
**CIVIL LIBERTIES UNDER THE CONSTITUTION
POLITICAL SCIENCE 411**

Spring 2009

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For the better part of the twentieth century, questions of civil liberties and civil rights were the primary preoccupation of the U.S. Supreme Court. Indeed, weighing the principle of majority rule against the rights of political minorities continues to command a good deal of the justices' time. Given the sheer volume of such cases resolved by the Court, a great many of these issues appear to be well settled. Moreover, the justices have, in recent years, begun to direct much of their attention to other substantive areas of the law. On closer examination, however, one discovers that most of the issues of liberties and rights continue to linger; as both society and the Court have changed, fresh constitutional imponderables have blossomed, while old issues have been litigated anew. Issues that many consider resolved reappear in various guises, testing the utility of longstanding principles. At the same time, changes in social custom, differences in moral views, and growth in science and technologies all serve to ensure that there are new conflicts over the liberties and rights of Americans. What is it that makes such issues so consistently difficult? How has the Supreme Court come to grips with them?

The answer lies in part in the dilemma, inherent in a modern democratic society, of sustaining the power of governmental decision makers to reflect the popular will on the one hand, while limiting that power when it restricts the prerogatives of the individual, on the other. After all, majorities have the legitimate right to see their preferences enacted into public policy; at the same time, however, the principle of majority rule does not of necessity grant the right of the many to treat the few in arbitrary and capricious ways. Thus, the justices must set about the business of weighing the legitimate interests of democratic decision making against individuality in one form or another. Fortunately, the Bill of Rights provides a good deal of promise by delineating, in a great many respects, where this line is to be drawn.

Interestingly enough, a Bill of Rights was not included by the Framers of the Constitution. For a variety of reasons, members of the Constitutional Convention were reluctant to place explicit limits on the powers of the new national government. Indeed, it was only because ratification of the Constitution itself hinged on the promise of a Bill of Rights that the nation's new charter was modified. Thus, the addition of the Bill of Rights was more a reflection of political compromise than a desire "to secure the blessings of liberty." For its part, the Supreme Court has defined the meaning of its provisions, but it has only been in the relatively recent past that the justices have undertaken to interpret them. Compared to other areas of constitutional law, the doctrines in the areas of civil liberties and civil rights are quite new, flowering fully only over the last fifty years. To be sure, the Court has provided considerable illumination on a wide array of questions that balance individual rights and governmental power. Despite this guidance, however, the constitutional provisions that constitute America's civil liberties and rights still remain frustratingly ambiguous and, consequently, far from self-executing. Thus, irrespective of where the justices seek to strike

that balance, challenging questions continue to confront the Court. You will see this played out in a number of respects throughout this term: Under what circumstances, if any, is government justified in regulating, punishing, or even preventing speech? Ought newspapers to be permitted to print virtually anything they wish, regardless of the consequences for individuals, government, or society as a whole? When, if ever, can the state legitimately punish the publication of an idea? How much latitude should individuals have in exercising their religious beliefs? Can the state involve itself in making judgments about what are and are not legitimate religions? To what extent can government involve itself in religious activities? Is the state ever justified in legislating on matters of highly personal choice? How far should the state be able to pursue the goal of eliminating and punishing criminal activity? What obligations does the state have to ensure that some citizens are not treated arbitrarily on account of characteristics that they possess, and what role should the state play in correcting inequities that may exist as a consequence of such treatment? These are, of course, perennial issues of American political discourse. They are also precisely the types of issues that the Supreme Court has attempted to resolve. In some instances, the Court's decisions have reconciled debates; in other instances, they have sparked new ones. In this class, it will be your task to confront and think with care about many of them.

Accordingly, the primary aim of this course is to acquaint you with the substantive meaning of the various protections of rights and liberties contained in the Constitution. You will be asked to consider not only the contemporary meaning of the Bill of Rights, but also the historical evolution of doctrines that have produced its present understanding. You will examine both the purpose the Bill of Rights was intended to serve, how and to what extent its protections have been guaranteed over time, and in general how the Court's changing views of the meaning of Bill of Rights has affected the state of personal rights and liberties in the United States.

Course requirements:

For most, effective performance in this class will require a substantial investment of time and effort. You should consider very carefully, therefore, whether you wish to make such a commitment. After all, consuming and making sense of a great many Supreme Court opinions can be tedious work, a task complicated by the sometimes competing --- and very plausible --- views of the justices.

