

## **The Constitutional Rights of Women PSC 411D, Fall 2009**

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When we hear the phrase "women's rights," all sorts of different images may pop into our heads. We might think of the parades of suffragettes from the early twentieth century. We might imagine a powerful female C.E.O. Perhaps we see the image of Bohemian-looking women burning their brassieres over a campfire, or a thirty-something mother on her first day of college.

The relationship between women and their society is shaped by a number of different things, including traditional roles and stereotypes, laws and statutes, politics and government institutions, and more. In this course, we will investigate the history and current status of one dimension of women's rights: women's *constitutional* rights. What does our founding document really say about women? How have the courts struggled between the competing goals of treating women as equal to men and treating women differently from men?

### **Course Objectives**

After completing this course, the successful student will:

- 1) Have a working knowledge of the history of women's legal rights in America;
- 2) Understand the way that procedures and institutions impact the nature of women's rights in theory and in practice;
- 3) Be able to analyze the merit of particular legal arguments and approaches, both from a socio-political perspective and a legal perspective;
- 4) Interpret the various outcomes of the court system in terms of the political, institutional and social characteristics of the American legal system;
- 5) Use Web 2.0 to communicate and collaborate efficiently;
- 6) Be able to contribute meaningfully to the current debates about women's rights.

### **Required Texts**

- Baer, Judith and Leslie Friedman Goldstein. 2007. *The Constitutional and Legal Rights of Women: Cases in Law and Social Change*, 3rd ed. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0-195-33074-9.
- Cushman, Claire. 2000. *Supreme Court Decisions and Women's Rights: Milestones to Equality*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN: 1-568-02614-5.
- Woods, Dan and Peter Thoeny. 2007. *Wikis for Dummies. For Dummies*. ISBN: 0-470-04399-7. [Recommended].
- Additional required readings through the UNLV Library's online academic journal subscriptions will be linked to the reading list.

### **Course Website (Wiki)**

<http://unlvrightsofwomen.wetpaint.com>

## Course Requirements

### *The Wiki*

The bulk of our work this semester will happen on the course wiki. The main areas of content will be the case briefs and the research paper (covered in the next section). Your case brief contributions to the wiki, along with your attendance and participation in class, will make up your Class Citizenship grade. A big part of our project this semester involves collecting information about court cases related to the constitutional rights of women. To accomplish this, each student will be completing several Case Briefs during the first half of the semester. To select the cases you'd like to brief, simply click the "EasyEdit" button above, and then type your name into the Student Name column next to the cases you've picked. If there is already a name next to that case, you'll need to choose again. Choose from the case names that appear in black text. Choose grayed-out cases only if there are no remaining cases listed in black text. Be sure to note the due date for your brief. It is important that your brief be submitted by **midnight** on the due date. This allows your fellow students to see your brief before we talk about the case in class.

You will be responsible for creating your brief pages and for linking them to this page. This will be relatively easy to accomplish. First, you will copy the case name *exactly* as it appears in this list. You will navigate to the Case Briefs page, and then you'll click on "Add a New Page." It will ask if you'd like to use a template. Select the "Case Brief" template from the list. Then, you'll be ready to complete the brief. To link it back to this page, you'll click the "EasyEdit" button above. Highlight your case name, and then click on the "Link" button in the "EasyEdit" menu. Type the case name in *exactly* as it appears on this page (and in the title of the page you've just created). Otherwise, you can click "Find Page" and navigate to your new brief. This will link the list of cases to their relevant briefs.

Your fellow students will be relying on this information, and everything we add to this wiki becomes part of the course material. For this reason, we will also be using a systematic fact-checking process to ensure the accuracy of these case briefs. We'll all be using this information, so it is important that we get it right. Each student will choose case briefs to fact-check. Be sure not to choose cases you've briefed yourself. Simply add your name to the relevant cell in the Fact-Checker column. Make a note of the date that the Fact-Check is due. To complete your fact-checking, you'll need to verify the information contained in the profile using *different* sources (when possible).

