

# **POLS 4740 JUDICIAL PROCESS & BEHAVIOR**

**Spring 2026**

## **Course Meeting Times**

**Class Meeting Time:** MW: 1:15pm-2:35

**Class Meeting Location:** Baldwin Hall, rm 301

## **Instructor Information**

**Instructor:** Professor Susan Haire

**Email:** [cmshaire@uga.edu](mailto:cmshaire@uga.edu)

**Phone:** 706-542-2057

**Office Hours:** M: 11:15-12:00 W: 2:45-3:45pm Baldwin Hall, rm 180

**Website:** <https://spia.uga.edu/faculty-member/susan-b-haire/>

Also available virtually and by appointment. Emails will be returned as soon as possible, typically within 24 hours during the week (M-F).

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## **Course Description & Details**

This course examines the relationship between law and society, types of law, and the operation of the judicial branch of government, particularly in the US.

### **COURSE-LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course you will have learned:

- theories and research that examine the nature of judging
- about the organization and functioning of the court system, including judicial selection procedures and the rules and informal norms that structure the adjudication of criminal and civil cases
- how to analyze judicial opinions
- about public policy issues that arise in the study of courts and judges

### **COURSE TOPICS**

1. Course introduction
2. Court organization
3. Judicial selection
4. Criminal litigation
5. Civil court process
6. Legal reasoning & theories of interpretation
7. Actors in the judicial process: lawyers, litigants, and interest groups
8. Judicial policy implementation & impact
9. The role of the courts in the political system

## TEXTBOOK

Carp, Robert A., Kenneth L. Manning, Lisa M. Holmes, and Jennifer Bowie. *Judicial Process in America*. 13th ed., SAGE Publications, 2025 ...or an earlier edition (12<sup>th</sup> edition, for example). I will upload the table of contents for the 13<sup>th</sup> edition so that you can follow the reading if you purchase (a less expensive) earlier edition. Sage also makes this text available in an online form.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Additional readings and materials will be uploaded to ELC.

## Assessment and Grading

Course Assignments & Requirements	Due Date	Portion of Final Grade
Test 1	February 11	15%
Test 2	March 23rd	20%
Test 3	April 29 <sup>th</sup> 12-3pm (during final exam period)	20%
Class participation		10%
Court observation essay	March 30 <sup>th</sup>	15%
Appellate court simulation	Paper due April 20 <sup>th</sup> ; simulation takes place April 20, 22 <sup>nd</sup>	20%

Tests (55%) All exams will consist of short answer and essay questions. For each test, I will allow each student to bring in a single page of notes that they have written (in their own hand). Students with medical emergencies may schedule a make-up test; however, you must contact me prior to the start of class and will need to provide evidence that you were ill on that date.

Class participation (10%). In-class participation counts for 10% of your participation grade. All students should be prepared to discuss the assigned material. In addition, students will be asked to participate in class on exercises designed to apply your concepts from the readings. I will not grade these “exercises” but completion of them represents half of your class participation grade. The other half of your participation grade reflects on your attending, and participating in class.

Please let me know if you will need to miss class as a result of a religious observance so that we can work on an accommodation.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I would like to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

If you experience a severe illness or you are dealing with a chronic sickness or other extenuating circumstance that is affecting your academic attendance, please contact me and Student Care and Outreach: <https://sco.uga.edu/> via email so that we can work out an accommodation.

#### Out-of-class graded assignments (35%)

Court observation essay. (15% of your course grade). For this assignment, you will directly observe a court "at work" for approximately one hour. In your essay (not to exceed 600 words), you will describe your observation and analyze what you observed by applying concepts, theories, and principles from our class readings. You may observe any court, but the observation needs to take place during the first half of the semester. This paper will be due no later than March 30, 2026.

Appellate court simulation. (20% of your course grade) For this assignment, you will be assigned to play a judge or justice who is seated to hear a hypothetical dispute before the appellate court. In addition to becoming familiar with the facts and issues raised in the hypothetical, you are expected to prepare for your role by analyzing the past voting behavior and opinion writing of their assigned judge/justice. You are to vote, debate, and write in the simulation as you believe the jurist would do if actually confronted with a real case similar to the hypothetical dispute.