Your formal responsibilities for this course are three-fold. First, there will be two regular examinations scheduled during the semester, and each of these will constitute 25% of your grade. A final examination --- more properly, a third examination with an additional comprehensive component --- will contribute 30%. The remaining 20% will come from your writing of a short analytical paper on a topic to be announced. You will be responsible for the following required readings, which are available for purchase at the Student Stores:

Louis Fisher. 2007. *American Constitutional Law*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Gregg Ivers and Kevin T. McGuire. 2004. *Creating Constitutional Change: Clashes over Power and Liberty in the Supreme Court*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE:

1. *Historical Origins of the Bill of Rights*

(January 13)

For all of their careful attention to the structure of the federal government --- its powers, prerogatives, and complex relationships between the branches --- the Founding Fathers provided no explicit protections within the Constitution of the kinds of rights and liberties that Americans today generally regard as indispensable. Why did the original Constitution make no mention of the right to free speech or the right to exercise religious freedom? Why did the Framers not seek to guarantee that, under a newly strengthened national government, there would be no limits on the arbitrary use of that power? How did such rights and liberties become a part of the Constitution?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 389-398

Suggested reading:

Henry Abraham and Barbara Perry. 1998. *Freedom and the Court: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights in the United States*. 7th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Akhil Reed Amar. 2000. *The Bill of Rights: Creation and Reconstruction*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Leonard Levy. 1999. *Origins of the Bill of Rights*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Geoffrey R. Stone, Richard A. Epstein, and Cass R. Sunstein. 1992. *The Bill of Rights in the Modern State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

“The argument we admit is not always the most conclusive which is drawn from the consequences urged against the adoption of a particular construction of an instrument. But when, as in the case before us, these consequences are so serious, so far-reaching and pervading, so great a departure from the structure and spirit of our institutions; when the effect is to fetter and degrade the State governments by subjecting them to the control of Congress, in the exercise of powers heretofore universally conceded to them of the most ordinary and fundamental character; when in fact it radically changes the whole theory of the relations of the State and Federal governments to each other and of both these governments to the people; the argument has a force that is irresistible, in the absence of language which expresses such a purpose too clearly to admit of doubt.”

--- Justice Samuel F. Miller
The Slaughterhouse Cases (1873)

“The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is free to regulate the procedure of its courts in accordance with its own conception of policy and fairness unless in doing so it offends some principle of justice so rooted in the traditions and conscience of our people as to be ranked as fundamental.”

--- Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo
Snyder v. Massachusetts (1934)

“The very purpose of the Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and

officials and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts. One's right to life, liberty, and property, to free speech, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly, and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote; they depend on the outcome of no election.”

--- Justice Robert H. Jackson
West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette (1943)

2. ***Free Exercise of Religion*** (January 15-20)

Pluralist society that it is, America has an enormous variety of religious faiths, all equally entitled to constitutional protection. But are they? In some instances, the legitimate exercise of a religious belief conflicts with governmental objectives. How does one balance the need to ensure religious liberty against the state's interest in promoting the public good? Are there some religious practices that the state may legitimately infringe upon? If so, by what rationale?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 565-584

Ivers and McGuire, pp. 181-193

Suggested reading:

Jesse H. Choper. 1995. *Securing Religious Liberty: Principles for Judicial Interpretation of the Religion Clauses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bette Evans. 1997. *Interpreting the Free Exercise of Religion*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Shawn Francis Peters. 2000. *Judging Jehovah's Witnesses: Religious Persecution and the Dawn of the Rights Revolution*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Frank J. Sorauf. 1976. *The Wall of Separation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

“Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.”

--- Thomas Jefferson
in *Works of Thomas Jefferson* (1802)

“Men may believe what they cannot prove. They may not be put to the proof of their religious doctrines or beliefs. Religious experiences which are as real as life to some may be incomprehensible to others. Yet the fact that they may be beyond the ken of mortals does not mean that they can be made suspect before the law....The religious views espoused [in this case] might seem incredible, if not preposterous, to most people. But if those doctrines are subject to trial before a jury charged with finding their truth or falsity, then the same can

be done with the religious beliefs of any sect. When the triers of fact undertake that task, they enter a forbidden domain.”

--- Justice William O. Douglas
United States v. Ballard (1944)

3. ***Freedom from Religion***
(January 22-29)

There is no “official religion” in the United States; the government makes no judgment as to a common faith to which its citizens should subscribe, nor does the state seek to make decisions that reflect the tenets of a particular faith. Still, religion has always played an important role in American culture, and there is little doubt that it influences the decisions of policy makers in various ways. Can government take actions which, in effect, promote the views of a religion? If a law seems to benefit a specific faith, does that necessarily mean that such a law is invalid? What of the cause of religion in general? May the state take actions that advance all religions?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 584-640

Ivers and McGuire, pp. 165-179

Suggested reading:

Stephen Feldman. 1997. *Please Don't Wish Me a Merry Christmas: A Critical History of the Separation of Church and State*. New York: New York University Press.

Edward Larson. 1997. *Summer of the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion*. New York: Basic Books.

Leonard Levy. 1986. *The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment*. New York: Macmillan.

Wayne Swanson. 1988. *The Christ Child Goes to Court*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

“The ‘establishment of religion’ clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa.”

