

Mercer County Community College

Course Outline

POL 120  
Course Number

Law and Society  
Course Title

3  
Credits

3  
Class Hours

0  
Laboratory Hours

15 weeks  
Length of Semester

Text: Title: TBA  
Author:  
Publisher:  
Edition:

Catalog Description:

Explains the interaction of American law and society and the influence of legal doctrine and thought on broad trends in society with an emphasis on the role of the Supreme Court in American life. Topics examined will include consideration of major recent Supreme Court decisions.

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

James F. Rowe  
Course Coordinator

Instructor's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Time/Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Office Hours \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Instruction:

The method of instruction will consist of lecture, discussion, and analysis of modern Supreme Court decisions.

Method of Evaluation:

The course will be divided into three units and each unit will be followed by an examination. Examinations will consist of a mixture between objective (multiple choice and true/false) questions and essay questions. There will be a comprehensive final examination to be conducted during the final exam week. Exams and one's final course grade will be based on the following scale:

A = 90 – 100  
B = 80 - 89  
C = 70 - 79  
D = 60 - 69  
F = below 60

As provided in the MCCC Student Handbook:

Classroom Environment:

Mercer welcomes all students who wish to be part of a learning community. The faculty and staff strive to maintain an environment of pride in our diverse community and mutual respect among all persons within it.

An important responsibility is to respect the rights of your classmates to learn. Your instructors are authorized to establish reasonable rules of conduct within their courses, and to require you to leave any class session in which your behavior disrupts the learning environment. (Please note that there are many forms of potentially disruptive behavior, ranging from “acting out” to engaging in side conversations to receiving cell phone calls or audible beeper messages.)

The college welcomes all students into an environment that creates a sense of community of pride and respect; we are all here to work cooperatively and to learn together.

Violations of Academic Integrity:

A student will be guilty of violating ACADEMIC INTEGRITY if he/she (a) knowingly represents work of others as his/her own, (b) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in the execution of any academic work, or (c) gives fraudulent assistance to another student.

The college recognizes the following general categories of violations of Academic Integrity, with representative examples of each. Academic Integrity is violated whenever a student:

1. Uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in any academic work.
  - copying from another student's exam
  - using notes, books or other aids of any kind during an exam when prohibited
  - stealing an exam or possessing a stolen copy of an exam.
2. Gives fraudulent assistance to another student.
  - completing an academic activity or taking an exam for someone else
  - giving answers to or sharing answers with another student during an exam
  - sharing answers during an exam by using a system of signals
3. Knowingly represents the work of other as his/her own, or represents previously completed academic work as current.
  - submitting a paper or other academic work for credit which includes words, ideas, data or creative work of others without acknowledging the source.
  - using another author's words without enclosing them in quotation marks, without paraphrasing them or without citing the source appropriately
  - presenting another individual's work as one's own
  - submitting the same paper or academic assignment to another class without the permission of the instructor
4. Fabricates data in support of an academic assignment.
  - falsifying bibliographic entries
  - submitting any academic assignment which contains falsified or fabricated data or results
5. Inappropriately or unethically uses technological means to gain academic advantage.
  - inappropriate or unethical acquisition of material via the Internet
  - using hidden devices for communication during an exam

Each instructor is authorized to establish specific guidelines consistent with this policy.

#### CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

For a single violation, the faculty member will determine the course of action to be followed. This may include assigning a lower grade on the assignment, assigning a lower final course grade, failing the student in the course, or other penalty appropriate to the violation. In all cases, the instructor shall notify the Chairperson of the Academic Standards Committee of the violation and the penalty imposed. When two (or more) violations of academic integrity are reported on a student, the Academic Standards Committee may impose disciplinary penalties beyond those imposed by the course instructors. The student shall have the right to a hearing before the ASC or a designated subcommittee thereof.

### Academic Integrity and Performance:

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY refers to the “integral” quality of the search for knowledge which a student undertakes. The work a student produces, therefore, ought to be wholly his or hers; it should result completely from the student’s own efforts.

