

FIRST DAY READING ASSIGNMENT—CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Fall 2017

Professor Matthew Lindsay

Welcome to Constitutional Law! This document explains what you'll need to do *before* our first class, on Tuesday, August 22.

1. Purchase the **two** required texts from the bookstore or an online book seller, such as amazon.com. Our primary book will be Sullivan and Feldman, *Constitutional Law* (19th ed. 2016). You do **not** need to buy the Supplement. We will also be reading extended selections from Linda Greenhouse, *A Very Short Introduction to the U.S. Supreme Court* (2012), which (in contrast to the casebook) is both slim and inexpensive. In addition, I recommend that you consider purchasing Erwin Chemerinsky, *Constitutional Law: Principles and Policies* (5th ed. 2015), a constitutional law treatise that students (and law professors) often find very helpful.
2. Read the syllabus carefully. In addition to listing the reading assignments, the syllabus sets forth important course policies and serves as an outline of the course material. Note that the reading assignments listed in the syllabus are subject to revision depending on the pace of each individual section. In other words, expect adjustments along the way.
3. Read the assignment for our first class meeting, which is the entirety of Topic 1: "Introduction to the American Constitutional System." The assignment includes the Constitution of the United States (printed in the front of your casebook) and three supplementary readings that are posted on D2L, and labeled Supp. #1, Supp. #2, and Supp. #3. (Click on the "Content" tab at the top of the course page; then the folder labeled "Supplementary Readings.") This is a relatively long assignment and some of the material is dense and challenging, so be sure to leave yourself ample time for reading and reflection.
4. Be prepared to discuss the following questions/issues:
 - (a) What is a constitution, and how is it different from a statute?
 - (b) Which provisions of the U.S. Constitution do the following?
 - Set up the machinery of the national government;
 - Confer authority on each of the three branches of the national government;
 - Constrain the authority of the national government;
 - Confer authority on the state governments;
 - Constrain the authority of the state governments;
 - Govern the conduct of private individuals.
5. Please be aware that I call on students at random and without warning, including the first class.
6. I will distribute a seating chart at the beginning of the first class.