Constitutional Liberties explores the values and principles our society adopted by establishing the U.S. Constitution. The course will trace the evolution of those values by examining court cases where rights and liberties, such as freedom of speech, religion, privacy, rights of the accused, and the equality of minorities emerged. The case law approach allows the student to critically examine the process of constitutional interpretation and judicial review. The course will emphasize the evolution of constitutional liberties within the political, racial, social and economic context of U.S. history.

Course Objectives
The objective of this course is to gain a deeper understanding of the Supreme Court and the Constitution. We will pay particular attention to notion of rights and liberties. Instead of simply reading the cases and memorizing rules, we will attempt to place each case in the proper historical context and debate the strengths and weaknesses of the Court’s rationale. This should result in improved writing and critical thinking skills. By examining both sides of the issue, you should leave this course with the ability to defend your opinion, now entrenched in facts, in a knowledgeable and non-emotional manner.

Electronic Forms of Communication
In accordance with College policy, I will use your Ramapo College email address (@ramapo.edu) to communicate with you about all course-related matters. If you use an alternate email address, please use the mail forwarding function of the Ramapo email system. Announcements and reading material for the course can be found on the course website at http://phobos.ramapo.edu/~alorenz

Texts, Readings, Materials

All other readings available http://phobos.ramapo.edu/~alorenz

Course Requirements

Classroom Participation – There is no substitute for attending class. If you need to miss class, inform me in advance or shortly thereafter. Attending class, taking copious notes, and keeping up with the reading and assignments is imperative. There are no short cuts, so do the work. Class discussions will be the cornerstone of this course. If you are not prepared to speak, get prepared. If you are shy, this will be the time to become more vocal. If you are talkative, this may be the time to listen and learn from others as well. NOTE: If it appears that the class is not keeping up with the assigned reading, additional pop-quizzes will be administered and factored into the participation grade.

Writing Assignments – Writing is integral to any field of study, especially Law & Society. In addition to developing your oral skills during classroom discussions, your writing should improve through both short answer questions on quizzes as well as a semester-long research paper which will be completed in intervals. For the quizzes, you should take your time pondering the issue before crafting an articulate and critical short answer. The research paper will be on a topic of your choosing related to course issues. After the first week of classes, you will receive more handouts regarding what the research paper will entail as well as how to cite sources.
**Examinations, Laboratory/Studio, Library Research** – There are 5 in-class quizzes worth 5% each. There will be NO make-up quizzes. Each quiz will consist of 2-10 short answer questions that will correspond to each section of study (listed below). If you do the required reading, come to class for discussions, and ponder the material outside of the classroom, you should do very well on the quizzes. They are not designed to trick you.

**Experiential Component**
This course includes a minimum of five (5) hours of unmonitored appropriate experience outside of the classroom. You will do this with the other people in your group, assigned at the beginning of the semester. The experience must come from observation of the legal system at work, as explained by the professor at the beginning of the course. At the end of the course, a poster session will be held, at which your group must present a poster demonstrating how your experience illustrated course concepts. Failure to participate in the experiential component will result in a lowered course grade.

**Writing Tutors Available**
The grade for this course depends heavily on written essays. Poor grammar, spelling or organization will result in a lowered course grade. If you are dissatisfied with your grade on written work in this course, please obtain a writing tutor in the Center for Academic Success (CAS), Room E-230 and Alcove, x7557.

**Attendance Policy** - Attendance is mandatory. Quizzes that are missed will be counted as zero unless there is proof of an emergency. Missing classes will result in a lowered course grade. Since attendance and participation are worth 20% of your grade, it is rather simple: you cannot participate unless you are present in class.

**Grading Policy**
Quizzes - 25%
Attendance/participation - 25%
Research paper – 50%
  - Title and question(s) presented - 5%
  - Annotated bibliography - 5%
  - Introduction and paper skeleton/outline- 5%
  - Final paper - 35%

There is no extra credit.

If you decide to withdraw from the course, you must do so by filing the proper form with the registrar by the date listed in the academic calendar (usually two weeks after the semester begins). If you withdraw from the course without filing the proper form, you will receive an F in course.

School policy forbids changing grades based on work submitted after the end of the semester, unless an incomplete grade request is signed by me and filed by you in the registrar’s office by the date specified on the academic calendar ([ramapo.edu/academics](http://ramapo.edu/academics)) (usually by the last day of the semester). I usually grant an incomplete only for emergent reasons, as incompletes are often unfair to those who completed the work by the due date(s). If you don’t have a very good reason, plan to complete your work on time.

The grading system is as follows. Grades are not negotiable:

93-100 = A
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C
70-72 = C-
60-69 = D
Below 62 = F
Policy on Academic Integrity
Students are expected to read and understand Ramapo College’s academic integrity policy, which can be found in the Ramapo College Catalog. Members of the Ramapo College community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Office of the Provost. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. This means that plagiarism of any kind will be met with a swift and decisive punishment. If you are unaware of Ramapo College’s policy on plagiarism, you should review it. If you are unaware what entails plagiarism, you should speak with me immediately. Do not devalue your education or the reputation of Ramapo College by caving to the pressure of stress, time, family, or other issues that may arise. It should be made clear to you that anyone caught plagiarizing in this course will have their materials forwarded to the Office of the Provost and I will vigorously push for expulsion from Ramapo College.