1. An academic institution is committed to guiding each student in his or her search for knowledge. That search must be the student’s own and no one else’s.
2. Students are required to perform all work specified by the faculty. They are responsible for the content and integrity of all academic work submitted such as papers, reports, and examinations. When that work has been influenced in any way by the work of others, such influences must be documented or credited according to accepted practices.
3. Students are responsible for maintaining established standards of academic performance with some uniformity for each course section in which they are registered. However, through the orderly procedures of the college, students will have protection against prejudiced or capricious evaluation.
4. Students are expected to attend all classes for every course and are not to absent themselves except for illness or other serious cause. It is the prerogative of each faculty member to excuse absences for valid reasons, should he/she feel that any student may satisfactorily fulfill all course requirements.

### Appeals:

The student has a right to appeal the decision of the instructor, or the Academic Standards Committee. Judicial procedures governing violations of Academic Integrity are contained in this Student Handbook.

## UNIT I

### General Objectives:

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the Supreme Court and various modern theories of constitutional interpretation. Unit I will be followed by Exam I.

### Specific Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. Describe the constitutional basis of the Supreme Court.
2. Understand the history of the Supreme Court from its formative years through the modern era.
3. Understand the composition of the current Supreme Court.
4. Describe the various modern theories of constitutional interpretation.

## UNIT II

### General Objectives:

The student will demonstrate an understanding of various modern landmark Supreme Court decisions that have had a significant influence on American society in the areas of criminal rights, civil rights, and the right to privacy and lifestyle choices.

### Specific Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. Understand the issues and societal impact of the “right to counsel” decision established in Gideon v. Wainwright.
2. Understand the issues and societal impact of the “right to remain silent” decision established in Miranda v. Arizona.
3. Understand the issues and societal impact of the “stop and frisk” decision established in Terry v. Ohio.
4. Understand the issues and societal impact of the capital punishment decision established in Gregg v. Georgia.
5. Understand the issues and societal impact of the Little Rock school integration decision established in Cooper v. Aaron.
6. Understand the issues and societal impact of the swimming pool integration decision established in Palmer v. Thompson.
7. Understand the issues and societal impact of the public accommodations decision established in Heart of Atlanta Hotel v. United States.

8. Understand the issues and societal impact of the civil rights demonstrations decision established in Cox v. Louisiana.
9. Understand the issues and societal impact of the interracial marriage decision established in Loving v. Virginia.
10. Understand the issues and societal impact of the abortion rights decision established in Roe v. Wade.
11. Understand the issues and societal impact of the homosexual rights decision established in Bowers v. Hardwick.

### UNIT III

#### General Objectives:

The student will demonstrate an understanding of various modern landmark Supreme Court decisions that have had a significant influence on American society in the areas of First Amendment religion, speech, and association; and various miscellaneous decisions dealing with voting, education, reverse discrimination, executive privilege, and child abuse. Unit III will be followed by Exam III.

#### Specific Objectives: The student will be able to:

1. Understand the issues and societal impact of the school prayer decision established in Abington School District v. Schempp.
2. Understand the issues and societal impact of the teaching “creationism” decision established in Edwards v. Aguillard.
3. Understand the issues and societal impact of the compulsory schooling for Amish children decision established in Wisconsin v. Yoder.
4. Understand the issues and societal impact of the Vietnam protest in schools decision established in Tinker v. Des Moines.
5. Understand the issues and societal impact of the flag burning decision established in Texas v. Johnson.
6. Understand the issues and societal impact of the Pentagon Papers decision established in New York Times v. United States.
7. Understand the issues and societal impact of the right to association decision established in Communist Party v. Subversive Activities Control Board.
8. Understand the issues and societal impact of the “one person, one vote” reapportionment decision established in Baker v. Carr.
9. Understand the issues and societal impact of the education funding decision established in San Antonio v. Rodriguez.
10. Understand the issues and societal impact of the reverse discrimination decision established in Regents v. Bakke.
11. Understand the issues and societal impact of the Watergate tapes decision established in United States v. Nixon.

12. Understand the issues and societal impact of the child abuse decision established in DeShaney v. Winnebago County.