--- Justice Hugo Black
Everson v. Board of Education (1947)

“We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being. We guarantee the freedom to worship as one chooses. We make room for as wide a variety of beliefs and creeds as the spiritual needs of man deem necessary. We sponsor an attitude on the part of

government that shows no partiality to any one group and that lets each flourish according to the zeal of its adherents and the appeal of its dogma. When the state encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our traditions. For it then respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs. To hold that it may not would be to find in the Constitution a requirement that the government show a callous indifference to religious groups. That would be preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe. Government may not finance religious groups nor undertake religious instruction nor blend secular and sectarian education nor use secular institutions to force one or some religion on any person. But we find no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion and to throw its weight against efforts to widen the effective scope of religious influence. The government must be neutral when it comes to competition between sects. It may not thrust any sect on any person. It may not make a religious observance compulsory. It may not coerce anyone to attend church, to observe a religious holiday, or to take religious instruction. But it can close its doors or suspend its operations as to those who want to repair to their religious sanctuary for worship or instruction. No more than that is undertaken here.”

--- Justice William O. Douglas
Zorach v. Clauson (1952)

4. ***Freedom of Speech and Association*** (February 3-10)

In a democratic society, individuals should be able to express their views, both to fellow citizens and to representatives in government. The expression of political views, however, can sometimes be controversial, unsettling, offensive, disruptive, or even dangerous. Should the First Amendment protect all of these views, or is society ever justified in silencing its members? And when individuals organize for political purposes --- to express collectively their opinions --- is it necessary to think of free speech in any different terms?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 451-507

Ivers and McGuire, pp. 195-232

Suggested reading:

Robert Justin Goldstein. 2000. *Flag Burning and Free Speech: The Case of Texas v. Johnson*.
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

David M. Rabban. 1999. *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years, 1870-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.

Philippa Strum. 1999. *When the Nazis Came to Skokie: Freedom for Speech We Hate*.
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Cass Sunstein. 1995. *Democracy and the Problem of Free Speech*. New York: Free Press.

“The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it...”

--- John Stuart Mill
On Liberty (1859)

“...if there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other it is the principle of free thought--not free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought we hate.”

--- Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes
United States v. Schwimmer (1929)

“It is hardly a novel perception that compelled disclosure of affiliation with groups engaged in advocacy may constitute as effective a restraint on freedom of association as the forms of governmental action in the cases above were thought likely to produce upon the particular constitutional rights there involved. This Court has recognized the vital relationship between freedom to associate and privacy in one’s associations....Inviolability of privacy in group association may in many circumstances be indispensable to preservation of freedom of association, particularly where a group espouses dissident beliefs.”

--- Justice John M. Harlan
NAACP v. Alabama (1958)

“We cannot accept the view that an apparently limitless variety of conduct can be labeled ‘speech’ whenever the person engaging in the conduct intends thereby to express an idea.”

--- Chief Justice Earl Warren
U.S. v. O’Brien (1968)

“Texas argues that its interest in preserving the flag as a symbol of nationhood and national unity survives this close analysis. Quoting extensively from the writings of this Court chronicling the flag’s historic and symbolic role in our society, the State emphasizes the ‘special place’ reserved for the flag in our Nation. The State’s argument is not that it has an interest simply in maintaining the flag as a symbol of something, no matter what it symbolizes; indeed, if that were the State’s position, it would be difficult to see how that interest is endangered by highly symbolic conduct such as Johnson’s. Rather, the State’s claim is that it has an interest in preserving the flag as a symbol of nationhood and national unity, a symbol with a determinate range of meanings. According to Texas, if one physically treats the flag in a way that would tend to cast doubt on either the idea that nationhood and national unity are the flag’s referents or that national unity actually exists, the message conveyed thereby is a harmful one and therefore may be prohibited. If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.”

--- Justice William J. Brennan
Texas v. Johnson (1989)

**First Examination
February 12**

5. ***Freedom of the Press***
(February 17-26)

Not surprisingly, Americans place a high value upon the free press; indeed, the printed word is essential in transmitting ideas and information. The trouble is that not all of the press is printed, and not all of it involves words. Does this affect the meaning of the First Amendment? Does the Supreme Court place a high value upon allowing the widest possible latitude in broadcasting information, or is the press entitled to less protection --- or even no protection --- if that information is arguably harmful or worthless?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 509-564

Ivers and McGuire, pp. 233-248

Suggested reading:

James Kirby. 1986. *Fumble: Bear Bryant, Wally Butts and the Great College Football Scandal*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Anthony Lewis. 1991. *Make No Law: The Sullivan Case and the First Amendment*. New York: Vintage Books.

David Rudenstine. 1998. *The Day the Presses Stopped: A History of the Pentagon Papers Case*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rodney A. Smolla. 1988. *Jerry Falwell v. Larry Flynt*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

“The last right we shall mention, regards the freedom of the press. The importance of this consists, besides the advancement of truth, science, morality, and arts in general, in its diffusion of liberal sentiments on the administration of Government, its ready communication of thoughts between subjects, and its consequential promotion of union among them, whereby oppressive officers are shamed or intimidated, into more honourable and just modes of conducting affairs.”

