Political Science 448G: The Supreme Court
Prerequisite: POLS 122 or Permission of instructor
MWF 11:00-11:50
Morgan Hall 316

Instructor: John Gettys  GA: Victor Zepeda-Martinez
Office Location: 430 Morgan Hall
Phone: (269) 808-3499
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 12:00-1:00, Mondays 2:00-3:00 and by Appt.
Email Address: JH-Gettys@wiu.edu

Course Description and Goals
This is an advanced seminar on the United State Supreme Court. We will be discussing, scrutinizing and simulating the activities and decision making of the U.S. Supreme Court. We will be examining the Court’s process, but more importantly we will be evaluating the way in which the Court works in society and in politics. We will discuss such issues as how cases get to the Court, how oral arguments work, the role of ideology in decision making, and the possible impact the Court has on litigants and society as a whole. The first part of the class will be dedicated to the examination of the process and politics of the Court as well as an examination of academic literature on each topic. The later part of the course will allow students to put knowledge into action by simulating the Court’s process using actual cases from the Court’s current term. Students completing this course will not only have a better grasp on the highest federal judicial institution but will have developed key analytical abilities as well as written and oral communication skills.

Required Text
In addition to the text, there will be readings from academic journals and law reviews. These will be made available on our Western Online Page and can be found through JSTOR and/or LexisNexis. I recommend printing out the articles and bringing them to class.

Expectations
I expect every student to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. This means respecting your fellow classmates, instructors, guests, WIU rules and most importantly yourself. It is important that you show up to every class period. I understand that things will come up an you may have to miss a class or two. Please email me as soon as you know that you can not make it to class. I will give excused absences as needed, as long as you let me know.

Course Requirements and Grading

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<td>Certiorari Exercise</td>
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<td>Oral Arguments Exercise</td>
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Grading Scale: All paper and exam grades will be out of 100 and then weighted according to the percentage that is listed above.

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Constitution Day Assignment Due: Sept. 10th at 11:00 am by Email
WIU recognizes Constitution Day, there will be activities on Monday September 17th from 11:00-1:00 in the Library. We have been invited to participate by making power point posters on the U.S. Supreme Court Justices. This year’s theme is “Citizenship and Immigration.” Each student will be assigned a Supreme Court Justice to create a power point on. We then will present these power points a week before Constitution Day in class. Since Constitution Day falls within the class period I encourage everyone to show up and stand next to their poster that they put on display. There will be a panel discussion put on by WIU faculty at approximately 12:00pm. If you can not stay for the panel that is completely understandable. Justices will be assigned to students the second week of classes and I will show examples of previous years presentations. Your grade for this assignment will be based on the quality of your power point slides as well as your brief in class presentation. Presentations will be printed to WIU’s Department of Print Services (DPS) to be printed (at no cost to you). You just have to go there and pick it up and bring it to Constitution day to put on the posters. DPS Email: DPS@wiu.edu

Certiorari Exercise Due: Oct. 15th at 11:00 am in Person
Thought the semester we are going to simulate the process of the U.S. Supreme Court. The first thing the Court must do each term is to chose which cases they will decide. Considering that thousands of petitions are submitted each year and the Court usually only hears 80-90 cases, this process is crucial to understanding Court politics and procedure. During this part of the course, we will learn about the certiorari (agenda setting) process and prepare a cert simulation. This exercise will be mostly written, in the form of party, clerk and interest group briefs. To determine which case, we want to go forward with we will have a conference vote just as the justices would do to determine which of the cases to take. Your grade will weigh heavily on the written aspect.

Oral Argument Exercise Due: Nov. 11th at 11:00 am in Person
Once a case has been taken by the Court, or granted cert, oral arguments are held. Here, the Justices will prepare questions for the attorneys and the attorneys each have half an hour to convince the justices that the outcome of the case should swing in their favor. This exercise will be both written and oral wherein the justices will participate with questions as well as preparing bench memos and the attorney will prepare written outlines to prepare for oral argument. Your grade will weigh heavily on the oral aspect.

