

Attendance is expected in this class and will affect your final grade. You should arrive on time. I will either pass around a sign-in sheet for each class or call roll at the beginning of class. If you do not sign the sheet or answer the roll call, I will count you as absent for the day. It will be your responsibility to sign the sheet (or remind me verbally that you were late to class) before I leave the classroom at the end of class; however, students who are habitually late may be counted as absent.

- If you are absent from class it is your responsibility, upon returning to class, to request from the instructor or check the Blackboard page for any handouts, announcements, or assignments that may have been given during your absence.

- If you are absent from class, you will be counted as absent regardless of the reason for your missing the class (in other words, an absence is an absence, with no “excused” absences, except for those outlined below under “UNCP Religious Holiday Policy”). I would ask, however, that if you miss a number of classes due to hospitalization or illness that you inform me of such ASAP, through either e-mail or a telephone call to my office, so I do not think you have dropped the class or just stopped showing up.

UNCP Religious Holiday Policy: To accommodate students’ religious holidays, each student will be allowed two excused absences each semester with the following conditions:

Students, who submit written notification to their instructors within two weeks of the beginning of the semester, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Excused absences are limited to two class sessions (days) per semester. At the time written notification is submitted to the instructor, students who will miss tests or other work due to an excused absence for a religious observance should be prepared to discuss with the professor a plan to make up such work.

Students with Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak directly to Disability Support Services and the instructor, as early in the semester (preferably within the first week) as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please contact Disability Support Services, in the DF Lowry Building, Room 103, or call 910-521-6695 for an appointment.

This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Disability Support Services, in the DF Lowry Building, Room 103, or call 521-6695.

“When testing accommodations or alternative testing is needed, students are responsible for discussing this issue with the professor to make the appropriate arrangements to have the exam administered.” Please visit http://www.uncp.edu/dss/students/directions_for_accesing_exams_for_current_students.htm for the Exam Proctoring Authorization Form and for more information.

Grading: There will be three tests – two midterms and a final exam – during the semester. The tests will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, short answer and essay questions. The final exam may address concepts that were discussed throughout the semester.

- In addition, each student is expected to complete 4 short writing assignments throughout the semester. Each writing assignment is worth 33 points, and the best 3 assignments out of the 4 will count toward your final grade. Writing assignments are due at **12:30 PM on the due date**. There will be **NO** exceptions to this, so don’t ask. Late papers will be penalized 10 points for each class in which the

paper is late, **starting at 12:31 PM**. I will not accept any late papers that are more than two (2) classes late. You are required to hand in a hard copy of your stapled paper AND submit a digital copy on Blackboard as a Safe Assignment. If you wish to turn in your hard copy of the paper early, either hand it to me directly in my office, put it in one of the boxes outside my office door, or personally hand it to Mrs. Effie Locklear to put into my mailbox in Oxendine 1300. Please do not slide papers under the office door. More information on the writing assignments is located at the end of this syllabus.

- Normally, I will not give out test, midterm, or final grades via e-mail or over the phone. Midterm and final grades will be posted on BraveWeb (not Blackboard) as soon as they are calculated. If you have a question or concern about your grade, please come by to see me in my office (either during office hours or by appointment) as soon as the issue arises. If you wait until the last week of the semester to discuss your performance and final grade in the class with me, it will be too late. If I am unable to schedule an appointment with you, I will do my best to discuss the situation via e-mail.

- Your final grade is the grade you have earned over the course of the semester. I do not offer or accept "extra credit" work. Instead, you should focus on studying the materials and participating in class from the beginning of the semester. Barring mathematical error, I will not change your final grade.

Test 1	100 points
Test 2	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Writing Assign. (best 3 of 4)	100 points
Attendance and Participation	<u>80 points</u>
TOTAL	480 points

Grading Scale: 480-446=A; 445-432=A-; 431-418=B+; 417-398=B; 397-384=B-; 383-370=C+; 369-350=C; 349-336=C-; 335-322=D+; 321-302=D; 301-288=D-; 287 and below=F.

Make-up Policy: There will be no make-ups in this course. If, for whatever reason, you should miss Test 1 or Test 2, then the final exam will be counted at 80% in replacing that missing score. If you miss Test 1 and Test 2, then one test will be given the grade of ZERO. No replacement grade will be given for the final exam. The only exception to this will be for students with OFFICIAL scheduled university activities, and arrangements must be made to do such graded work BEFORE the scheduled date.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty of any variety (including plagiarism) will not be tolerated. Any instance coming to the attention of the instructor will result in the assignment of an "F" grade for the course, and notification of the appropriate Deans.

Cell Phones: Please turn your cell phones SILENT or OFF while in class, and then put them away for the duration of the class. You may not wear headphones or Bluetooth earpieces in the classroom. Cell phones must be OFF during tests. If you do not wear a watch, I will bring a clock for you to reference during the test.

Other Class Considerations: Ours is a large class, so the rules of common courtesy will apply in the classroom. This includes raising your hand to be called on, not talking over others, etc. Students who are disruptive may be asked to leave and counted as absent for the day. Disruptive behaviors include (but are not limited to) gossiping, text messaging your friend or significant other, reading a textbook other than ours in class, sleeping/snoring in class. You can bring a small drink and snack to class, but nothing more (this means no hot lunch or Taco Bell leftovers). Generally, I expect you to be considerate of your fellow classmates and the professor.

