

PSCI 3210, U.S. Supreme Court
Fall 2020, MWF 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM

Monday Section 001: ENV 160
Wednesday Section 002: SAGE 116
Friday Section 003: SAGE 116

Instructor: Eddie L. Meaders, J.D., M.A.

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Political Science Department Phone: (940) 565 - 2276
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Zoom Office Hours:

Monday afternoons: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Meeting ID # 970 1849 3205
<https://unt.zoom.us/j/97018493205>

Tuesday mornings: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Meeting ID # 992 4204 3438
<https://unt.zoom.us/j/99242043438>

Tuesday afternoons: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Meeting ID # 915 8136 0234
<https://unt.zoom.us/j/91581360234>

Wednesday afternoons: 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Meeting ID # 934 3439 9254
<https://unt.zoom.us/j/93434399254>

If the posted hours are no good, let me know and we'll set something else up.

Required Texts: Baum, Lawrence. 2019. *The Supreme Court*, 13th ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Course Description: This course examines the U.S. Supreme Court from an institutional point of view. That is, we will explore varying aspects of the U.S. Supreme Court including its policymaking role, how Justices select and decide cases, how Justices are appointed, how the Supreme Court interacts with other branches of government, interest groups, the public, and how decisions are implemented and their impact.

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the Court's place in the judicial system
2. Analyze the Court as an institution
3. Identify and explain justice's selection, backgrounds, careers, and circumstances for leaving the Court
4. Explain how cases reach the Court through the actions of parties to cases, the lawyers who represent them, interest groups, the federal government in its special role and finally, and how and why the Court selects the small number of cases that it will fully consider and decide.
5. Explain the factors that influence the Court's choices among alternative decisions and policies.
6. Explain the kinds of issues on which the Court concentrates, the policies it supports, and the extent of its activism in the making of public policy.
7. Explain the ways in which other government policymakers respond to the Court's decisions, as well as the Court's impact on American society as a whole.

Technical Requirements: Since this is a hybrid face to face class you will need regular access to your course through a computer or other mobile device that connects to the internet. Please note that if circumstances require, we may have to go fully remote quickly. Students will need access to a webcam and microphone. In addition, you will need access to **Respondus Lockdown Browser** and may need access to a webcam for taking your exams.

The Student Version of LockDown Browser uses a standard Windows or Mac installer. This download link is unique for UNT and can be used by faculty or students:

[Download student edition](#)

**Don't use the "Student Edition" of LockDown Browser on UNT-owned computers; use the "Lab Edition" instead. [Log in with your UNT credentials to Download the Lab Edition.](#)*

****From experience, I do not think Chromebook works with Respondus. Contact the Student Help Desk for more information.**

Technical Support: Your instructor is not wise in the ways of technical support resources. If you experience any kind of technical problem, please contact:

Student Helpdesk:
UIT Helpdesk

Sage Hall 130
940-565-2324
helpdesk@unt.edu

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

Telephone Availability:

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](#)

Class Recordings: Synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be recorded for students enrolled in this class section to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university or instructor and are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Please note: If you experience a loss of internet connection, WIFI signal, or your browser freezes up on you during an exam, you must contact the UNT resources first, then send me an email with the problem you experienced and how you're addressing it. In most cases, though, failing to complete an assignment or exam because of technical issues will not be reason enough to dismiss the grade or allow a retake.

Class Procedure: This class will be conducted in a hybrid lecture/discussion format. Students will physically attend class on the day they registered for; Section .001 on Mondays, Section .002 on Wednesdays, and section .003 on Fridays. On non-attendance days, students will log into Canvas and then Zoom in for the lecture. Students are encouraged to actively participate in class discussions. **READ AND PREPARE FOR CLASS!** Your views, opinions, and questions are valued no matter how insignificant or controversial you may feel them to be. Warm bodies only fill up space and are not very exciting unless they say something.

Attendance: Why pay all that tuition if you do not come to class? Be there! If you cannot be physically in class, Zoom in! I will not take attendance for grade points. You will have assigned seats for your attendance day. I will take roll

each day for those physically in class to assist in COVID – 19 contact tracing if needed.

COVID-19 impact on attendance

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to COVID-19 including symptoms, potential exposure, pending or positive test results, or if you have been given specific instructions to isolate or quarantine from a health care provider or a local authority. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

Face Coverings: Face coverings are required in all UNT facilities. Students are expected to wear face coverings during this class. If you are unable to wear a face covering due to a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Access to request an accommodation. UNT face covering requirements are subject to change due to community health guidelines. Any changes will be communicated via the instructor

UNT Academic Integrity Policy: Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Political Science Department Policy on Cheating & Plagiarism: Perish the thought and do not give in to temptation and the easy way! The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT's policy on academic integrity. Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student

Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of "F" in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at: <http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity> . Review the policy!