Decision Making Exercise Due: Dec. 7th at 11:00 am in Person
After oral arguments, the justices hold conference. This is where the nine justices meet to discuss and vote on cases. For this exercise we will hold conference and will assign written opinions to justices. As we will learn, justices are free actors; hence, students will be free to write concurring ad or/ dissenting opinions. As is the case for the Supreme Court where there is one majority and one minority writer we will have each student will write their own opinion on the case.
Participation/ Discussion Leader Due: Wed. of your Discussion Week in Person
Participation will be heavily weighted based on attendance, as you have to be in class to be able to participate in discussions. Each student will also be assigned a week to be the discussion leader for the assigned readings for that week. It is that student’s responsibility to prepare a 2-4-page discussion/analysis paper and help lead the discussion. The paper is due on Wednesday of your assigned week to be the discussion leader. There will be more than one leader for that week, so feel free to work together, however each student will still be required to write their own paper. Discussion paper should not summarize but analyze that week’s readings and compare the readings to one another. If it is not your week to be discussion leader I will still encourage you to read the articles and participate in the discussion.

Final Exam Wednesday December 12th 10:00-11:50 am
The Final exam will be either an in-class blue book essay exam or a take home essay final. One week prior to our final exam I will distribute a list of five possible questions. If we have the in class final exam I will randomly select two questions from the five, the day of the final. If we have the take home final I will expect you to answer four of the five questions. You will also have to bring in the take home finals if that is the option we select to do at the given final exam time period.

Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

University Values
University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php.

Academic Integrity
Anyone caught cheating or in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to punishment under the guidelines laid out by the policy.
Student rights and responsibilities: http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php
Academic Integrity Policy: http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php

Writing Center
The University Writing Center is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any Academic level. It is a great resource for students who need one-on-one assistance with writing. The University Writing Center has locations all over campus. Call 298-2815 for an appointment.
Course Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to schedule as needed, but no additional work or reading will be assigned. Students will be informed of any changes via email and in class.

Week of 8/20
No class August 20\textsuperscript{th}
Introduction to Class
The Court and Legal Research & Baum Chapter 1

Week of 8/27
Pick Constitution Day Assignments and Examples
The Justices
Baum Chapter 2

Week of 9/03
No class- Labor Day
Pick Discussion Weeks & Movie Confirmation

Week of 9/10
Constitution Day Presentations in Class (5 each day)

Week of 9/17
Attend Constitution Day in Library 11:00-1:00
Movie Muhammad Ali’s Greatest Fight

Week of 9/24
Nomination and Conformation Process and Politics

Weekly Discussion Group #1


Week of 10/01
Certiorari and Agenda Setting in the U.S. Supreme Court

Weekly Discussion Group #2
Selection for Cert Assignment

Baum Chapter 3


**Week of 10/08**  
**Oral Arguments & Decision Making**  
**Weekly Discussion Group #3**  
**Fall Break No Class-10/12**

Baum Chapter 4


**Week of 10/15**  
**Certiorari Simulation & Assignment Due**  
Chose which case to go forward with

**Week of 10/22**  
**Decision Making- The Attitudinal/Legal Controversy**  
**Weekly Discussion Group #4**

Read in this Order


Week of 10/29  Decision Making- Other Models and Public Opinion

Weekly Discussion Group #5
Oral Argument Selection of Attorneys and Justices


Week of 11/05  Opinion Writing

Weekly Discussion Group #6


Week of 11/12  Oral Argument Simulation and Assignment Due

Week of 11/19  Thanksgiving Break- NO CLASS! 😊

Week of 11/26  Conference Simulation and Decision Making
Impact and Compliance

Weekly Discussion Group #7

Baum Chapters 5 & 6


Week of 12/03
Graduate Student paper presentations
Final Exam In class or Take-Home Vote & Review
Decision Making Exercise Due

FINAL EXAM
Wednesday December 12th 10:00-11:50 am
Graduate Student Papers Due