

Northeastern University
School of Law
Boston, Massachusetts

COURSE SYLLABUS - WINTER 2019 TERM

I. COURSE TITLE: **Introduction to U.S. Constitutional Law
(Law 6314 01)**

II. TEXT:

Required Material:

Leading Cases in Constitutional Law: A Compact Casebook for a Short Course (2019 edition), by Choper, Fallon, Kamisar, Shiffrin, et al.
("LCCL")

2019 Supplement to Constitutional Law - Cases and Materials, Concise Fifteenth Edition ("CL15Supp"),
by Jonathan D. Varat and Vikram D. Amar

Strongly Recommended Material:

Constitutional Law - Cases and Materials, Concise Fifteenth Edition,
by Jonathan D. Varat and Vikram D. Amar ("CL15")

III. INSTRUCTOR: **Diane Messere Magee, Esq.**
(Licensed: MA, RI, United States Supreme Court)
Email: dmmesq19@aol.com, d.magee@neu.edu
Twitter: @AttyDMM

IV. PLACE: TBD

V. TIME: **Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:10 p.m. - 2:10 p.m.**

VI. COURSE INTRODUCTION: Introduction to Constitutional Law explores the three branches of the government of the United States of America in relation to the context and purpose of the United States Constitution. The course will examine the separation of powers among the three branches of government, judicial review, the relationship of power between the federal government and the sovereign states. We will also review individual rights and specifically examine the bill of rights and other amendments to the United States Constitution. Additionally, we will look at strategies to assimilate constitutional law into critical thinking practices.

SYLLABUS CONTINUED

Introduction to U.S. Constitutional Law (Law 6314 01)

VII. REQUIREMENTS:

1. While I do not prohibit the use of laptops during class, I encourage you to refrain from using them as it will help you develop significant skills in deep focus of complex legal issues. And it will develop your ability to take time-constrained handwritten notes (which is generally all you are allowed at oral argument in Court).
2. All cell phones must be turned off during class (not merely placed on vibrate or silent). As in all Courts you should practice self-prohibition of cell phone use to avoid unnecessary distractions during class.
3. You are expected to be fully prepared to discuss the issues presented in each assignment prior to the day of class. While some legal issues will take more than one class to complete you should have the full legal topic prepared for discussion on the first class day of that legal topic.
4. Regular participation, preparation, and attendance are expected.
5. There will be one or more multiple choice interim tests lasting no more than 15 minutes each. These tests will be graded in class with a following discussion of strategies for understanding constitutional law legal issues in the context of this kind of testing environment.
6. The final exam will be a 24-hour take home exam.

VII. **GRADE COMPOSITION:** Your final grade will be determined by the multiple choice test(s) and the final exam. I will also consider, however, the development of your critical thinking skills as evidenced by your class preparation, participation, and attendance. The cumulative effect of these factors may result in my making a special mention in your evaluation. The majority of your grade, however, will be your performance on the required final examination.

IX. **ATTENDANCE POLICY:** It is mandatory that students attend class sessions. While I understand public transportation can be unpredictable, please respect your fellow classmates and be in class on time. Repeated class absence or tardiness will be reflected in your overall class evaluation.

SYLLABUS CONTINUED

Introduction to U.S. Constitutional Law (Law 6314 01)

X. TEACHING METHODOLOGY: Class instruction will be split between classroom lectures and practical case study application of the legal principles covered. Students should be familiar with the concepts reviewed in the reading assignments and be prepared to participate in and generate classroom discussions.

Questions and problems on material being covered are expected to be raised immediately for resolution and classroom discussion. Office hours are available for more in depth questions or questions that, due to classroom time constraints, could not be fully developed or addressed.

INTRODUCTION TO U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW
(Law 6314 01) WINTER TERM, 2019
ACADEMIC SCHEDULE FOR TUESDAY/THURSDAY DAY CLASS

- WEEK 1: **Article III and Judicial Review**
 READ LCCL pp. 1-35, pp. 885-908
 READ CL15 pp. 25-43
 READ CL15Supp pp.3-10
- WEEK 2: **The Power of the National Congress**
 READ LCCL, pp. 37-101
- WEEK 3: **The Power of the National Congress**
 READ LCCL, pp. 37-101
 READ CL15Supp pp. 15-20
- WEEK 4: **Distribution of Federal Power:
 Separation of Powers**
 READ LCCL, pp. 103-137
 READ CL15Supp pp. 39-42
- WEEK 5: **State Power to Regulate**
 READ LCCL, pp.139-177
- WEEK 6: **Substantive Protection of Economic Interests**
 READ LCCL, pp. 179-212
 READ CL15Supp 48-57
- WEEK 7: **Protection of Individual Rights**
 READ LCCL, pp. 213-317
 READ CL15Supp pp. 45-46
- WEEK 8: **Protection of Individual Rights**
 READ LCCL, pp. 213-317
 READ CL15Supp pp. 45-46
- WEEK 9: **Equal Protection/State Action**
 READ LCCL, pp. 693-884
- WEEK 10: **Equal Protection/State Action**
 READ LCCL, pp. 693-884
- WEEK 11: **Equal Protection/State Action**
 READ LCCL, pp. 693-884

FINAL EXAMINATION