Instructor: Michael Willemsen

Time and location: 10:30 AM M-Th. Room L22.
Contact Information: mwillemsen2000@gmail.com

Office hours: After class.

Supplemental readings will be assigned and distributed in class or available by e-mail.

**Course Description**

1. I will discuss the history of the United States Constitution, the concept of constitutional law and judicial review, and the competing theories of how to interpret a constitution.
2. I will explain the structure of the federal judicial systems and procedures used in federal trial and appellate court. The course will not cover specific federal laws (such as the federal budget, income tax, immigration, etc. except to the extent they raise constitutional issues). Some of these are covered in other course.
3. The emphasis in this course will be on the provisions of the federal constitution establishing constitutional rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, the right to due process and to the equal protection of the laws. This will lead into discussion of discrimination on grounds of race, sex, and sexual orientation. I will also cover issues regarding the right to bear arms, the constitutional restrictions on criminal prosecutions and punishment, the government's right to take property by eminent domain, and federal control of interstate commerce. We will consider recent important decisions, including the decision upholding the health care law, the campaign financing case, and others. We will also discuss current issues likely to come before the U.S. Supreme Court, such as gay marriage and voter identification.
4. The class will also look at the California Constitution, at how it differs from the federal constitution, and the proposal for a California constitutional convention.

**Course Goals**

1. To help the student to understand the structure of the federal constitution and the ways in which it can be interpreted and used.
2. To understand the structure of the federal government and the federal court system, and their relationship to state governments and courts.
3. To learn how to read and brief judicial decisions.
4. To enable the student follow and understand current and politically significant developments in constitutional law, including: (a) Equal protection of the law, as applied to bar discrimination on the basis of race, age, sex, and sexual orientation. (b) The right of privacy under the federal and state constitutions, as it relates to issues of abortion, gay marriage,
eavesdropping, and surveillance. (c) Current issues on freedom of speech and religion under the First Amendment, and gun control under the Second Amendment. (d) The controversy.

**Assignments/ exams**
There will be one midterm and a final exam. There will be some in-class quizzes (usually given in the last 20 minutes of the Thursday class) covering the readings for that week.

**Attendance/ Dropping**
Attendance is required, and class participation is an important factor in the final grade. Attendance will be taken at each class. If a student wishes to drop the class it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor and the college records office. The instructor has the right to drop any student who misses 4 or more classes.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short quizzes</td>
<td>30</td>
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**Tentative Readings Assignments**
This schedule below is very tentative. Several important cases are pending before the United States Supreme Court and if decided during this quarter may be assigned instead of the listed cases. Some topics will take longer than the allocated time, others will take less. Additional material on most topics will be distributed as available. Some of the text material will be designated as optional reading instead of assigned reading. The order of topics may be changed to accommodate outside speakers.

Material in italics will be furnished by the instructor. Where the assigned case also appears in the text, the student should use the instructor's edited version instead of the text version.

**Week 1. 9/24-9/27.**
(1) Introduction to Constitutional Law. Text ch. 1.
(2) Judicial review. Text pp. 72-74.

**Week 2. 10/1-10/4.**
(2) The Constitution and the federal government. Text ch. 2.
(3) Federal judicial power and the federal court system. Text ch. 3.

**Week 3. 10/8-10/11.**
(1) Federal court system (cont.)

**Week 4. 10/15-10/18.**

Week 5. 10/22-10/25. (1) Election law.
   (b) Primary elections and nominations.
   (c) Registration and voting. Text pp. 217-222.

Week 6. 10/29-11/1. 
   (1) Federal executive powers. Text ch. 5.
   (2) State powers. Text ch. 6.
   (3) Begin Constitution protection of civil rights. Text ch. 7.

Week 7. 11/5-11/8.
   (1) Constitution protection of civil rights. Text ch. 7.

Week 8. 11/12 to 11/15.

Week 9. 11/19-11/22.


Week 11. 12/3 -12/6.

Week 12. 12/10-12/13.
   (1) Monday. Anything we haven't covered.
   (2) Tuesday. California constitutional law.
   (3) Wednesday. Review
   (4) Thursday. Final Exam.