Students with Disabilities
If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a documented disability, please make an appointment during my office hours. You may also contact the Office of Specialized Services, which provides assistance to students with disabilities: C205, ext. 7514 or oss@ramapo.edu. Please note: Students must be registered with the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) to receive accommodations.

Weekly Class Schedule
NOTE: Reading assignments are to be completed BY that class. All reading is subject to change. Awareness of any changes is the responsibility of the student. All readings can be found in the course book or online, except where listed, in which case I will distribute the appropriate reading(s).

January 22: Introduction
Read syllabus.

January 25: The Supreme Court and the Constitution
PART 1: THE SUPREME COURT AND THE CONSTITUTION
The Supreme Court and the Constitution: In order to properly understand the cases that you will read this semester, we must begin with an introduction to the Court and the Constitution. We will address historical and contemporary arguments surrounding the notion of a fixed or living constitution.
Epstein and Walker: 3-8
Browse http://www.supremecourtus.gov

January 29: Understanding the Supreme Court
Epstein and Walker: 10-46

February 1: The Judiciary
Epstein and Walker: 49-69

February 5: Freedom of Religion
PART 2: FREEDOM OF RELIGION – EXERCISE AND ESTABLISHMENT
Freedom of Religion: A variety of issues arise when addressing the role of separating Church and State. How is religion defined? How do you allow for free exercise and simultaneously prevent the establishment of a state religion? What role, if any, should religion play in government?
Epstein and Walker: 99-132
Supplemental reading: Mark David Hall (available online)

February 8: QUIZ #1
Review and quiz

February 12: Freedom of Religion
Epstein and Walker: 138-208

February 15: Freedom of Speech, Assembly, and Association
PART 3: FREEDOM OF SPEECH, ASSEMBLY, AND ASSOCIATION
Freedom of Speech, Assembly, and Association: The First Amendment, for obvious reasons, gets a great deal of societal attention. In this section, we will dissect the First Amendment and delve into the issues of content and contexts.
Epstein and Walker: 210-244

February 19: Freedom of Speech, Assembly, and Association
Epstein and Walker: 244-268
February 22: Freedom of Speech, Assembly, and Association - TITLE & QUESTION(S) PRESENTED DUE
Epstein and Walker: 276-312
Supplemental reading: Mark Kessler (available online)

February 26: QUIZ #2
Review and quiz

February 29: Freedom of the Press

PART 4: FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Freedom of the Press: Whether it be John Peter Zenger, Alexander Hamilton, or Judith Miller, the notion of a free press is a cornerstone constitutional principle in the United States. This section will briefly look at cases involving freedom of the press and the notion of prior restraint.

Epstein and Walker: 314-345

March 4: Free Expression – Obscenity and Libel

PART 5: FREE EXPRESSION – OBSCENITY AND LIBEL

Free Expression – Obscenity and Libel: Defining obscenity requires a balance between historical constitutional ideas and changing contemporary standards. As we will see, this has often been a recipe for a fleeting consensus. Like obscenity, libel requires a specific definition and the Court has attempted to give us that working definition.

Epstein and Walker: 347-401

Supplemental reading: Catherine Hancock (available online)

March 7: The Right to Privacy - ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

PART 6: THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The Right to Privacy: The right to privacy, which is not specified in the Constitution, is a fundamental right recognized under the Bill of Rights. Since it is written specifically in the Constitution as other rights, the right to privacy is one of the most heavily debate rights in both society and within the corridors of the Court.

Epstein and Walker: 412-450

Supplemental reading: Warren and Brandeis (to be distributed)

March 11: No class
Spring break

March 14: No class
Spring break

March 18: The Right to Privacy
Epstein and Walker: 450-470

March 21: QUIZ #3
Review and quiz

March 25: Rights of the Criminally Accused

PART 7: THE RIGHTS OF THE CRIMINALLY ACCUSED

The Rights of the Criminally Accused: The criminal justice system is an ever-popular topic with factually intriguing cases and dramatic stories. In this section, we will be reminded that the Bill of Rights was designed to protect criminals from an overreaching government.

Epstein and Walker: 481-526

March 28: Self-incrimination
Epstein and Walker: 526-547

Supplemental reading: Joseph R. Ashby (available online)

April 1: The Right to Counsel
Epstein and Walker: 549-578

April 4: The Eighth Amendment
Epstein and Walker: 581-613

April 8: Discrimination – INTRODUCTION & PAPER SKELETON/OUTLINE DUE

PART 8: DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination: Discrimination in the United States is an issue that has plagued sociolegal circles for 200+ years. The Supreme Court has attempted to balance the contemporary issues of the times with the requirements of the Constitution. The result has been an especially divisive set of cases, most of which remain applicable to the issues of discrimination today.

Epstein and Walker: 626-660

Supplemental reading: Paul Bender and Chelsea Sage Durkin (available online)

April 11: QUIZ #4
Review and quiz
April 15: Discrimination
Epstein and Walker: 660-686

April 22: Discrimination
Epstein and Walker: 686-706

April 25: Remediying the Effects of Discrimination
Epstein and Walker: 706-736

April 29: QUIZ #5
Review and quiz

May 2: Experiential component presentations
Experiential component presentations

May 6-12: Final Examination Period

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE ON TUESDAY MAY 6, 2008 AT 1:00 IN G417