

## POLS 4740H: Judicial Process and Behavior - Fall 2023

Dr. Christina L. Boyd  
Tuesday/Thursday 11:10am-12:25pm, Baldwin Rm 302  
Office Hours: By appointment  
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### Course Description:

This course examines courts and judges (broadly speaking) in the United States. Our focus will include topics such as the organization of courts, role of judges, the selection of judges, judicial decision making, judicial legitimacy, lawyers, and juries.

### Grading:

Exam: 30%  
Three Assignments: 45% (15% each)  
Participation: 25%

A:	94-100	C:	74-77
A-:	90-93	C-:	70-73
B+:	88-89	D:	60-69
B:	84-87	F:	< 60
B-:	80-83		
C+:	78-79		

**Exam:** An open book/notes take home essay-based exam will be administered during the semester as detailed below. Sample essay questions and format discussion will be provided prior to the exam.

**Assignments/Events:** We will have three major assignments, with each worth 15% of your grade. These assignments will be further detailed at the appropriate time during the semester but will be related to the Supreme Court nomination process, judicial elections, and attorney advertising. The assignments will vary in format including written, in-class solo presentation, and group work. The assignments are designed to help us embrace the honors spirit of the class, so that we are learning about and analyzing the important topics of the course in an engaging and (hopefully) fun and creative fashion.

**Participation:** This small honors course requires active participation from prepared students. Active participation should extend to discussion of class readings and class activities such as the jury voir dire event and the criminal investigation activity. It is the responsibility of students who miss class to keep up with missed notes (from fellow students) and assignments.

**Academic Integrity:** Please see UGA's extensive policies on academic honesty (<http://honesty.uga.edu>). Be aware that under no circumstances will cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty be tolerated in this class. Student assignments or quizzes generated with artificial intelligence-based technologies like ChatGPT will be deemed to be in violation of the university's academic honesty policy.

**Mental Health and Wellness @ UGA:** If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services. UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>). If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA

(<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

**Disability Resources @ UGA:** If you anticipate needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, you must register for services with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). I will accommodate requests from the DRC in this course. Additional information can be found here: <http://drc.uga.edu/>

**Prohibition on Class Recordings and Distribution of Course Materials:** Please do not take audio or video recordings of course lectures or discussions (live or Zoom) or repost any course materials (recorded, links, written) without my express permission. Doing so violates my and the University of Georgia’s intellectual property and the privacy of your fellow classmates as protected under federal and state law.

**Required Course Materials:**

There is no course textbook. Required course readings are posted on eLC.

**eLC:** We will rely very heavily on eLC for this course. Course material will be found in the Reading or Lectures folder for that week’s class on eLC in the course content section. Go to POLS 4740 → Course content → Readings

**Schedule:** Assignment dates are approximate. We may have to adjust them slightly depending on our speed during the semester. Unless otherwise noted, **all assigned reading is to be conducted prior to the class for which it is listed.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b> (discussion meets during the listed week UNLESS otherwise noted)	<b>Reading &amp; Pre-Class Assignments</b> (to be read <i>prior</i> to class) • Readings and online activities posted on eLC in the content §
8-17	Course introduction, syllabus	No reading
8-22; 8-24 (start)	Supreme Court Today; Courts, legal actors, and law	Read: Murphy 3-7; 38-67
8-24 (end); 8-29	Court organization in U.S.	Read: Baum 19-48; 245-256
8-31	<b>No class (Dr. Boyd at APSA)</b> • Out of class activity: Coordinate with group on Supreme Court reform efforts for in-class report on 9-5	Read: 2021 Presidential Commission Report (Focus on potential for future reforms relating to term limits, membership size, etc).
9-5	Supreme Court reform efforts This will be a student-led class, so come prepared to discuss, debate, and brainstorm	Individual tasks related to 2021 Presidential Commission Report
9-7; 9-12	Federal judicial selection	Read: Yoon2006-pension.pdf; Corley; SteigerwaltMartinek; BoydLynchMadonna
9-14	Race and Gender during Supreme Court confirmation hearings; preparation for Assignment #1	BoydCollinsRinghand; See handouts on Assignment #1

9-19; 9-21	Assignment #1/Confirmation Event	See handouts on Assignment #1
9-26; 10-3	State judicial selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No class on 9-28.</b> Out of class activity – prepare for Assignment #2 with group</li> <li>• <b><u>Assignment #2 due on 10-4 at 3:00pm per directions</u></b></li> </ul>	BonneauRice; <i>Republican Party v. White (Majority, Stevens, Ginsburg)</i> ; McCall; GibsonNelson2017; See handouts on Assignment #2 for 9-28
10-5; 10-10	Judicial Decision-Making Theories-Law & Politics	Read: Unah [pgs 139-148]; Murphy [pgs 30-33; 438-459; 476-477]; SegalChamplin; EpsteinKnight-chap1
10-12	<b>No class this day.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of class activity: start working on Assignment #3</li> </ul>	See handouts on Assignment #3
10-17	Judicial decision making – Public Opinion; Legitimacy; Other factors	Read: GibsonCaldeiraSpence; CasillasEnnsWohlfarth; KuklinskiStanga; HarrisSen
10-19; 10-24	Lawyers & Legal Culture Part I	Read: Tarr; GalanterLawyer
10-26; 10-31	Lawyers & Legal Culture Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Follow instructions for Assignment #3</u></b></li> </ul>	<u>Assignment #3 preparation/presentation</u>
11-2	Out of class activity – podcast on jury selection and bias ( <b>no class this day</b> )  Explore the whole Curtis Flowers case here: <a href="https://features.apmreports.org/in-the-dark/season-two/">https://features.apmreports.org/in-the-dark/season-two/</a>	Focus on/listen to Episode 8 on the district attorney and jury strikes: <a href="https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2018/06/12/in-the-dark-s2e8">https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2018/06/12/in-the-dark-s2e8</a>  Episode link and transcript also posted on eLC.
11-7; 11-9	Juries – Background and History	Read: Vidmar and Hans [pgs 65-105]; Juror Bill of Rights; Miller [pgs 64-82]
11-14; 11-16	Jury Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jury voir dire sheets due on eLC by 11-13 at noon.</b></li> <li>• Event materials must be brought to class on assigned day</li> </ul>	Event preparation
11-21 @ 2:00pm	<b>Exam due</b>	Exam preparation
11-23	Thanksgiving – No class	N/A
11-28; 11-30	Criminal Investigation Activity	TBA