

---

I. UH LAW CENTER – FLLM CONSTITUTIONAL LAW – SPRING 2024

A. *Course and Instructor Information*

In some format, the top part of the first page of the syllabus should provide the following.

Item	Notes for Implementation
Course Name	Constitutional Law (5397/23327)
Semester	Spring
Year	2024
Class time(s) and day(s)	4:00p-5:30p TTH Room 311
Mode of Instruction	Face-to-Face
Names of Instructor(s)	Vanessa L. Johnson
Office(s) for Instructor(s)	
Contact Information for Instructor(s)	UH email address -TBD <a href="mailto:johnsonv@uhcl.edu">johnsonv@uhcl.edu</a> 281-283-3161

B. *Office Hours*

**In-person:**

- By appointment

**Virtual/Remote:**

- Via LinkedIn: Mondays – Fridays 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/vanessaljohnson/>
- By appointment: Via Zoom or Phone

C. *Course Objectives and Learning Objectives*

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand and identify overarching constitutional law principles, theories, and policies;
- Identify and consider ethical and professional questions raised by the course materials;
- Have knowledge and understanding of substantive constitutional law;
- Understand, identify, and articulate policy arguments commonly used in constitutional law;
- Articulate and express a well-informed opinion regarding constitutional issues; and
- Develop skills in legal analysis, reasoning, research; problem-solving; and written and oral communication related to constitutional law.

The Law Center has adopted learning outcomes, which can be located at:

[www.law.uh.edu/about/Mission/](http://www.law.uh.edu/about/Mission/)

---

D. *Required Reading / Assigned Books or Materials*

CALVIN R. MASSEY & BRANNON P. DENNING, *AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: POWERS AND LIBERTIES* (7<sup>th</sup> ed. 2023).

- Connected eBook with Study Center (Digital Only) ISBN: 9798886144000

E. *Law Center Attendance Policy*

Consistent with university policy, 80 percent attendance in class is required. An attendance list will be circulated at each class session. Those individuals not satisfying the attendance requirement will be reported to UH Law Center administrative officials to be dropped from the course. During class, students will be called on at random (Socratic method) to answer questions about the reading. Students will be expected to have read the assigned readings prior to class and to be prepared to discuss the material in class.

F. *Mode(s) of Assessment - Grading*

The majority of your final grade will be based on a final exam (80%), consisting of a potential combination of multiple choice, essay, and/or short answer questions. This assessment will be anonymous. You will also have homework assignments (20%) throughout the semester to help you prepare for the exams by providing feedback. The deadline for each homework assignment will be announced at least one week prior. Late assignments will not be accepted. (Note, however, that the schedule is subject to change so make sure you stay apprised of our progress throughout the semester.)

- Final Exam 80%
- Homework Assignments 20%

**Use of Laptops:** You may use a laptop for taking notes and other purposes directly related to the class. Use of your laptop for any other purpose is prohibited during class meetings (e.g., you may NOT surf the internet, play games or give/receive answers or other aid via any method). Nonparticipation and nonresponsiveness in the classroom discussion attributable to diversionary use of your personal computer constitutes an absence from the class. In the event this occurs, you are not eligible to sign the attendance sheet and are subject to appropriate action as the professor may determine in her sole discretion.

G. *Chronology of Topics/Reading/Assignments through the Semester*

I will provide more narrowly tailored reading assignments (specific material on which to focus to prepare for class) at the beginning of each week. I reserve the right to make adjustments to the schedule.