### *Research Paper*

Each student will be required to complete a research paper on a topic related to the constitutional rights of women. This paper will be written on the wiki, and is due on **11/5**. Details of this assignment will be distributed during the first few weeks of class. The paper itself will be 3000 words (or 10 double-spaced word processing pages), and will be in the style of a traditional formal research paper. You should direct your paper to an educated citizen who wishes to learn more about this topic. The paper will be evaluated on content *and* presentation, which includes things like grammar, spelling and style. More details about the assignment will be distributed during the first few weeks of the semester. Once this paper is completed, we will begin the process of creating topic-based "mash-ups" of the information contained in the research papers. We will accomplish this collaboratively through the use of the wiki.

### *Examinations*

There are two examinations in this course. All examinations will be closed book. The midterm exam will be held on **10/15** in class. The final exam will be held on **12/10** at **10:10 a.m.** The final exam will assume a thorough knowledge of all material covered in the course, but will be weighted toward the post-midterm material.

## Grading Policy

Weighted Assessment List:

Class Citizenship	25 %
First Midterm Exam	25 %
Research Paper	25 %
Final Exam	25 %

Grading Scale:

A	Exceptional	90-100	%
B	Good	80-89	%
C	Average	70-79	%
D	Marginal	60-69	%
F	Unacceptable	<60	%

## Tentative Schedule

The schedule of topics is listed in the table below. Please note that the relevant book chapters are listed, but that there will be additional reading material for each topic. This material will be made available on the wiki at least a week in advance of our discussion on the topic. At the end of each course period, you will get specific instructions about which readings will be required for the next class.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Book Chapters</b>
1	Introduction	<i>Wikis; CLRW Introduction</i>
2		<i>CLRW 1; SCDWR 1</i>
3	Standards of Review	<i>SCDWR 2; CLRW 2 (to p.73)</i>
4		<i>CLRW 2</i>
5	Women at Work	<i>CLRW 3 (to p.150); SCDWR 7</i>
6		<i>CLRW 3 (to p.166), 6 (pp. 543-566); SCDWR 8</i>
7		<i>CLRW 3; SCDWR 9</i>
8		
9	Marriage	<i>CLRW 4 (pp. 264-297); SCDWR 4</i>
10		<i>CLRW 4 (to p. 264; from p. 297); SCDWR 6</i>
11	Reproduction	<i>CLRW 5 (to p. 367); SCDWR 10 (to p. 187)</i>
12		<i>CLRW 5 (to p. 445); SCDWR 10</i>
13		<i>CLRW 5, 8</i>
14	Women in the Law	<i>SCDWR 11</i>
15	Study Week	
16	Finals Week	

## **University Policies**

### ***Academic Misconduct –***

“Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.”

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism: “Using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources.” See the “Student Academic Misconduct Policy” (approved December 9, 2005) located at:

<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>.

### ***Copyright***

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. To familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, you are encouraged to visit the following website: <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright/>.

### ***Disability Resource Center (DRC)***

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the official office to review and house disability documentation for students, and to provide them with an official Academic Accommodation Plan to present to the faculty if an accommodation is warranted. Faculty should not provide students accommodations without being in receipt of this plan.

UNLV complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, offering reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Room 137, and the contact numbers are: Voice (702) 895-0866, TDD (702) 895-0652, fax (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit:

<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.

### ***Religious Holidays Policy***

Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the last day at late registration of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university which could not be avoided. <http://catalog.unlv.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=44&bc=1>

### ***Tutoring***

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring and academic assistance for all UNLV students taking UNLV courses. Students are encouraged to stop by the ASC to learn more about subjects offered, tutoring times and other academic resources. The ASC is located across from the Student Services Complex, #22 on the current UNLV map. Students may learn more about tutoring services by calling (702) 895-3177 or visiting the tutoring web site at:

<http://academicsuccess.unlv.edu/tutoring/>

### ***UNLV Writing Center***

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance.

