

# GOVT 430 – CONSTITUTIONAL LAW; CIVIL LIBERTIES

## SYLLABUS

**Instructor:** Dr. Stephen C. Roberds  
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Adams State College  
208 Edgemont Ave.  
Alamosa, CO 81102.

### COURSE DELIVERY:

Print-Based Correspondence Course

### CREDIT HOURS:

Three Semester Hours

### COURSE MATERIALS:

To order textbooks or obtain information about book titles you may go to [www.exstudies.adams.edu](http://www.exstudies.adams.edu) and click on the “ASC Bookstore” icon.

Use **Section Number: 1065** to order books from Bookstore site.

### Required Textbook:

Constitutional Law for a Changing America: Rights, Liberties, and Justice,  
7th edition  
Lee Epstein, Northwestern University  
Thomas G. Walker, Emory University

Since the publication of your text, the Supreme Court has ruled in a number current cases altering or sharpening the law in fundamental ways. In addition to the cases found in your text, you must read and are responsible for current cases that are listed in the units below.

### CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course examines Supreme Court decisions and doctrine in areas such as speech, assembly, religion, privacy, press, civil rights, and election law.

### AMPLIFIED COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course surveys how the U. S. Supreme Court has interpreted the U. S. Constitution and shaped constitutional law. Arranged thematically, this course focuses primarily on civil rights

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and liberties and how these have been defined by the courts. Students shall acquire a working knowledge of the rudiments of constitutional law, learn how to brief a case by briefing a landmark and a contemporary case, learn basic legal research techniques both in traditional and cyber formats, present case briefs and legal research before their classmates, produce a term paper, and stand for four exams

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The student will:

- Identify and explain fundamental cases and questions adjudicated by the Supreme Court since incorporation in class discussion, a mid-term, and a final exam;
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the rudiments of constitutional law;
- Produce a case brief of a contemporary Supreme Court case;
- Demonstrate basic legal research techniques in both traditional and cyber formats, produce a term paper that evaluates the jurisprudence of a particular justice on a specific issue or range of issues or evaluates the handling of a specific issue or class of issues by the Supreme Court.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- The student shall stand successfully for four exams—the last of which consists of a unit four exam plus comprehensive essays and cases to identify from the previous units. You may be asked any of the questions listed below under each unit’s readings, or some combinations of those questions.
- The student shall produce an approved ten page research paper (pages of actual text, exclusive of bibliography and endnotes) on the jurisprudence of a particular Supreme Court Judge (e. g., “Mr. Justice Black and State Restrictions on Speech”) in which you analyze his opinions—majority, concurring, dissenting—on the topic. An effective paper is one that is grounded in standard scholarly literature—law review articles, scholarly monographs about the Justice in question—but that makes an original argument rooted in a thorough reading of the case law—Black’s actual opinions. The student shall prepare a prospectus indicating the topic and the research materials to be consulted, followed by a complete draft of the paper—think of this draft as the FINAL paper—to be submitted to me, followed by a revision taking into account my suggestions. (See grade scale below for further clarification.)

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## GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND SCALE:

In alignment with ASC academic policies, no D may apply to a major or minor field.

Test One	50 points
Test Two	50 points
Test Three	50 points
Test Four/Comprehensive Final	100 points
Paper Prospectus	25 points
Paper Draft	100 points
Final Revision	25 points
Total Points	400 points

A	360-400
B	320-359
C	280-319
D	240-279
F	Below 239

## ADA STATEMENT:

Students who need special accommodation to complete this class should contact the instructor and the Office of Student Affairs, 719.587.7221 as soon as possible.