In this course, we will study methods of constitutional interpretation, the role of judicial review, and fundamental topics concerning governmental powers and individual rights. The purpose of this course is to teach you the analytical skills that are necessary to apply Supreme Court opinions and theories of constitutional interpretation to new circumstances.

Readings will be drawn primarily from Kathleen M. Sullivan & Noah Feldman, Constitutional Law (18th ed. 2013) and its 2013 Supplement. We will discuss most of the topics in chapters 1 through 10 and discuss some of the First Amendment topics in later chapters in a more abbreviated fashion. At our first class, I will give you a pocket-sized U.S. Constitution. You should strive to develop the same level of affection and familiarity toward it that a U.S. Marine accords to his or her rifle.

A color-coded calendar for the Supreme Court’s current term is attached to this syllabus. The Court will sit for oral argument 23 times this semester. You can familiarize yourself with the Court at its website: http://www.supremecourts.gov/. The questions presented and the briefs submitted by the petitioners and respondents may be obtained by selecting “Merits Briefs” from the menu. Transcripts are typically available on the website the same day as oral argument; audio recordings are typically released at the end of each argument week. Two non-governmental websites that are also worth viewing are “Scotusblog” (http://www.scotusblog.com/) and “Oyez” (http://www.oyez.org/).

This is a required course. Grades will be curved according to the Law School’s grading policies. Your grade will be based on your performance on a final examination and on your active participation in class. Please do not bring computers, tablets, and similar devices to our first class. Office hours are by appointment to accommodate the diversity of schedules.

For our first class, please read the Constitution (casebook pages lxxv-lxxix), pages 1-16 of your casebook, the essay by Philip Bobbitt (attached), and the Solicitor General’s Petition for a Writ of Certiorari in NLRB v. Noel Canning (also attached). For our second class, please read pages 16-33 of your casebook and the Brief of Respondent Noel Canning (attached). For our third class, please read pages 34-71 of your casebook, pages 1-14 of its supplement, and either listen to the audio recording of oral argument in NLRB v. Noel Canning or read the transcript of it.

I look forward to working with you this semester.