Appointments may be made in person or by calling 895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

### **Ask The Professor: Classroom Policy FAQs**

#### ***Do I have to come to class?***

Yes, but you already knew that. Your attendance and participation in classroom activities makes up a quarter of your Class Citizenship grade (the rest of this grade comes from your wiki contributions). In addition, students who have not attended class at all during the first three weeks of the semester will be automatically dropped from the course. If you are ill, you will need to contact me right away with documentation from your doctor. If you must miss class for religious reasons, please consult the Religious Holidays Policy above.

#### ***Did I miss anything important?***

Yes! You may not agree, but you probably shouldn't pose this question to me or the T.A. I think that everything I say is at least mildly important. Instead, you might try asking a fellow student for the lowdown on any information or activities you've missed. Keep in mind that, while the T.A. and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have, we will NOT be able to re-enact the classroom experience for you. It is your responsibility to get notes, etc. from a classmate. Then, if you have questions, you may feel free to ask.

#### ***What happens if I have to miss an exam?***

If you must miss an exam, you need to contact me right away. Make-up exams will be proctored *before* the actual exam date. If you have one of those rare last-minute medical emergencies that crops up the morning of the test, you *must* contact me as soon as possible. In order to take the exam *after* the scheduled time, you will need the appropriate documentation from your doctor. Be advised that I reserve the right to give alternative make-up examinations (i.e., exams with different questions or different types of questions).

#### ***Where can I download the lecture notes?***

Ooh, sorry. You're out of luck on this one. One of the many benefits of coming to class is that you get to see the whole production. These lectures are my intellectual property. You may not record them without my permission. They will not be available online. If you miss a class, you will have to rely on the note-taking skills and generosity of your fellow students.

#### ***I'm no good with technology. Do I really have to use the wiki?***

Yes. I've assigned a recommended book called *Wikis for Dummies*. I'm not calling you a dummy or anything, but I suggest that you read the book if you are not confident in your technological skills. I will be going over the nuts-and-bolts of the wiki during the first week. You will need to make sure that you come to me or the T.A. *before* you fall behind.

#### ***What happens if I turn my work in late?***

You won't, right? Minding the deadlines is very important in this class. Remember, we are working collaboratively on a public service project. When one person's work is late, it throws off the entire schedule. As such, I reserve the right not to accept late work. I do not give extensions.

***What do I need to know about contacting my professor or T.A.?***

To facilitate a quick and accurate response to your queries, please be sure to abide by the following guidelines:

- You MUST use RebelMail. This is a university policy.
- Be advised that we will not receive/respond to communications through WebCampus.
- E-mails must include your full name and the class you're in.
- Be sure to include a greeting. I suggest something like "Dear Dr. Wood" or "Dear Professor." Greetings like "hey" or "what's up rebecca" are far less desirable.
- If you would like a response, be clear about that in your e-mail.
- Sign your e-mail (e.g., "Sincerely, Jenny Smith").

***What if I "accidentally" copy content or structure from somewhere else?***

This is NOT OKAY. You must be sure to cite your sources. If you didn't know something before you started writing, you must cite it. This includes direct quotes, ideas, facts, concepts, argument structure, etc. We will be covering some of this during the first week of class. When in doubt, cite it! You should also be advised that your references should come from reputable sources or academic articles. Please (I beg you!) do not cite Wikipedia. If you do turn in *any* plagiarized work—even in your wiki contributions—you will face the consequences outlined in the Academic Misconduct Policy found in the University Policies section.

***Can I check e-mail/chat on AIM/tweet/update Facebook status, etc. during class?***

Um...no. You will be asked to leave. It will be terribly embarrassing.

***Is this going to be on the test?***

Yes. If the information is purely an FYI, I will let you know. Otherwise, plan to know and understand the material we cover in class, in the readings, on the wiki, etc.

***I have a disability and need accommodations. What should I do?***

I am happy to accommodate your needs, but you will need to present me with your Academic Accommodation Plan from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at the beginning of the semester. Please see the information on the DRC in the University Policies section above.

***I'm not a very good writer. Does spelling and grammar really matter these days, anyway?***

Yes. Communication is a HUGE part of what we do. If you know that this is a weakness of yours, be sure to contact the Writing Center for help. Please see the information in the University Policies section above.