--- Journals of the Continental Congress (1774)

“[P]rior restraints on speech and publication are the most serious and the least tolerable infringement on First Amendment rights. A criminal penalty or a judgment in a defamation case is subject to the whole panoply of protections afforded by deferring the impact of the judgment until all avenues of appellate review have been exhausted. Only after judgment has become final, correct or otherwise, does the law's sanction become fully operative. A prior restraint, by contrast and by definition, has an immediate and irreversible sanction. If it can be said that a threat of criminal or civil sanctions after publication ‘chills’ speech, prior restraint ‘freezes’ it at least for the time. The damage can be particularly great when the prior restraint falls upon the communication of news and commentary on current events.”

--- Chief Justice Warren E. Burger
Nebraska Press Association v. Stuart (1976)

**Written Assignment Due
March 3**

6. ***Personal Autonomy and Privacy***
(March 3-5)

Those who drafted the Bill of Rights contemplated that Americans would enjoy a certain degree of privacy within their homes, a privacy unhampered by arbitrary violations by the state. So, for instance, individuals should feel secure in knowing that their homes and effects are free from unwarranted governmental intrusion. Today, issues of privacy in the Supreme Court take on a different sort of meaning: To what extent does the Constitution protect the rights of individuals to make the most deeply personal decisions about how to live their lives? Does it matter that the Constitution makes no explicit statement on such issues?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 891-954

Suggested reading:

Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O'Brien. 1993. *Abortion and American Politics*.
Chatham: Chatham House.

Lee Epstein and Joseph F. Kobylka. 1992. *The Supreme Court and Legal Change: Abortion and the Death Penalty*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

David Garrow. 1994. *Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade*.
New York: Macmillan.

Karen O'Connor. 1996. *No Neutral Ground? Abortion Politics in an Age of Absolutes*. Boulder:
Westview Press, 1996.

“Since 1879 Connecticut has had on its books a law which forbids the use of contraceptives by anyone. I think this is an uncommonly silly law. As a practical matter, the law is obviously unenforceable, except in the oblique context of the present case. As a philosophical matter, I believe the use of contraceptives in the relationship of marriage should be left to personal and private choice, based upon each individual's moral, ethical, and religious beliefs. As a matter of social policy, I think professional counsel about methods of birth control should be available to all, so that each individual's choice can be meaningfully made. But we are not asked in this case to say whether we think this law is unwise, or even asinine. We are asked to hold that it violates the United States Constitution. And that I cannot do.”

--- Justice Potter Stewart
Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)

“If the First Amendment means anything, it means that a State has no business telling a man, sitting alone in his own house, what books he may read or what films he may watch.”

--- Justice Thurgood Marshall
Stanley v. Georgia (1969)

7. ***Unreasonable Searches and Seizures***
(March 17-19)

One of the most interesting --- and complex --- set of legal questions that the Supreme Court has confronted involves the issue of how the state goes about gathering evidence to be used in criminal proceedings. The Fourth Amendment prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures, but what makes a search unreasonable? Moreover, the techniques by which officials have collected this evidence have changed drastically over time; innovations in medicine, telecommunications, transportation, and the like have made the work of law enforcement both easier and more difficult. What kinds of constitutional implications have they had?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 703-757

Ivers and McGuire, pp. 249-263

Suggested reading:

Craig M. Bradley. 1993. *The Failure of the Criminal Procedure Revolution*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Whitfield Diffie and Susan Landau. 1998. *Privacy on Line: The Politics of Wiretapping and Encryption*. Boston: MIT Press.

John Gilliom. 1994. *Surveillance, Privacy, and the Law: Employee Drug Testing and the Politics of Social Control*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

“This Court has recognized that coercion can be mental as well as physical, and that the blood of the accused is not the only hallmark of an unconstitutional inquisition. A number of cases have demonstrated, if demonstration were needed, that the efficiency of the rack and the thumbscrew can be matched, given the proper subject, by more sophisticated modes of ‘persuasion.’ A prolonged interrogation of an accused who is ignorant of his rights and who has been cut off from the moral support of friends and relatives is not infrequently an effective technique of terror. Thus the range of inquiry in this type of case must be broad, and this Court has insisted that the judgment in each instance be based upon consideration of the totality of the circumstances. As important as it is that persons who have committed crimes be convicted, there are considerations which transcend the question of guilt or innocence. Thus, in cases involving involuntary confessions, this Court enforces the strongly felt attitude of our society that important human values are sacrificed where an agency of the government, in the course of securing a conviction, wrings a confession out of an accused against his will. This insistence upon putting the government to the task of proving guilt by means other than inquisition was engendered by historical abuses which are quite familiar.”

--- Chief Justice Earl Warren
Blackburn v. Alabama (1960)

“Whether the exclusionary sanction is appropriately imposed in a particular case...must be resolved by weighing the costs and benefits of preventing the use in the prosecution's case in chief of inherently trustworthy tangible evidence obtained in reliance on a search warrant issued by a detached and neutral magistrate that ultimately is found to be defective. The

substantial social costs exacted by the exclusionary rule for the vindication of Fourth Amendment rights have long been a source of concern....An objectionable collateral consequence of this interference with the criminal justice system's truth-finding function is that some guilty defendants may go free or receive reduced sentences as a result of favorable plea bargains. Particularly when law enforcement officers have acted in objective good faith or their transgressions have been minor, the magnitude of the benefit conferred on such guilty defendants offends basic concepts of the criminal justice system.”