You will turn in an essay (approximately 10 pages, 15% of your course grade) that includes: your justice's professional background as it relates to the case (1-2 pages), an analysis of the justice's decision making, with particular attention to previous positions on similar issues (appr. 5 pages), and an analysis of your prediction of the justice's present stance on the hypothetical case before the court (appr. 3 pages). Although the writings of your justice will guide your paper, the essay also will be expected to demonstrate an ability to develop an appropriate analytical framework for that issue. In addition, justices will participate in "mock" conference deliberations where you will be expected to apply what you have learned about appellate court deliberations (5% of your course grade).

### **MISSED EXAMS & LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Students with medical emergencies may schedule a make-up test or submit a late assignment; however, you must contact me prior to the due date (or test date) and may need to provide evidence that you were ill on that date. Late assignments may also be accepted under other circumstances, provided a student has contacted the instructor prior to the due date. Late assignments incur grading penalties that are commensurate with the degree to which the submission is late. If you experience a severe illness or you are dealing with a chronic sickness or other extenuating circumstances that is affecting your academic performance (including attendance), please contact me and Student Care & Outreach ([sco@uga.edu](mailto:sco@uga.edu)) so that we can work on an accommodation.

## FINAL GRADES

92.5-100: A

89.5-92.49: A-

87.5-89.49: B+

82.5-87.49: B

79.5-82.49: B-

76.5-79.49: C+

70-76.49: C

60-69: D

Below 60: F

## Course Statements & Policies

### UGA HONOR CODE

"I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [honesty.uga.edu](https://honesty.uga.edu). Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

### Accessibility & Class Recordings

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the *Accessibility & Testing*. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <https://accessibility.uga.edu/>.

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Accessibility & Testing center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws."

## USE OF AI IN THIS COURSE

Unless expressly authorized in assignment directions, the use of artificial intelligence (or word mixing software for the purpose of disguising plagiarized work) is considered unauthorized assistance in this course.

Use of AI tools has become an issue in higher education as well as the legal profession; we'll discuss these issues over the course of the semester. For our purposes, we will use AI for a specific assignment where it augments, rather than replace, your skills. You should always be aware of the limitations of (G)AI tools. For example, AI may be inaccurate and/or biased. To gain a deeper understanding of GAI tools, you should explore the following resources:

Introduction to Generative AI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IK3DFHRFfw>

UGA LibGuide on Generative AI

<https://guides.libs.uga.edu/ai>

## UGA WELL-BEING RESOURCES

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit [sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu). Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the [Embark@UGA](mailto:Embark@UGA) program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: [well-being.uga.edu](https://well-being.uga.edu)
- Student Care and Outreach: [sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu)
- University Health Center: [healthcenter.uga.edu](https://healthcenter.uga.edu)
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: [caps.uga.edu](https://caps.uga.edu) or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: [healthpromotion.uga.edu](https://healthpromotion.uga.edu)
- Accessibility & Testing: [accessibility.uga.edu](https://accessibility.uga.edu)

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting [well-being.uga.edu](https://well-being.uga.edu).

## **STUDENT SUCCESS RESOURCES**

The Office for Student Success and Achievement (OSSA) empowers students to achieve success throughout their academic journey. Through free peer tutoring, academic coaching, UNIV student success courses, Bulldog Basics, and first-generation student support, we promote well-being, student learning, and community building. To connect with OSSA, email [ossa@uga.edu](mailto:ossa@uga.edu), call (706) 542-0163, or visit Milledge Hall (near Reed Hall and Sanford Stadium).

## **DISCLAIMER**

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

## Course Schedule & Activities

First day of class: Jan. 12th

Last day to withdraw: April 9th

Last day of class: April 27th

MLK Day – no classes: Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>

Midterm: March 2<sup>nd</sup>

Spring break – Mar. 9-13

Final exam (test 3): April 29<sup>th</sup> 12-3pm

A detailed list of assignments and dates will be available on ELC and updated regularly over the course of the semester.