

Course Outline
POLS 225/CRJU 225
Constitutional Law
3 Credit Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

Constitutional Law

Studies the development of the U.S. Constitution through interpretation by the Supreme Court; includes judicial review, federalism, Congressional and presidential authority, the First Amendment, criminal rights and equal protection of the law.

Overall Course Objectives (Learning Objectives)

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Explain the nature of constitutional law and its function in the American political system;
2. Describe how constitutional law is made and how it changes;
3. Describe the role and make-up of the U.S. Supreme Court and how it conducts its business;
4. Describe the origins and significance of the Court's power of judicial review;
5. Explain the system of American federalism and how the relative powers of the Federal government and state governments have evolved over time;
6. Describe how the power of Congress to regulate interstate commerce has changed over time;
7. Describe the constitutional powers of the President in the area of national security;
8. Describe the First Amendment's protection of free expression and how its extent changes in the face of a need to protect public order;
9. Describe the Constitution's protection of the right of privacy;
10. Explain the incorporation of protections of the Bill of Rights into the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause;
11. Describe the function and extent of the exclusionary rule in criminal justice rights;
12. Describe the principal constitutional protections of criminal justice, regarding unreasonable searches and seizures, involuntary confessions, right to counsel, etc.;
13. Explain the meaning of the concept of "equal protection of the law";
14. Describe the development of constitutional protections against racial discrimination;
15. Describe the constitutional protections against discrimination on grounds other than race.

Major Topics

I. The Boundaries of Governmental Authority

1. The nature of constitutional law and the role of the U.S. Supreme Court
2. Judicial authority: the origin and function of judicial review
3. The American system of federalism
4. Congressional authority: the example of the regulation of interstate commerce

5. Presidential authority: the example of the protection of national security
- II. First Amendment Liberties
6. The First Amendment's protection of free expression
 7. The First Amendment's protection of religious freedom
 8. The constitutional right of privacy
- III. Criminal Justice Rights
9. The incorporation of the Bill of Rights into the Fourteenth Amendment
 10. The exclusionary rule in criminal justice rights
 11. Principal criminal justice rights regarding, e.g., unreasonable searches and seizures, involuntary confessions, right to counsel, cruel and unusual punishments
- IV. Equal Protection of the Law
12. Racial discrimination
 13. Discrimination on grounds other than race

Course Requirements

Students will be expected to demonstrate learning through:

1. Four in-class examinations, including analytical written exercises;
2. Additional written or oral exercises (e.g., quizzes, reports, term papers) at the instructor's discretion.

Other Course Information

1. This course was POLS 221 prior to Fall, 1990. Credit may be earned for POLS 225, CRJU 225 or POLS 221, but not for more than one.
2. This course is an elective in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.
3. Regular attendance and participation in class is a requirement for this course.
4. Students will be expected to have regular access to a required text or casebook and such additional learning material as an instructor may assign.
5. The instructor, at his/her discretion, may arrange for guest lecturers, audio/video presentations, and/or attention to current events as a part of the Course content;
6. The instructor will be available to assist students through regular office hours, telephone, and in some cases voice mail and Internet email.

2/10/00