutes long. Lectures from other sources are about 1 hour in length.

You might think of questions while you are doing your reading. I have created a Discussion Board Forum for questions on the reading so each week you can post your questions there. I will check daily and respond to your questions as soon as possible. You can also email me if you aren't comfortable posting your question.

Each lecture is followed by a question or a topic you are expected to address on a BlackBoard Discussion Forum. You are required to make sure you respond a forum question once every two weeks; you will do six responses in all. The class is divided into two groups – an “A Group” and a “B Group”. The “A Group” members must post responses on weeks identified as “A” weeks on the syllabus (look under “writing assignments”). The “B Group” members must post on weeks identified as “B” groups. These posts will be graded – each post can earn up to 20 points.

Participation

In addition to the required posts, you may earn class participation credit by responding to your classmates posts in substantive, interesting, and constructive ways. Participation will be graded based on frequency and quality of posts. So you can be an active participant in discussions, it is extremely important that you read assigned materials and listen to the lectures before posting your comments. Postings must be written in complete, grammatical English sentences. This is not the place for casual online communication styles. Participation postings must be made during the week for which the material is assigned. For example, if you want to comment on something posted or assigned during the first week of class, your posting must be in place by the end of that week (midnight Sunday) for it to count toward your participation grade. Any postings done after that deadline will not count toward your participation points. However, if you really want to get one more word in, please do so.

Exams

There are two exams during the semester – a midterm and a final. Each exam will contain essay questions designed to get you to integrate the reading and lecture material in well-organized essays. Undergraduate exams should be between 7-9 pages, typed, double-spaced. Graduate student exams should be between 10-12 pages, typed, double-spaced.

All written work must be in standard grammatical English. If your work does not meet this requirement, it will not be graded until revised. The revised work will be treated as late.

The exams questions will be posted under “Assignments” by noon Tuesday of the week the exam is scheduled. Your answers must be emailed to me by the time indicated on the assignment schedule. When I receive the email with your exam, I will reply to you letting you know I have it and that I can open the attachment. If you do not receive that reply within 24 hours contact me right away because I didn’t get the exam.

I encourage you to discuss exam answers and course material frequently. However, when you get to the point of writing your exam answers, you must do individual work. Anyone caught using another student’s work or plagiarizing from another source on an exam will be penalized to the fullest extent possible under university regulations.

Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify the instructor during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Disability Services in the Student Life Building, Room 11, 217-206-6666.