

Professor Samuel P. Stafford

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 6:00pm-8:30pm via Zoom and by pre-set appointment through the link on the Course Homepage.

352-273-2372 (office)

Ms. Chalisa Budhai (Teaching Assistant)

Office Hours: Tuesday (8:30am-10:30am) & Thursday (9:30am-10:30am) on the first floor of Library West lobby, across from Starbucks (or in a study room/over Zoom if requested). Sign-up for slots through the link on the Course Homepage.

Email: ta.acl.spring26@gmail.com

American Civil Liberties

POS3606 - Section 13751 | AFA3930 - Section 10169

Spring 2026 – 3 Credits

Tuesday (Period 1), Thursday (Period 1-2)

Turlington Hall, Room 2319

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This survey course is designed to examine several categories of enduring and emerging civil liberties granted to each person by the United States Constitution. The major purpose is to investigate the role and functions of courts – especially the United States Supreme Court – in addressing major interpretive/enforcement issues concerning civil liberties in America. Additionally, we shall explore and assess the interconnected relationship of the Judicial, Legislative, and Executive branches of federal and state government. Students seeking an in-depth exposure to purely legal/jurisprudence aspects of civil liberties should locate and take separate criminal justice, and/or constitutional law courses.

Note: This Syllabus is a general outline of the course and is subject to change. The Professor and/or TA will let you know when modifications are made, therefore class attendance is important.

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

The course fulfills the General Education requirements for the Gordon Rule requirement. This means that the major writing assignments will amount to a total of 6000+ words, and that students will receive feedback so they can improve their writing skills.

Upon completing the course, students will:

1. Learn about the historical, political-social impact of civil liberty issues;
2. Be able to describe/appreciate the roles and responsibilities of all levels of courts in the management and/or resolution of civil liberty policy conflict and implementation challenges;
3. Be able to analyze the nature, limitations, power and capacity of the United States Supreme Court to shape, define and address evolving civil liberty concerns; and

4. Be able to appreciate/examine the interconnecting and/or sometimes conflicting roles of various components of the justice system, media, interest groups and society, as they each seek to guide, influence and impact the evolution of civil liberties in this country.

REQUIRED READINGS AND MATERIALS

Barker and Barker, Civil Liberties and the Constitution, 9th Ed., (Prentice-Hall, 2010). (latest/most current edition is also acceptable).

O'Brien, David. Storm Center: The Supreme Court in American Politics, 12th Ed., (Norton), 2017 (latest/most current edition is also acceptable).

Articles will be assigned throughout the semester as well. Students will be expected to access those readings online via the UF library catalog, Canvas, or through a hard copy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student will complete all required reading assignments and brief all assigned cases prior to each class meeting, AND be prepared to fully and cogently discuss the cases/readings at the next class.
2. Each student will be expected to read and thoroughly digest the Articles and the Amendments to the United States Constitution.
3. There will be two (2) major Examinations: a cumulative Midterm and a cumulative Final Exam. These Exams will only be given during the semester, No exceptions. These Exams and all quizzes of whatsoever nature must be completed and turned in on time, OR there will be a corresponding Full Letter Grade reduction for the Exam or quiz or any test instrument, for Each Calendar Day the assignment is late, OR it/they may NOT be accepted at all.
4. There will be several announced and unannounced quizzes during the semester. These focus-quizzes cannot be made up or taken again. These quizzes must be completed and turned-in on time, OR there will be a corresponding Full Letter Grade reduction for the Exam or quiz or any test instrument for Each Calendar Day the assignment is late; OR it/they may NOT be accepted at all.
5. There will be one class project during the semester. Each student will be required to participate and/or submit the project on time. The same penalty found in items 3, 4, & 6 will apply.
6. A Moderate (12 pages) and a Long (27 pages) research paper will be assigned during the semester. Each research paper must be turned in on time, OR there will be a corresponding Full Letter Grade reduction for the Exam or quiz or any test instrument for Each Calendar Day the assignment is late; OR it/they may NOT be accepted at all.
7. Due to the nature of the course, class attendance and participation are mandatory and will count towards approximately 15% of your final grade. There will be a heavy emphasis on student-class & professor interchange, as well as facilitated class discussions where we will learn from one another. Hence your prior preparation & consistent attendance is mandatory not only for participation but also for staying engaged with the course material and contributing meaningfully to the collective learning experience.

8. Class participation/attendance, assigned research papers, (class project[s]), quizzes, etc. will reflect 40% of the student's final grade; the Midterm will count for 25%; while the cumulative Final Examination will comprise approximately 35% of the total grade in this course. See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/> for current University of Florida grading policies.
9. Each student has the individual responsibility to read, assess, comprehend and fully comply with All procedural and assignment requirements of the course as listed in this Course Syllabus, AND any subsequent adjustments, during the semester.
10. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students have the responsibility to research and locate when the evaluation period opens. Each student must complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals. Through your input, the class can be improved.

WRITING REQUIREMENT

All assignments should be:

- Written in standard English and demonstrates competence in capitalization, grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph structure
- Typed with Times New Roman, 12 point font with one-inch margins
- Information with your name, date, and course should be on the first page only or on a cover page.
- All work must be properly documented. Students may use APA, MLA, Turabian, etc.
- Feature numbered pages in the bottom right-hand corner, starting on the page where your essay begins. Do not start numbering on the title page if used.

I will provide feedback on written assignments; these comments are intended to strengthen and improve your writing skills. Papers will be evaluated via the Gordon Rule requirements, below.

