Constitutional Law – Fall 2006
Professor Christopher Schroeder

Class Meeting: Schedule for Monday through Friday 11:05 – 12:05, Room 4045

Instructor: Chris Schroeder, 3185 Law School, 613-7096
E-mail: Schroeder@law.duke.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00 -4:30 PM and by appointment

1. Blackboard

This course will use the University’s Blackboard homepage system to communicate information and disseminate materials as necessary. The syllabus of the course may well be amended during the semester, in which case the updated syllabus will be placed on Blackboard. You can reach the course’s Blackboard page through the law school’s web page, by going to “Academics” and then “Course Sites.”

2. Course Materials

The required texts are Chemerinsky, Constitutional Law (2d Ed. 2005) and its 2006 Supplement, both from Aspen Publishing. I am informed that the Supplement is on its way to the bookstores this week, and should be in stock prior to the first class assignment that uses it. On the Syllabus, assignments to the text will be indicated with plain page numbers; supplement assignments will have an "S" in front of the page numbers. Occasionally, I will provide handout materials as well, and will post these on line.

For your information, Professor Chemerinsky has a one-volume treatise, Constitutional Law: Principles and Policies (3rd Ed. 2006), which is a useful supplement to the casebook for people looking for a good companion treatise for the course.

3. Course Content and Assignments

The Constitution allocates decision making power among branches of the federal government, between the federal government and the states, and between government and the individual. After an introductory assignment, the course divides into four main units: (1) the separation of powers between the branches of the federal government; (2) the relationship between the federal government and the states; (3) the basic structure of the Constitution's protection of individual rights; (4) the protections of due process and equal protection. Significant portions of the Constitution will not be covered. In particular, constitutional provisions regarding the rights of criminal defendants, the protections provided by the First Amendment, and many of the provisions regulating the jurisdiction of the federal court are topics for other courses (respectively, criminal procedure, 
the First Amendment and Federal Courts.) In addition, upper class courses such as Civil Rights & Civil Liberties and Administrative Law, go into further depth regarding some of the materials covered here. I encourage you to supplement the basic Constitutional Law course with one or more of these upper class offerings.

Often, I will distribute questions in advance of class for you to think about in preparing the assignments. These will be distributed via e mail and also posted on Blackboard.

4. Course Calendar

The class will meet 53 times during the semester, which works out to an average of slightly more than 4 class meetings a week. The Course Calendar, posted on Blackboard, shows some of the days during the semester when we will not meet. I will post additional “off days” shortly.

For most assignments, I will also distribute electronically a set of questions to think about in preparing that assignment for class. A link to both a Word Perfect and a Word version of each assignment's questions can be found on the syllabus below.

5. Exams and Grading

There will be a mid term exam on September 28, conducted during the normal class hour, which will comprise 1/4 of your final grade. The final exam will comprise 3/4 of your final grade. The exams will be open-book, open-note, with notes limited to material prepared by you together or in groups. No commercial outlines. Computers may be used solely to perform the functions of a typewriter, and no other. Computer users are to start the exam by opening a new document in a word processing program. That is the only document, file or information contained on the computer that you may access at anytime during the exam. No information stored on a computer may be searched for, displayed, retrieved, accessed, or used during the exam, other than the information you type into your exam answer during the exam period. Accessing the Internet or the law school's network is NOT permitted. After calculating raw scores and placing them on the law school's curve, I reserve the option of taking class participation into account in moving a grade up a maximum of three-tenths of a point.

6. Classroom Conduct

The class period will place maximum emphasis on discussing and analyzing the assigned material. Please come to class having read the assignment and ready to participate in the class. To contribute to good classroom conditions, lap-tops, cell phones, pagers, blackberries and any other electronic equipment that could potentially be distracting should be turned off during the class period.