--- Justice Byron R. White
U.S. v. Leon (1984)

Second Examination March 24

8. *Counsel, Confessions and Punishment* (March 26-31)

The system of justice in the United States affords those who are charged with criminal wrongdoing with a number of guarantees. These procedural protections, which seek to ensure that the accused is not treated capriciously, have often required clarification from the justices. What kinds of rights does the accused have? Do individuals have the right to an attorney, and if so when? What do the constitutional provisions that work to ensure a fair trial actually require in practice? What kinds of limits are there on the types of punishments that may be imposed on those who are convicted?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 641-702

Ivers and McGuire, pp. 265-294

Suggested reading:

Lee Epstein and Joseph F. Kobylka. 1992. *The Supreme Court and Legal Change: Abortion and the Death Penalty*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Joseph Grano. 1993. *Confessions, Truth, and the Law*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Anthony Lewis. 1964. *Gideon's Trumpet*. New York: Vintage Books.

“The right to be heard would be, in many cases, of little avail if it did not comprehend the right to be heard by counsel. Even the intelligent and educated layman has small and sometimes no skill in the science of law. If charged with crime, he is incapable, generally, of determining for himself whether the indictment is good or bad. He is unfamiliar with the rules of evidence. Left without the aid of counsel he may be put on trial without a proper charge, and convicted upon incompetent evidence, or evidence irrelevant to the issue or otherwise inadmissible. He lacks both the skill and knowledge adequately to prepare his defense, even though he have a perfect one. He requires the guiding hand of counsel at every step in the proceedings against him. Without it, though he be not guilty, he faces the danger of conviction because he does not know how to establish his innocence. If that be true of men of intelligence, how much more true is it of the ignorant and illiterate, or those of feeble intellect. If in any case, civil or criminal, a state or federal court were arbitrarily to

refuse to hear a party by counsel, employed by and appearing for him, it reasonably may not be doubted that such a refusal would be a denial of a hearing, and, therefore, of due process in the constitutional sense.”

--- Justice George Sutherland
Powell v. Alabama (1932)

“The term ‘interrogation’ under *Miranda* refers not only to express questioning, but also to any words or actions on the part of the police that the police should know are reasonably likely to elicit an incriminating response from the suspect. The latter portion of this definition focuses primarily upon the perceptions of the suspect, rather than the intent of the police. This focus reflects the fact that the *Miranda* safeguards were designed to vest a suspect in custody with an added measure of protection against coercive police practices, without regard to objective proof of the underlying intent of the police. A practice that the police should know is reasonably likely to evoke an incriminating response from a suspect thus amounts to interrogation. But, since the police surely cannot be held accountable for the unforeseeable results of their words or actions, the definition of interrogation can extend only to words or actions on the part of police officers that they should have known were reasonably likely to elicit an incriminating response.”

--- Justice Potter Stewart
Rhode Island v. Innis (1984)

“Racial discrimination in selection of jurors harms not only the accused whose life or liberty they are summoned to try. Competence to serve as a juror ultimately depends on an assessment of individual qualifications and ability impartially to consider evidence presented at a trial. A person’s race simply is unrelated to his fitness as a juror. As long ago as *Strader*, therefore, the Court recognized that by denying a person participation in jury service on account of his race, the State unconstitutionally discriminated against the excluded juror. The harm from discriminatory jury selection extends beyond that inflicted on the defendant and the excluded juror to touch the entire community. Selection procedures that purposefully exclude black persons from juries undermine public confidence in the fairness of our system of justice. Discrimination within the judicial system is most pernicious because it is a stimulant to that race prejudice which is an impediment to securing to [black citizens] that equal justice which the law aims to secure to all others.”

--- Justice Lewis Powell
Batson v. Kentucky (1986)

“In 1988, when Congress enacted legislation reinstating the federal death penalty, it expressly provided that a ‘sentence of death shall not be carried out upon a person who is mentally retarded.’ In 1989, Maryland enacted a similar prohibition. It was in that year that we decided *Penry*, and concluded that those two state enactments, even when added to the 14 States that have rejected capital punishment completely, do not provide sufficient evidence at present of a national consensus. Much has changed since then. Responding to the national attention received by the Bowden execution and our decision in *Penry*, state legislatures across the country began to address the issue. In 1990 Kentucky and Tennessee enacted statutes similar to those in Georgia and Maryland, as did New Mexico in 1991, and Arkansas, Colorado, Washington, Indiana, and Kansas in 1993 and 1994. In 1995, when New York reinstated its death penalty, it emulated the Federal Government by expressly exempting the mentally retarded. Nebraska followed suit in 1998. There appear to have

