**Wayland Mission Statement**

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, and service to God and humankind.

**Contact Information**

**Course**

: POLS 5300 VC01 – American Constitutional Law: Civil Rights/Civil Liberties

**Campus**

: WBUonline

**Term/Session**

**:** Summer 2025

**Instructor**

**:** Dr. Brenda Johnson

**WBU Email Address**

**:** brenda.johnson@wayland.wbu.edu

**Office Hours, Building, and Location**

**:** WBUonline

**Class Meeting Time and Location**

**:** Online

**Course Information**

**Catalog Description**

**:** Study of the American judicial system, the constitutional basis of civil liberties and civil rights, and the controversial nationalization of these liberties.

**Prerequisite(s): Admittance to the graduate program.**

**Textbook Information**

**Required Textbook(s) and/or Required Materials**

**:** 

*The textbook for this course is part of the* ***Wayland’s Automatic eBook*** *program. You will have access to an eBook and interactive learning material on the first day of class through your Blackboard course site. The cost of this Automatic eBook will be billed directly to your student account when you register for the course. You will be notified via email with access instructions and additional information. If you do not wish to participate in the Automatic eBook program, you will have the first 12 days of class to opt-out of the program (additional details will be outlined in your email instructions). For more information on the Automatic eBook program, visit the Wayland Bookstore* [*Automatic eBook FAQ*](https://bookstore.wbu.edu/site_inclusive.asp) *page.*

**Course Outcome Competencies**

**:** The student will demonstrate knowledge of the American judicial system, the basis of American jurisprudence in common law, the criteria of justiciability, the major schools of thought on judicial review, and the development of constitutional interpretation of civil liberties and civil rights.

**Attendance Requirements**

WBUonline

Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses. Online courses are no different in this regard; however, participation must be defined in a different manner.

Student “attendance” in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus. Instructors in online courses are responsible for providing students with clear instructions for how they are required to participate in the course. Additionally, instructors are responsible for incorporating specific instructional activities within their course and will, at a minimum, have weekly mechanisms for documenting student participation. These mechanisms may include, but are not limited to, participating in a weekly discussion board, submitting/completing assignments in Blackboard, or communicating with the instructor.

Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.

Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 2 or more weeks of an 8-week session, may receive an F for that course. Instructors may also file a Report of Unsatisfactory Progress for students with excessive non-participation. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given session is considered a “no-show” and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus. Additional attendance and participation policies for each course, as defined by the instructor in the course syllabus, are considered a part of the university’s attendance policy.

**University Policies**

[Link to Statement on Academic Integrity , and reference one of the following in regard to how generative artificial intelligence (GAI) such as ChatGPT may or may not be used in this course:](https://www.wbu.edu/academics/writing-center/Academic%20Integrity%20Statement%20Pol%208.4.1%20Attch%20Oct%2020222.pdf)

1. No use of any generative AI tools permitted.
	1. Students are required to create and produce all work themselves or with assigned group members. Any work submitted that has used an AI generative tool like Chat GPT will be in immediate violation of the academic integrity policies for the course and WBU.
	2. All assignments must be fully created, designed, and prepared by the student(s).
	3. Any work that uses generative AI will be treated as plagiarism.

**Disability Statement**

**:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

Accessibility issues with content in WBUonline courses or in Blackboard should be addressed to the WBU accessibility coordinator, Dr. Rick Hammer, hammerr@wbu.edu or call (806) 292-9150.

**Course Requirements and Grading Criteria**

**Required First Assignment**: 5 points possible

**Email Assignment**: 15 points possible

**Quizzes**: 350 points possible

**Discussion Board**: 280 points possible

**Final Project**: 150 points possible

**Final Exam**: 100 points possible

**Attendance/Participation**: 100 Points Possible

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= **1000 Points Possible**

**Required First Assignment:** As the name implies, **this assignment** **must be completed first**. You will find this assignment at the very top of the course content section.

**NOTE**: This assignment will be used for census purposes. Thus, students who have completed the RFA before the deadline will be counted as attending/participating on census day. **Students who have not completed this assignment by the deadline will be automatically dropped from the course on June 9, 2025**.

Please understand that completion of other course activity (such as discussion boards or other assignments) **will not substitute** **for the required first assignment**. Therefore, even if you completed all the other assignments, but fail to complete this assignment, **you will be administratively dropped** from the course.

**If you are administratively dropped, you will lose access to the course in blackboard.** So, if you are administratively dropped and wish to remain in the course, please do not hesitate to email me. I will be happy to assist you in getting re-enrolled.

**Email Assignment:** To encourage prompt and effective communication throughout the semester, students **must use their Wayland email address** to send an email to the instructor. **To receive full credit, the email must include the following information:**

1. Name of the student
2. Course Title that the student is enrolled in
3. that the email is made for the purpose of fulfilling the email assignment
4. a statement that the student has independently reviewed the syllabus
5. inform the instructor whether or not they have any questions regarding the syllabus, assignments, or course structure and
6. if the student does have questions, list those questions out.

