

**POL207 The Courts**  
**(3 credit hours)**  
**Course Syllabus**

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### **Course Description**

The course analyzes the political context of the judicial process. Topics covered include the structure and function of American court systems, court staffing, judiciary, roles of lawyers and other actors in the American legal system.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Differentiate how the court system operates on a federal, state and local level.
2. Analyze the concepts, institutions, and officials that make up court system at each level.
3. Apply the meaning and intent of the United States Constitution, as it relates to the levels of the court system.

### **Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None

### **Required Textbook(s) and Resources**

Neubauer D. W., & Meinhold, S. S. (2017). *Judicial process: Law, courts, and politics in the United States*. (7e) Boston, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Newspapers, as well as journal articles, will be required for completing the written assignments.

Be sure to also review the weekly **Explore** sections for additional library or web resources. For access to databases, research help, and writing tips, visit the [Tiffin University Library](#).

### **Time Commitment**

Effective time management is possibly the single most critical element to your academic success. To do well in this online class you should plan your time wisely to maximize your learning through the completion of readings, discussions, and assignments. Because of our accelerated, seven-week term, TU online courses are designed with the expectation that you

dedicate a little over **six (6)** hours per credit hour to course activities and preparation **each week**. For example, for successful completion of a three-credit, seven-week online course you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week**.

To help plan your time and keep on track toward successful course completion, note the distinctive rhythm of assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Unless otherwise noted, initial assignments or discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays**.
4. Additional assignments or follow-up discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays, and**
5. Major assignments and reflections are typically due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays**.

### Learning Activities

Two discussions each week plus responses to those discussions from other students

Six essays – two to three pages in length for each essay

Final Paper – five to seven pages in length

### Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per week.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
Discussions 25 25	Discussions 25 25	Discussions 25 25	Discussions 25 25	Discussions 25 25	Discussions 25 25	Discussions 25 25	<b>350</b>
Assignments 75	Assignments 75	Assignments 75	Assignments 75	Assignments 75	Assignments 75	Assignments -	<b>450</b>
Final Paper -	Final Paper -	Final Paper -	Final Paper -	Final Paper -	Final Paper -	Final Paper 200	<b>200</b>
<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>1000</b>

### Grading Scale

A: 90-100% | B: 80-89% | C: 70-79% | D: 60-69% | F: <60%

## Course Schedule and Weekly Checklist

### Week 1 - Understanding the Courts

- WED: Activity 1.1 (Forum): Meet Your Peers
- WED: Activity 1.2 (Forum): Civil vs. Common Law - Initial Post
- WED: Activity 1.3 (Forum): Law and the Internet - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 1.2 (Forum): Civil vs. Common Law - Secondary Posts
- SAT: Activity 1.3 (Forum): Law and the Internet - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 1.4: Research Essay--Courts and Political Institutions

### Week 2 - State vs. Federal Courts

- WED: Activity 2.1 (Forum): Search Warrants - Initial Post
- WED: Activity 2.2 (Forum): Technology and Offender Registries - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 2.1 (Forum): Search Warrants - Secondary Posts
- SAT: Activity 2.2 (Forum): Technology and Offender Registries - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 2.3: Research Essay--State vs. Federal Powers

### Week 3 - Lawyers, Legal Representation, and Judges

- WED: Activity 3.1 (Forum): Legal Representation - Initial Post
- WED: Activity 3.2 (Forum): Judges and Diversity - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 3.1 (Forum): Legal Representation - Secondary Posts
- SAT: Activity 3.2 (Forum): Judges and Diversity - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 3.3: Research Essay--Judicial Ethics and Politics

### Week 4 - Special Interest Groups and the Criminal System

- WED: Activity 4.1 (Forum): Law and the Local Community - Initial Post
- WED: Activity 4.2 (Forum): Defendants and the Legal System - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 4.1 (Forum): Law and the Local Community - Secondary Posts
- SAT: Activity 4.2 (Forum): Defendants and the Legal System - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 4.3: Research Essay--The Legislative Branch

### Week 5 - Civil Litigation

- WED: Activity 5.1 (Forum): Divorce Laws - Initial Post
- WED: Activity 5.2 (Forum): Winners and Losers in Civil Litigation - Initial Post

- SAT: Activity 5.1 (Forum): Divorce Laws - Secondary Posts
- SAT: Activity 5.2 (Forum): Winners and Losers in Civil Litigation - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 5.3: Research Essay--Tort Reform

### **Week 6 - Juries and Appellate Courts**

- WED: Activity 6.1 (Forum): Jury Selection - Initial Post
- WED: Activity 6.2 (Forum): Appellate Courts and Special Interest Groups - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 6.1 (Forum): Jury Selection - Secondary Posts
- SAT: Activity 6.2 (Forum): Appellate Courts and Special Interest Groups - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 6.3: Research Essay--Jury Nullification

### **Week 7 - The Supreme Court and its Justices**

- WED: Activity 7.1 (Forum): Selection of Supreme Court Justices - Initial Post
- WED: Activity 7.2 (Forum): Democratic Versus Republican Supreme Court Appointments - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 7.1 (Forum): Selection of Supreme Court Justices - Secondary Posts
- SAT: Activity 7.2 (Forum): Democratic Versus Republican Supreme Court Appointments - Secondary Posts
- THU: Activity 7.3: Final Research Paper--Supreme Court Decision Analysis

### **Tips for Success**

Online learning requires self-discipline and self-direction. As seekers of the truth, we should be willing to challenge one another's academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery. Your course is a place for you to grow as you benefit from the expertise, experience, and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will challenge you to stretch your own thinking, thereby expanding your knowledge and understanding.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all of the course materials and activities.

### **For More Information:**

Be sure to review the [Support, Policies, and Procedures](#) addendum.