been no similar enactments during the next two years, but in 2000 and 2001 six more States --- South Dakota, Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Missouri, and North Carolina --- joined the procession. The Texas Legislature unanimously adopted a similar bill, and bills have passed at least one house in other States, including Virginia and Nevada. It is not so much the number of these States that is significant, but the consistency of the direction of change. Given the well-known fact that anticrime legislation is far more popular than legislation providing protections for persons guilty of violent crime, the large number of States prohibiting the execution of mentally retarded persons (and the complete absence of States passing legislation reinstating the power to conduct such executions) provides powerful evidence that today our society views mentally retarded offenders as categorically less culpable than the average criminal. The evidence carries even greater force when it is noted that the legislatures that have addressed the issue have voted overwhelmingly in favor of the prohibition. Moreover, even in those States that allow the execution of mentally retarded offenders, the practice is uncommon. Some States, for example New Hampshire and New Jersey, continue to authorize executions, but none have been carried out in decades. Thus there is little need to pursue legislation barring the execution of the mentally retarded in those States. And it appears that even among those States that regularly execute offenders and that have no prohibition with regard to the mentally retarded, only five have executed offenders possessing a known IQ less than 70 since we decided *Penry*. The practice, therefore, has become truly unusual, and it is fair to say that a national consensus has developed against it.”

--- Justice John Paul Stevens
Atkins v. Virginia (2002)

Interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment

(April 2)

There is probably no constitutional provision that has been subject to greater debate than the Fourteenth Amendment. Enacted to secure the citizenship rights of black Americans, the leading Civil War Amendment has now reached far beyond race to touch on a great many different types of government classifications, including gender, socioeconomic status, alienage, and sexual orientation. How should these various types of legislative enactments be evaluated? Does the Equal Protection Clause require “more equality” in some instance than in others? And, if so, how does one distinguish between them?

Required reading:

None

Suggested reading:

Raoul Berger. 1999. *Government by Judiciary: The Transformation of the Fourteenth Amendment*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Michael Kent Curtis. 1990. *No State Shall Abridge: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Bill of Rights*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Michael J. Perry. 1999. *We the People: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Supreme Court*. New York: Oxford University Press.

“Until some State law has been passed, or some State action through its officers or agents has been taken, adverse to the rights of citizens sought to be protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, no legislation of the United States under said amendment, nor any proceeding under such legislation, can be called into activity: for the prohibitions of the amendment are against State laws and acts done under State authority. Of course, legislation may, and should be, provided in advance to meet the exigency when it arises; but it should be adapted to the mischief and wrong which the amendment was intended to provide against; and that is, State laws, or State action of some kind, adverse to the rights of the citizen secured by the amendment. Such legislation cannot properly cover the whole domain of rights appertaining to life, liberty and property, defining them and providing for their vindication. That would be to establish a code of municipal law regulative of all private rights between man and man in society. It would be to make Congress take the place of the State legislatures and to supersede them....In fine, the legislation which Congress is authorized to adopt in this behalf is not general legislation upon the rights of the citizen, but corrective legislation, that is, such as may be necessary and proper for counteracting such laws as the States may adopt or enforce, and which, by the amendment, they are prohibited from making or enforcing, or such acts and proceedings as the States may commit or take, and which, by the amendment, they are prohibited from committing or taking.”

--- Justice Joseph Bradley
Civil Rights Cases (1882)

“In the area of economics and social welfare, a State does not violate the Equal Protection Clause merely because the classifications made by its laws are imperfect. If the classification has some ‘reasonable basis,’ it does not offend the Constitution simply because the classification ‘is not made with mathematical nicety or because in practice it results in some inequality.’ The problems of government are practical ones and may justify, if they do not require, rough accommodations --- illogical, it may be, and unscientific. A statutory discrimination will not be set aside if any state of facts reasonably may be conceived to justify it.”

--- Justice Potter Stewart
Dandridge v. Williams (1970)

“Petitioners’ central claim is that they were laid off because of their race in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Decisions by faculties and administrators of public schools based on race or ethnic origin are reviewable under the Fourteenth Amendment. This Court has consistently repudiated [distinctions] between citizens solely because of their ancestry as being odious to a free people whose institutions are founded upon the doctrine of equality. Racial and ethnic distinctions of any sort are inherently suspect and thus call for the most exacting judicial examination. The Court has recognized that the level of scrutiny does not change merely because the challenged classification operates against a group that historically has not been subject to governmental discrimination. In this case, Article XII operates against whites and in favor of certain minorities, and therefore constitutes a classification based on race. Any preference based on racial or ethnic criteria must necessarily receive a most searching examination to make sure that it does not conflict with constitutional guarantees. There are two prongs to this examination. First, any racial classification must be justified by a compelling governmental

interest. Second, the means chosen by the State to effectuate its purpose must be narrowly tailored to the achievement of that goal.”