Gordon Rule: "The Writing Requirement (Gordon Rule) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. " This is a Gordon Rule course with a 6000+ word writing requirement. Your writing will be evaluated, and you will receive feedback that is intended to fulfill this writing requirement. You will be evaluated based on: grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, organization, content, structure and Sources.

To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher, and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

GRADING SCALE

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [Catalog](#).

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-92.5	92.4-89.5	89.4-86.5	86.4-82.5	82.4-79.5	79.4-76.5	76.4-72.5	72.4-69.5	69.4-66.5	66.4-62.5	62.4-59.5	59.4-0

GRADE PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN

Category	Percent
Participation/Attendance	15%
Research Paper(s)	11%
Class Project(s)	6%
In-Class Quizzes/Assignments	8%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	35%

See the UF Catalog's "Grades and Grading Policies" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

EXAM DATES (TENTATIVE) *subject to change/adjustment*

Major Quiz 1	February 17th/TBA (In Class)
Midterm Exam	March 10th/TBA (In Class)
Final Exam	April 28th/TBD (In Class)

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

Assignment #1	O'Brien: Preface, Chapters 2-3
Assignment #2	O'Brien: Chapters 4-5
Assignment #3	O'Brien: Chapter 1 and 6 *** Mini Research Paper
Assignment #4	Barker: pp. 291-297; 301-311; 336-339; 349-351; 357-376; 377-381; 395-400; 423-428 <i>If you do not have the 9th edition, contact the TA for correct readings/pages.</i>
Assignment #5	O'Brien: pp. 27-28; 42-42; 124-126; 151-152; 168; 206-207; 224-225; 82-83; 79-81; 91-94; 187; 125-137; 158-160; 47; 87-88; 53-60; 236-256; 300; 325-332; 348-357; 413 *** First Batch of Cases
Assignment #6	Barker: pp. 443-450; 459-461; 466-477; 514-524; 527-537; 579-583; [576-580; 639-663; 649-656] *** Second Batch of Cases

Assignment #7	Barker: pp. 683-685; 686-693; 710-713; 722-728 *** Third Batch of Cases
Assignment #8	Barker: pp. 31-37; 61-67; 74-79; 84-89; 108-109; 111-115; 124-125; 132-135; 143-144; 151-157; 169-170; 179-189; 196-198 *** Major Research Paper

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND CLASS EXPECTATIONS

While attendance will not be taken every class meeting, we will have regular assignments that you cannot make up. Moreover, major quizzes, the Midterm, and the Final Exam will cover all lectures, CE's and assigned readings (whether within or outside of the class). It is common for material in lectures/class discussions to come from any and all assignments/readings. In short, if you miss class, you will likely fail. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Undergraduate Catalog, and approved by the professor.

During class, students are expected both to silence phones and to refrain from using them at all. Laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices may be used for taking notes or other activities directly related to class. Departure from these requirements must be approved by the professor.

ZOOM PRIVACY CONSENT STATEMENT (If & When Applicable)

Our class sessions may have to be audio/visually recorded, but only with the necessary/expressed permission and request of the University and the professor. Students who participate with their cameras engaged or utilize a profile image, agree to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The "chat" will not be recorded or shared. The Zoom feature will only be utilized if required University-wide, and as a safe/healthy means to instruct. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded material is prohibited.

CLASS RECORDINGS

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are: (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the University, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered 'published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities, of any kind, who experience learning barriers or challenges, and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) by visiting our Get Started page. It is important for students to share and discuss their verified need for various accommodations, along with their accommodation letter from DRC, as soon/early as possible with their professor.

AI/SUPPLEMENTS: *EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN*

Any use, reference, inclusion, or reliance upon ChatGPT, Google BARD, Chatsonic, Microsoft Bing Chat, Github Copilot, Fusion Chat, YouChat, Law ChatGPT, Clearbrief, Case Text, and Any known subsequently developed artificial intelligence (AI) supplements, as well as any similar type of unauthorized AI writing, note-taking or research assistance/supplements, not mentioned here OR that may be invented or made available during the semester, will be and are expressly prohibited and forbidden for use in this course. Any use, inclusion, indication, or infusion of any material from all of these or similar sources, will be viewed and considered by the professor as a class violation, and the offending student shall be immediately assessed for disciplinary action.

BE AWARE: Any use of AI will be subject to detection through third-party software utilized upon submission of all graded and ungraded assignments submitted via Canvas or email.

Finally, the ability to remain in this course during the semester shall be determined by the professor and University.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

University policy requires that we remind you of the commonsense values embodied in the University Honor Code. We assume and know that you are all familiar with the policy on academic honesty. If you are not, it is included below:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment. " The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TA in this class.

A student cannot use unauthorized materials or resources in Any academic activity for academic advantage or benefit. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

1. Using any materials or resources prepared by another student without the other student's express consent or without proper attribution to the other student.
2. Using any materials or resources, through any medium, including AI, which the faculty has not given express permission to use and that may confer an academic benefit or advantage to the student.
3. Using additional time, or failing to stop working when instructed, on any time-bound academic activity.
4. Failing to follow the directions of a proctor of any academic activity, when such conduct could lead to an academic advantage or benefit.
5. Collaborating with another person, through any medium, on any academic activity, when faculty has expressly prohibited collaboration.

Plagiarizing the previous or current work of others, online documents, or any online platform without the proper citation/s will not be tolerated, and will be treated as a matter of grave concern.

V. UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see this link (<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>).

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#) (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal well-being, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via email at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

[Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

[Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Academic Resources](#): Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 for teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers by scheduled appointments or drop-in consultations.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.