Week	Class #	Date	Topic(s)	Readings
1	1	1/16/24	Judicial Review and Constitutional Structure	Ch. 1
	2	1/18/24	Doctrines Limiting the Scope of Judicial Review	Ch. 2 to page 96
2	3	1/23/24	Doctrines Limiting the Scope of Judicial Review (cont'd) Federalism The Limits of Federal Legislative Power	Ch. 2 (97-118) Ch. 3 to page 141
	4	1/25/24	The Limits of Federal Legislative Power (cont'd)	Ch. 3 (141-230)
3	5	1/30/24	Limiting the Scope of State Power over Interstate Commerce	Ch. 4 to page 275
	6	2/1/24	Limiting the Scope of State Power over Interstate Commerce (cont'd) Separation of Powers	Ch. 4 (276-305) Ch. 5 to page 322
4	7	2/6/24	Separation of Powers (cont'd)	Ch. 5 to page 367
	8	2/8/24	Separation of Powers (cont'd)	Ch. 5 (368-410)
5	9	2/13/24	Due Process	Ch. 6 to 459
	10	2/15/24	Due Process (cont'd)	Ch. 6 (460-510)
6	11	2/20/24	Economic Rights: The Takings and Contracts Clauses	Ch. 7 to page 557
	12	2/22/24	Economic Rights: The Takings and Contracts Clauses (cont'd) Equal Protection	Ch. 7 (558-571) Ch. 8 to page 609
7	13	2/27/24	Equal Protection (cont'd)	Ch. 8 (610-667)
	14	2/29/24	Equal Protection (cont'd)	Ch. 8 (667-713)
8	15	3/5/24	Equal Protection (cont'd)	Ch. 8 (714-752)
	16	3/7/24	Free Expression of Ideas	Chapter 9 to 758
9	SPRING BREAK 3/11/24 – 3/15/24			
10	17	3/19/24	Free Expression of Ideas (cont'd)	Ch. 9 (759-800)
	18	3/21/24	Free Expression of Ideas (cont'd)	Ch. 9 (801-847)
11	19	3/26/24	Free Expression of Ideas (cont'd)	Ch. 9 (847-896)
	20	3/28/24	Free Expression of Ideas (cont'd)	Ch. 9 (897-944)
12	21	4/2/24	Free Expression of Ideas (cont'd)	Ch. 9 (945-988)
	22	4/4/24	Free Expression of Ideas (cont'd)	Ch. 9 (988-1029)
13	23	4/9/24	Free Expression of Ideas (cont'd) The Religion Clauses	Ch. 9 (1030-1052) Ch. 10 to page 1068
	24	4/11/24	The Religion Clauses (cont'd)	Ch. 10 (1069-1119)
14	25	4/16/24	The Religion Clauses (cont'd)	Ch. 10 (1119-1166)
	26	4/18/24	State Action and the Power to Enforce Constitutional Rights	Ch. 11
15	27	4/23/23	The Right to Keep and Bear Arms	Ch. 12
	28	4/25/24	Exam Review	

---

## H. *Honor Code*

The UHLC Honor Code applies to all aspects of this course. You are responsible for knowing all Honor Code provisions and for complying with the Honor Code. Please inquire if you have any questions regarding how the Honor Code's provisions apply to specific activities or situations related to this course. Your continuing enrollment in this course is deemed to be a pledge by you under the Honor Code to comply with the Honor Code in relation to this course and to comply with the instructions in the course syllabus.

## I. *AI Generated Text*

The software technology known as artificial intelligence has recently expanded its capability to generate text (AI Generated Text). Examples of the technology include what are known as “generative” large language models (LLMs), and a specific implementation what is well known in the general public is ChatGPT. These systems can generate text in response to prompts and/or input of other text/documents/code/images. The output, the AI Generated Text, appears to have human-mimicking “intelligence” and is thus potentially usable as a substitute for written work product one might generate themselves. AI Generated Text can include computer code or programs as well as human language content.

Your continuing enrollment in this course is deemed to be a pledge by you under the Honor Code to not prompt, generate, obtain, read, or use any AI Generated Text in relation to any activity or assessment in this course. This applies to AI Generated Text from yourself or others. This pledge includes that your assessment work product in the course is without any contribution from AI Generated Text. This specifically extends to the plagiarism policy and unauthorized aid/materials parts of the Honor Code: AI Generated Text will be treated as from another/others in applying the plagiarism policy to this course. The term “assessment” means any work product generated for this course that is submitted to the instructor or presented in a class session, regardless whether it is graded content or not. Assessments include mid-terms and final exams. AI Generated Text may not be used in the development or drafting of any assessments created by you in a non-proctored environment, such as a “take-home” final examination unless specified as an exception below. The parts of the Honor Code that refer to unauthorized materials or aid are specifically prohibited from any use of AI Generated Text in this course.