--- Justice Lewis Powell
Wygant v. Jackson Board of Education (1986)

10. *Racial Equality*
(April 7-14)

The Fourteenth Amendment was designed to ensure that government not treat individuals in disproportionate ways on account of race. But what does equality actually require? Is it possible for the state to treat citizens differently along racial lines and still ensure that they are treated equally? Is it ever permissible for the state to make distinctions --- either explicitly or implicitly --- on the basis of race? Does it matter if those distinctions may be designed to correct for the effects of past discrimination?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 759-825

Ivers and McGuire, pp. 295-323

Suggested reading:

Donald W. Jackson. 1992. *Even the Children of Strangers: Equality Under the U.S. Constitution*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith. 2000. *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Andrew Kull. 1994. *The Color-Blind Constitution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Michael Perry. 1999. *We the People: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Supreme Court*. New York: Oxford University Press.

“The law regards man as man, and takes no account of his...color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved.”

--- Justice John M. Harlan
Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

“11. K. B. Clark, Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development (Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, 1950); Witmer and Kotinsky, Personality in the Making (1952), c. VI; Deutscher and Chein, The Psychological Effects of Enforced Segregation: A Survey of Social Science Opinion, 26 J. Psychol. 259 (1948); Chein, What are the Psychological Effects of Segregation Under Conditions of Equal Facilities?, 3 Int. J. Opinion and Attitude Res. 229 (1949); Brameld, Educational Costs, in Discrimination and National Welfare (MacIver, ed., (1949), 44-48; Frazier, The Negro in the United States (1949), 674-681. And see generally Myrdal, An American Dilemma (1944).”

--- Footnote 11, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

“Justice Stevens chides us for our ‘supposed inability to differentiate between invidious and benign discrimination,’ because it is in his view sufficient that ‘people understand the

difference between good intentions and bad.’ But, the point of strict scrutiny is to differentiate between permissible and impermissible governmental use of race. And Justice Stevens himself has already explained in his dissent in *Fullilove* why ‘good intentions’ alone are not enough to sustain a supposedly ‘benign’ racial classification: ‘[E]ven though it is not the actual predicate for this legislation, a statute of this kind inevitably is perceived by many as resting on an assumption that those who are granted this special preference are less qualified in some respect that is identified purely by their race. Because that perception especially when fostered by the Congress of the United States - can only exacerbate rather than reduce racial prejudice, it will delay the time when race will become a truly irrelevant, or at least insignificant, factor. Unless Congress clearly articulates the need and basis for a racial classification, and also tailors the classification to its justification, the Court should not uphold this kind of statute.’...We hold today that all racial classifications, imposed by whatever federal, state, or local governmental actor, must be analyzed by a reviewing court under strict scrutiny. In other words, such classifications are constitutional only if they are narrowly tailored measures that further compelling governmental interests.”

--- Justice Sandra Day O’Connor
Adarand Constructors v. Peña (1995)

11. ***Gender Equality*** (April 16-21)

As American society has changed, many norms about the proper roles of the genders in both public and private life have been challenged and changed. Of course, since the law reflects the ebb and flow of such social customs, public policies as they relate to gender also have produced disputes. How has the Supreme Court come to terms with such questions? It is important to remember that the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees equal protection of the laws, was undoubtedly motivated by issues of race, not gender. Does that mean that the state may legitimately discriminate on the basis of gender? Or does the Constitution forbid such distinctions?

Required reading:

Fisher, pp. 827-863

Ivers and McGuire, pp. 325-340

Suggested reading:

Judith A. Baer. 1991. *Women in American Law: The Struggle toward Equality from the New Deal to the Present*. New York: Holmes and Meier.

Susan Gluck Mezey. 1992. *In Pursuit of Equality: Women, Public Policy, and the Federal Courts*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

Karen O’Connor. 1980. *Women’s Organizations’ Use of the Courts*. Lexington: Lexington Books.

Suzanne Samuels. 1995. *Fetal Rights, Women’s Rights: Gender Equality in the Workplace*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

“Man is, or should be, woman’s protector and defender. The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life. The constitution of the family organization, which is founded in the divine

ordinance, as well as in the nature of things, indicates the domestic sphere as that which properly belongs to the domain and function of womanhood. The harmony...of interests and views which belong, or should belong, to the family institution is repugnant to the idea of a woman adopting a distinct and independent career from that of her husband....The paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother.”

--- Justice Joseph P. Bradley
Bradwell v. Illinois (1873)

“The bias in Johnson Controls’ policy is obvious. Fertile men, but not fertile women, are given a choice as to whether they wish to risk their reproductive health for a particular job. [T]he Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits sex-based classifications in terms and conditions of employment, in hiring and discharging decisions, and in other employment decisions that adversely affect an employee's status. Respondent’s fetal-protection policy explicitly discriminates against women on the basis of their sex. The policy excludes women with childbearing capacity from lead-exposed jobs, and so creates a facial classification based on gender....Johnson Controls’ policy classifies on the basis of gender and childbearing capacity, rather than fertility alone. Respondent does not seek to protect the unconceived children of all its employees. Despite evidence in the record about the debilitating effect of lead exposure on the male reproductive system, Johnson Controls is concerned only with the harms that may befall the unborn offspring of its female employees....Johnson Controls’ policy is facially discriminatory, because it requires only a female employee to produce proof that she is not capable of reproducing.”