Syllabus adjustments will be announced in class and on Blackboard as necessary.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Jan. 10	Introduction, syllabus review	
Jan. 12	Law, Courts, and Politics	Chap. 1
Jan 17-19	Law and Legal Systems	Chap. 2
Jan. 24-26	Federal Courts	Chap. 3
Jan. 31-Feb. 7	State Courts	Chap. 4
Feb. 9	TEST 1	
Feb. 14-16	Lawyers and Legal Representation	Chap. 5
Feb. 21-23	Judges	Chap. 6
Feb. 28 - March 1	Mobilizing the Law	Chap. 7
March 5-10	No Class – Spring Break	
March 13-15	Trial Courts, Criminal Cases	Chap. 8
March 20-22	Trial Courts, Criminal Cases End	Chap. 9
March 27	TEST 2	
March 29	Trial Courts, Civil Trials	Chap. 10
April 3-5	Trial Courts, Civil Trials End	Chap. 11
April 10	Trials and Juries	Chap. 12
April 12-17	The Appellate Process	Chap. 13
April 19-24	The Supreme Court: Deciding	Chap. 14
April 26	The Supreme Court: The Justices	Chap. 15
May 1	Final Exam at 10:45 AM – Tuesday	

The exam will start at 10:45 AM. To be fair to those who arrive on time, students who arrive late (after 11:00 AM) will not be allowed to sit for the exam.

MLA Handbook important chapters/topics:

Chapter 1.4.8 – Web Sources

Chapter 2 – Plagiarism

Chapter 5.6.1 – Citing Web Publications

**Chapter 6 – Documentation: Citing Sources in the Text
Paper Requirements**

Composition: These assignments are short research/opinion papers, and should be about 3 pages each. Papers are to be typed, double-spaced, and with 1” margins all around. Please do not use a font larger than 12 point, and use Arial font if you can. Also **include a separate title page stapled to your paper** (this means your title page does not count as one of your 3 pages. Your works cited page is also not included in the 3 page count).

You will be graded on the following factors: the content and clarity of your answer to the question, and how you support your argument (reasoning).

In addition to content, your paper will be graded on spelling, grammar, and sentence structure, so please **proofread your paper before handing it in**. Visit the University Writing Center in Dial 131, or their website <http://www.uncp.edu/writing/> for more information.

Sources: You should have, at a minimum, three (3) referenced sources for your paper and I expect you to do some research, either online or at the library. You can use our textbook as a source, but you cannot count it toward the three sources. Examples of sources include: newspaper articles, magazine stories, academic journals, books, *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, etc. Try to use a balance of sources in your paper (i.e., don't use three stories from *The New York Times*). Wikipedia, although a popular and entertaining website, is not a good source of information because the pages can be altered by anyone at any time (therefore my suggestion would be not to use it). Editorial blogs may be interesting, but please be aware that you are probably getting only one side of the story. Again, a balance of sources can help you understand both sides of the story.

Visit the reference librarian or <http://www.uncp.edu/library/reference/> for assistance in researching books and articles for your paper.

Citations: Please format in text citations and a works cited bibliography according to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. This format will be graded VERY STRICTLY, so please reference the Handbook and proofread your paper before handing it in. This handbook is available at the University Bookstore for purchase, or in the library under call number LB2369 .G53 2003.

If you have any questions regarding MLA format you can e-mail me, but please reference the Handbook first.

Plagiarism:

From the UNCP Student Handbook: “Plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly presenting someone else’s words or ideas as one’s own. You avoid plagiarism by very carefully acknowledging the sources of ideas you use and by appropriately indicating any material that has been quoted [or paraphrased] (that is, by using quotation marks and properly acknowledging the source of the quote, usually with a clear reference source citation and page number).” If an instance comes up where you are unsure whether or not you should cite, play it safe and cite. Ignorance or typos are not acceptable excuses for plagiarism. Visit Chapter 2 of the MLA Handbook and <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html> for more information on plagiarism.

Writing Assignment Paper Topics and Due Dates
for PLS 2170 Judicial Process and Behavior Spring 2012

1. Chapter 1, pages 18-19. The issue of gay marriage has been in the news with the Federal District Court's decision striking down California's Prop 8 as unconstitutional. What is the status of gay marriage in the United States? (Where and how was it legalized?) In your opinion, who should determine the legality of gay marriage: the courts or the legislature? What do you think about the U.S. Supreme Court deciding the issue of gay marriage? Explain your reasoning. **Due Feb. 2.**

2. Chapter 6, pages 191-193. Sonia Sotomayor is the first Latina justice on the Supreme Court. She and newly appointed Justice Elena Kagan bring the total number of women currently serving on the Court to 3 (or 1/3 the makeup of the Court). Currently, there are no Protestants on the Court (six justices are Roman Catholic, three are Jewish). In your opinion, how much should someone's race, gender or religion be considered in selecting nominees to the Supreme Court? How important is it to have "diversity" on the Court? Explain your reasoning. **Due March 1.**

3. Chapter 9, page 295 and Chapter 13, page 420. In February 2010, Gregory Taylor was freed from a North Carolina prison after serving 16 years for a murder he did not commit. Taylor was freed by order of a three judge panel, who reviewed the case after it was presented to them by the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission (NCIIC). Explain what the commission is, and why it was established. Do you think the problem of innocent people in prison (including death row) is great enough that every state should establish a committee similar to the NCIIC? Explain your reasoning. **Due April 3.**

4. Chapter 12, pages 393-394. In July 2011, a Florida jury declined to convict Casey Anthony in the death of her daughter, Caylee. Prior to trial the case received a great deal of pre-trial publicity (pg. 395-397). The trial and verdict were broadcast live on TV. A number of people were shocked and outraged by the verdict; some of the jurors were threatened after the trial was over. Given the public's reaction to this case and verdict, do you think citizens will be more reluctant to serve on a jury in high profile cases in the future? In your opinion, do you think it will be more difficult for a high profile defendant to receive a fair trial now than before the Casey Anthony case? Explain your reasoning. **Due April 24.**