## J. *Teaching Objectives/Philosophy*

My teaching style is a mixture of lecture, traditional “soft” Socratic method, and occasional collective problem solving. Sometimes I orally review and probe a particular case in detail, but in some contexts I may directly pose a problem or hypothetical without laying any foundation – with the goal of providing a “life like” opportunity for students interactively to synthesize the materials into a broader understanding of the subject.

---

K. *Class Preparation and Participation*

To facilitate our class discussion, we will use discussion panels in lieu of an on-call system. You must sign up for at least **five** discussion panels. You will sign up for your panels using an on-line tool called “Sign Up Genius.” Before the first week of class, you should receive an email invitation to sign up. If you do not sign up for the required number of panels by **Friday, January 19**, I will randomly assign you to under-enrolled panels. On the days of your panels, you should have prepared extensively for class and should expect to be called on. I will email the class a list of the panel members and a series of four to six discussion questions the day before our class meeting. Members of the discussion panel will be my “go-to” people for that day; however, I reserve the right to call on any member of the class. Students with outstanding participation will be eligible for an upward adjustment of a partial letter grade (e.g., from a B to a B+, or from a B+ to an A-).

L. *Student Professionalism*

During class discussions, I expect participants in the class to be respectful, civil to each other, incorporate constructive comments, and not dominate the discussion. This does not mean students cannot express disagreement in a significant way but should do so using the sort of language they might use in court and in a way that displays respect for others in the class. In essence, students should argue in class as if they were arguing before a judge to engender the good will of the judge yet working to state their case as persuasively as possible.

M. *Mental Health and Wellness Resources*

The University of Houston has a number of resources to support students’ mental health and overall wellness, including CoogsCARE and the UH Go App. UH Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, college adjustment and sadness. CAPS provides individual and couples counseling, group therapy, workshops and connections to other support services on and off-campus. For assistance visit [uh.edu/caps](http://uh.edu/caps), call 713-743-5454, or visit a Let’s Talk location in-person or virtually. Let’s Talk are daily, informal confidential consultations with CAPS therapists where no appointment or paperwork is needed.

The Student Health Center offers a Psychiatry Clinic for enrolled UH students. Call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

The A.D. Bruce Religion Center offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.

Need Support Now? - If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call CAPS crisis support 24/7 at 713-743-5454, or the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988, or chat [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org).

---

N. *Title IX/Sexual Misconduct*

Per the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>.

O. *Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids*

The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational programs that are accessible for its students. Any student with a disability who is experiencing barriers to learning, assessment or participation is encouraged to contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (Dart Center) to learn more about academic accommodations and support that may be available to them. Students seeking academic accommodations will need to register with the Dart Center as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations. Please contact the Dart Center by visiting the website: <https://uh.edu/accessibility/> calling (713) 743-5400 or emailing [jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU](mailto:jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU).

P. *Recording of Class*

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor’s recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor’s recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Q. *UH Email*

Please check and use your CougarNet email for communications related to this course. Faculty use the CougarNet email to respond to course-related inquiries such as grade queries or progress reports for reasons of FERPA. To access your CougarNet email, login to your Microsoft 365 account with your CougarNet credentials. Visit University Information Technology (UIT) for instructions on how to connect your CougarNet e-mail on a mobile device.

R. *Security Escorts and Cougar Ride*

UHPD continually works with the University community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. The security escort service is designed for the community members who have safety concerns and would like to have a Security Officer walk with them, for their safety, as they make their way across campus. Based on availability either a UHPD Security Officer or Police Officer will escort students, faculty, and staff to locations beginning and ending on campus. If you

---

feel that you need a Security Officer to walk with you for your safety, please call 713-743-3333. Arrangements may be made for special needs.

Parking and Transportation Services also offers a late-night, on-demand shuttle service called “Cougar Ride” that provides rides to and from all on-campus shuttle stops, as well as the MD Anderson Library, Cougar Village/Moody Towers and the UH Technology Bridge. Rides can be requested through the UH Go app. Days and hours of operation can be found at <https://uh.edu/af-university-services/parking/cougar-ride/>.

S. *Syllabus Changes*

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible via course announcements.