--- Justice Harry A. Blackmun
Automobile Workers v. Johnson Controls, Inc. (1991)

12. *Equality, the Disadvantaged, and Beyond*
(April 23)

Does the gap between poverty and affluence have constitutional implications? Individuals from different economic backgrounds make important choices--where to live, how to raise their children, and so on--and these private decisions have tangible results: One implication, for example, is wealthier suburbs with better schools and poorer inner cities with educational systems of a lower caliber. Does the Constitution require government to correct for such disparities? Does it matter that such programs are designed, financed, and administered by the state?

Required reading:
Fisher, pp. 863-889

Suggested reading:
Evan Gerstmann. 1999. *The Constitutional Underclass: Gays, Lesbians, and the Failure of Class-Based Equal Protection*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Susan E. Lawrence. 1990. *The Poor in Court: The Legal Services Program and Supreme Court Decision Making*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Douglas S. Reed. 2001. *On Equal Terms: The Constitutional Politics of Educational Opportunity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

“The children who are plaintiffs in these cases are special members of [an] underclass. Persuasive arguments support the view that a State may withhold its beneficence from those whose very presence within the United States is the product of their own unlawful conduct. These arguments do not apply with the same force to classifications imposing disabilities on the minor children of such illegal entrants....[E]ducation has a fundamental role in maintaining the fabric of our society. We cannot ignore the significant social costs borne by our Nation when select groups are denied the means to absorb the values and skills upon which our social order rests. In addition to the pivotal role of education in sustaining our political and cultural heritage, denial of education to some isolated group of children poses an affront to one of the goals of the Equal Protection Clause: the abolition of governmental barriers presenting unreasonable obstacles to advancement on the basis of individual merit.”

--- Justice William J. Brennan
Plyler v. Doe (1982)

Final Examination
Saturday, May 2, 12:00pm

Frequently Asked Questions

Is class participation required?

I encourage participation and frequently call on people at random during class, but your contributions to class discussions have no bearing on your grade.

Do I have to do the suggested reading?

No.

Do I have to do the required reading before class?

No, the required readings will not be discussed in class. You will probably find it easier to do the required reading *after* class, since materials that are covered in class may make it easier for you to make sense of the readings.

What should I do if I miss class?

Confer with another member of the class and copy that student's notes. If you then have questions about any of the material that you missed, please stop by my office to discuss those questions.

Can I take notes on my laptop?

Yes, if that is what you really do with your laptop. I strongly encourage you to take handwritten notes, because a laptop in a classroom with wireless capability is what tort law refers to as an attractive nuisance --- ‘a condition that is both attractive and dangerous to curious children.’ During class, the internet is an almost irresistible lure that can distract the computer user and those around that user. If you insist on typing your notes, please sit in the back of the room, where your computer screen will minimize the likelihood of distracting others. Please note that, if you opt for laptop use during class, I will presume that you are not giving the class your full attention.

Is the final exam cumulative?

The final exam itself is *not* a comprehensive exam, but it will contain a cumulative component. This means that the final will resemble the previous exams by covering only new material on which you have not been previously tested. It will, however, also contain a single, comprehensive question.

How are final grades determined?

The numerical score (ranging from 0 to 100%) of each assignment is weighted, and those weighted scores are added together for an overall course score. Your overall course score is the basis for your final grade, which will be assigned according to the standard grading scale. So, for example, an overall course score of 91 is an A-, and a score of 79 is a C+. No letter grades are assigned to any individual exam or paper.

Is there a curve?

Yes, but only if the grade distribution suggests that a curve is necessary. In some classes, there has been a considerable curve, while in others there has been none at all. I cannot say whether and to what degree there will be a curve until all assignments have been graded.

Is there any extra-credit that I can do to improve my grade?

No. Grades should be and are based on achievement, not effort.

What if my grades improve over the course of the semester? Will that improvement be reflected in my final grade?

No. The weights assigned to each assignment are specified at the outset of the course. Giving greater emphasis to work done later in the semester requires changing those weights for some students (i.e., those who have improved) but not others (i.e., those who have not improved). Such a system does not treat all students equally, which is something that a fair grading system requires.

Can I take the final exam on some day other than the required date?

The circumstances under which you may reschedule the final are described in detail in the undergraduate bulletin. In relevant passage, it states:

“A student who has three final examinations scheduled by the Registrar’s Office within a 24-hour period may petition his or her dean for permission to have one of the scheduled examinations rescheduled. In the event that one of the scheduled examinations is a common final examination for a multiple-section course, that examination is the one to be rescheduled. Students who have secured an ‘examination excuse’ or an ‘official permit,’ and who transmit the document to the instructor or the instructor’s departmental chair or dean, must be granted permission to take the exam at an alternate time, although students will need to arrange a mutually convenient time with the instructor. Except when the provost has provided an exception in writing, the exam will be taken at a time subsequent to the regularly scheduled exam, though no later than the end of the following semester.”