UNT ADA Policy: UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website](#).

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault: UNT has procedures in place that aim to be aware of the needs of those who make an institutional report of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Procedures include informing individuals about their right to file criminal charges as well as the availability of counseling, health, mental health, victim advocacy, legal assistance, visa and immigration assistance and other services on and/or off campus, as well as additional remedies to prevent contact between a complainant and a respondent, such as housing, academic, transportation and working accommodations, if reasonably available. The University will make such accommodations, if the victim requests them and if they are reasonably available, regardless of whether the complainant chooses to report the crime to the UNTPD or local law enforcement.

Anyone can report prohibited conduct by notifying the [Dean of Students Office](#) (940.565.2648), [the Title IX Coordinator](#) (940.565.2759) or the UNT Police Department 940.565.3000. The online reporting form is found at <http://report.unt.edu>.

Emergency Notification & Procedures: UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Examinations: There will be two (2) of them consisting of a midterm and a final. Exams, which are closed book/notes, will consist of multiple choices, true false and short answer/identification questions. The exams are non-cumulative in the sense that they focus on the specific topics and reading assignments delineated by each section. This course requires use of the **Respondus Lockdown Browser**. You *may* be asked to access a webcam for the exams. I may also require that written materials be submitted to

Written Assignment: Choose a landmark Supreme Court decision (list to be provided later) and provide me with a written autopsy of it. In other words, I would strongly suggest that your paper succinctly address the following:

- a.) Facts & historical context of the case.
- b.) Legal issues involved.
- c.) Attorneys & groups involved.
- d.) Reason for the case to be before the Court.
- e.) Was there opposition to the granting of certiorari (if applicable)?
- f.) Outcome of the case (reverse, affirm).
- g.) Policy established by the majority opinion.
- h.) Author of the majority and/or concurring/dissenting opinion along with his/her basic ideological beliefs, objections to, or reasons for voting with the majority.
 - ❖ Why was this Justice placed on the Court?
 - ❖ Why was this Justice selected to write this opinion?
- i.) Policy concerns of concurring and dissenting opinions (if applicable).
- j.) Was the ruling liberal or conservative in your opinion? If so, why?
- k.) What was the societal impact of the case?

Ideas on how to address each of the topics in your paper will be evident as we work through the various chapters of the textbook. I'll add some helpful links from the UNT library in Canvas.

Write all this up in a **TYPED** paper not less than ten (10), and no more than twelve (12) pages, double-spaced with a 12-point font (this syllabus is in a 12-point font) and standard margins. **THE PAPER IS DUE AT NOON ON NOVEMBER 25TH**. If it is late, you lose a letter grade! **FAILURE TO COMPLETE THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL RESULT IN A FAILING CLASS GRADE!**

Final Exam: The final is scheduled for SATURDAY, **December 5th, from 8:00 am – 10:00 am**. Since it will be administered via Respondus Lockdown Browser, I'll likely give you all day to take it. Who really wants to take a final at 8:00 am!

Grades: A necessary evil. Your grade will be determined by the following criteria:

Exams	70%
Case Autopsy	30%

Miscellaneous: I reserve the right to change any of the exam times or assignments by providing you with at least a 48 hour notice of such changes. You are responsible for any changes that may occur during the course of the semester. Any changes will be announced in Canvas.

Tentative Coming Attractions
(More or Less, Sort Of)

Week 1 (8/24): Introductions, Chapter 1

Week 2 (8/31): “ ”

Week 3 (9/9): The Justices, Chapter 2

Week 4 (9/14): “ ”

Week 5 (9/21): The Cases, Chapter 3

Week 6 (9/28): “ ”

Week 7 (10/5): “ ”
Midterm Exam on the 7th!
Decision Making, Chapter 4

Week 8 (10/12): “ ”

Week 9 (10/19): “ ”

Week 10 (10/26): “ ”

Week 11 (11/4): Policy Outputs, Chapter 5

Week 12 (11/2): “ ”

Week 13 (11/9):

Week 14 (11/16): The Court's Impact, Chapter 6

Week 15 (11/23): “ ”
Case autopsy due at noon on the 25th!

Week 16 (11/30): Review Week

Final Exam: Saturday December 5th, 8:00 am – 10:00 am (officially)