

PSCI 3210, U.S. Supreme Court
Summer 5W1 (May 22 – June 23, 2023)
M-R, 10:00 AM – 11:50 AM
BLB 065

Host: Eddie L. Meaders, J.D., M.A.
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Zoom Hours: Mondays, 1:30 pm -3:30 pm,
<https://unt.zoom.us/j/81619348456>

Walk in Hours (WH141): Thursdays, 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Feel free to drop by. No appointment is needed during office hours. If the posted hours are no good, let me know and we'll set something else up.

Required Texts: Baum, Lawrence. 2021. *The Supreme Court*, 14th ed. Sage Publications, Inc. Vital Source Bookshelf. (U.S.)

Course Description: This course examines the U.S. Supreme Court from an institutional and political 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.

Class Procedure: This class will be conducted in a lecture/discussion format. Students are encouraged to actively participate in class discussions. **READ THE ASSIGNED CHAPTERS PRIOR TO CLASS!** Your views, opinions, and questions are valued no matter how insignificant or controversial you may feel them to be. Politics these days is controversial, please keep class comments on point as they pertain to the lecture material. Still, I would like to know what you think about things.

Course Expectations: A university course is a joint endeavor between instructor and students. We all have an important part to play.

As the instructor in this course, I am responsible for

- providing course materials that will give you the opportunity to achieve our course objectives and providing you with the tools to learn,
- providing timely feedback on your work and explaining concerns you may have with grading,
- and being fair in my implementation of rules and policies in the course.

As a student in this course, you are responsible for

- reading and completing all requirements of the course in a timely manner,
- working to remain attentive and engaged in the course and interact with your fellow students,
- and assisting in maintaining a positive learning environment for everyone.

Assessment components

Exams (70% of final grade). There are two in class exams; the midterm and final. They will consist of multiple guess, short identifications, and essays.

Term Project, Multimedia Presentation (15% of the final grade). This is a group project. Choose a case from the 2022-2023 Supreme Court term; list to be provided. Produce a multimedia presentation (20-25 minutes) generally discussing the following aspects of the case:

- a.) Facts & modern context of the case.
- b.) Legal issues involved.

- c.) Attorneys & groups involved.
- d.) Was there opposition to the granting of certiorari (if applicable)?
- e.) Outcome of the case (reverse, affirm).
- f.) Policy established by the majority opinion.
- g.) Author of the majority and/or concurring/dissenting opinion. Who nominated them to the Supreme Court.
- h.) What was the societal/political impact of the case?

THIS IS NOT A LEGAL ANALYSIS OF A CASE SUCH AS YOU WOULD SEE IN A BRIEF. THIS IS AN ANALYSIS OF THE **POLITICAL CLIMATE** SURROUNDING A CASE AND THE JUSTICES WHO DECIDED IT.

Ideas on how to address each of the topics in your presentation will be evident as we work through the various chapters of the textbook. Helpful links are in the Resources Module.

You will be required to submit your presentation through Turnitin in Canvas. I will be watching for plagiarism and AI.

The project must be ready for presentation on June 22nd, 2023.

Attendance (5% of final grade): Why spend tuition money on a class if you do not attend? I will take attendance each class day and you are expected to attend regularly. Please inform me if you are unable to attend class meetings. Doing so in advance is best.

Professionalism (5%): Preparation for class; attitude and courtesy in class, online, and in e-mails.

Teamwork (5%): Contributions/ attitude; cooperation with others; focus/commitment; team role fulfillment; ability to communicate; correctness.

Grades: (earned and not given). Your grade will be determined based on your scores earned in the following activities:

A range=89.5-100, B range=79.5-89.4, C range=69.5-79.4, D range =59.5-69.4

Your final grade is the culmination of work that you have done over the course of the semester. **It is not the product of bargaining for academic mercy at the at the end of the term.** Moreover, I cannot make an exception for one student without making it for all students, and that is never practical or fair.

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://faculty.success.unt.edu/academic-integrity>. Review the policy!

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 accommodation 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 \(https://disability.unt.edu/\)](https://disability.unt.edu/).

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation: The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

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.

Retention of Student Records: Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Rules of Engagement: rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use "I" statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individuals' experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people's ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as "YELLING!"

- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using “text-talk” unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect: Students’ access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student’s Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates: Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Student Support Services

Mental Health: UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

Survivor Advocacy: UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination based on sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship

violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648.

Chosen Names: A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [UNT Email Address](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

**UNT euids cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

Pronouns: Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Additional Student Support Services:

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (<https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

Academic Support Services:

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (https://library.unt.edu/)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)

Schedule Changes: I reserve the right to change any of the exam times or assignments by providing you with at least 48-hour notice of such changes. You are responsible for any changes that may occur during the semester. Any changes will be announced at the beginning of each class and posted in Canvas.

**Tentative Coming Attractions
(More or Less, Sort Of)**

Week 1, May 22 - 25: Introductions, Chapter 1 (The Court), 2 (The Justices)

Week 2, May 29 – June 1: **No class on May 29th** (Memorial Day Holiday);
Chapter 2, 3 (The Cases)

Week 3, June 5-8: **Midterm on Tuesday, June 6th** (1st half of class); Chapter 4
(Decision-making)

Week 4, June 12-15 Chapter 4, 5 (Policy Outputs)

Week 5, June 19-23: Chapter 6 (The Court's Impact)
Presentations on the 22nd

Final Exam: Friday, June 23, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm.