

# **Common Course Outline**

## **POLS 225**

### **Constitutional Law**

**3 Semester Hours**

## **The Community College of Baltimore County**

### **Description**

**POLS 225 - 3 credits - Constitutional Law** examines the nature and development of the United States Constitution interpreted by the Supreme Court. Students analyze the role judicial review, federalism, Congressional and Presidential authority play in the system. Students examine the relationship between government accountability, the language in the Constitution, and role of the Supreme Court. Students review civil liberties & rights along with the limits on the government granted by the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments.

**3 credits**

**Pre-requisites: POLS 101 or POLS 111 or CRJU 101 or permission of the Political Science Program Coordinator**

### **Overall Course Objectives:**

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

1. explore the origins and concept of judicial review under the Constitution;
2. outline the structure of the federal court system;
3. explain the role of the Supreme Court in the judicial process;
4. analyze the conflict in Federalism between federal and state government authority;
5. discuss presidential authority and what the courts have offered the executive branch;
6. assess the Supreme Court's interpretation of First Amendment rights;
7. explain how the Supreme Court has expanded and contracted constitutional rights and why;
8. outline how the court has balanced the interest of business and commerce along with taxing power in the Constitution against the government wishes to regulate;
9. evaluate the role of the court in the American electoral process;
10. examine the Fifth Amendment due process rights of citizens accused of a crime;
11. explain the equal protection clause in the Fourteenth Amendment with whom it covers;
12. describe how the court balanced the Fourth Amendment and right to privacy against police and government needs;
13. debate how the courts have used judicial activism and judicial restraint;
14. identify the major Supreme Court cases that have dealt with government power and individual rights; and
15. research and write legal briefs about major Supreme Court decisions.

### **Major Topics:**

- I. The American Court System
  - a. History of the Supreme Court and the Constitution
  - b. Structure of the federal court system
- II. Sources of Constitutional Power
  - a. Judicial Activism v. Judicial Restraint
  - b. Marbury v. Madison- judicial review
  - c. The Bill of Rights
- III. Government and the Economy in the Constitution
  - a. Conflict: congress and the president
  - b. Commerce clause and Article I of the Constitution
  - c. Federalism and the states
  - d. Voting and elections
  - e. National taxing and spending power
- IV. Civil Liberties, Equal Protection and the Constitution
  - a. First Amendment: freedom of speech, press and religion
  - b. Fourth Amendment: right to privacy
  - c. Fifth Amendment: due process and property rights
  - d. Fourteenth Amendment: equal protection under the laws
  - e. Security v. freedom in times of war

### **Course Requirements**

Grading/exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

Class participation in at least 5 collaborations, debates, oral presentations and/or online discussion forums about current political events and topics

A minimum of 4 examinations

Students will write a minimum of 4 legal briefs about Supreme Court cases

### **Other Course Information:**

This course is a Political Science elective.

Date Revised: 04/27/11