**Emails sent from non-WBU addresses will not be accepted.** If you have issues accessing your WBU email, please reach out to WBU Online or IT promptly. Access to your WBU email is not only necessary for this assignment but will be vital throughout the semester as I send course updates and announcements via email.

This email assignment is due by 11:59 PM CST on **June 4, 2025.**

**Reading Assignments & Supplemental Readings/Videos:** Reading assignments are to be completed on time (i.e., before they are scheduled for discussion and quiz). You are encouraged to take notes as you read, and you should be prepared to participate in online discussions and quizzed over the assigned reading. Occasionally, videos links and/or news articles will be posted in the weekly folders. Students are expected to watch and or read the supplemental material and may be quizzed over such content. You will notice you will not be quizzed over the chapter until the entire chapter reading is complete. However, the discussion boards will require discussion of any of the weekly assigned reading, so it is important you read the assigned material as scheduled.

**Discussion Boards:** There will be a discussion topic each week of class, except for Week 8. Each week, a prompt will be posted by Monday by 1:30 PM CST. You will need to post your initial response to that prompt by Thursday @ 11:59 PM CST of each week. By Sunday at 11:59 PM CST of each week, you will need to have read your classmates initial responses and reply to *at least two* of your classmates’ posts. You are welcome to respond to more than two of your classmate’s posts, but if you do, you will need to clearly indicate which two responses you would like me to grade. Otherwise, I will grade the first two responses that I see.

**Note:** Posting all your discussions answers on Bb is a **major requirement of this course**. Accordingly, late posts will receive an automatic deduction as late posts interfere with the overall class discussion. If you consistently turn in late discussion board posts, the deduction will increase. Also, please remember that Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any way (refer to Wayland Baptist University Policy on Dishonesty). You may view your peers work and postings to learn from one another, but you can’t copy their work. Students who have circumstances which prevent them from participating or completing an assignment on time *must communicate with me prior to the due date*, to find reasonable accommodations to complete the required course work.

Your posts must be insightful, thorough, and interesting. These responses should demonstrate an understanding of the assigned readings and should be substantiated by two or more examples from the textbook and/or appropriate websites. Do not forget to cite your sources!

Each response to your classmates should also be substantive. Participation for this course is measured on the student’s interaction and contribution with the course and other students as demonstrated through active involvement on the virtual classroom discussion board. A student’s contribution must add value to the course. A discussion board posting is determined to be of substance by containing information that supplements, contradicts, questions, or furthers discussion on a subject area contained in the discussion board prompt. Additionally, it is expected that posts reflect critical thinking and utilize proper grammar.

**Course Exams & Quizzes:**

* **Chapter Quizzes**: You will have 7-chapter quizzes, one for each of the chapters we cover this semester. You are advised to take notes as you read the assigned chapters. The quizzes are open book and open note. However, time constraints will be imposed. Therefore, you should ensure you have an adequate understanding of the material prior to beginning the quizzes as you will not have time to “hunt” for answers in the textbook. The quizzes are due on Sundays by 11:59 p.m. Late quizzes will receive an automatic 5-point deduction. If you consistently turn in late quizzes, the deduction will increase.

* **Midterm Exam**: n/a

* **Final Exam**: The final exam is comprehensive and open book/open note. However, time constraints will be imposed. Therefore, you should ensure you have an adequate understanding of the material prior to beginning the exam as you will not have time to “hunt” for answers in the textbook. The best way to prepare for the final exam is by reviewing your past quizzes, PowerPoints, and notes. The Final Exam is due on July 23, 2025 by 11:59 PM CST.

**FINAL PROJECT:**

**The People’s Constitution: Propose a Right, Change a Law**

In this final project, students will apply what they’ve learned throughout the semester by proposing a new constitutional right and recommending a change to an existing law, doctrine, or Supreme Court precedent. The assignment encourages creative thinking, doctrinal analysis, and real-world application. Students will present their ideas in a PowerPoint (10–15 slides), demonstrating their understanding of constitutional principles, legal reasoning, and the societal impact of legal reform. A reflective component will allow students to connect their proposals to personal values and course themes.

More detailed information about this assignment will be released during the first week of class.

**The University has a standard grade scale:**

A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F= below 60, W = Withdrawal, WP = withdrew passing, WF = withdrew failing, I = incomplete. An incomplete may be given within the last two weeks of a long term, within the last week of an 8-week session, or within the last two days of a microterm to a student who is passing, but has not completed a term paper, examination, or other required work for reasons beyond the student’s control. A grade of “incomplete” is changed if the work required is completed prior to the last day of the next long 16-week term or 8-week session, unless the instructor designates an earlier date for completion.  If the work is not completed by the appropriate date, the I is converted to an F.

**Student Grade Appeals**

**:** Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice President of Academic Affairs to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

**Tentative Schedule**

**WEEK ONE**: June 2 – June 8

* **Required First Assignment**: Due Wednesday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Email Assignment**: Due Wednesday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Assigned Reading**: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (stop on p. 117 before §2.6 Ripeness)
* **Initial Discussion Board Post**: Due Thursday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Two Responsive Discussion Board Posts**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Chapter 1 Quiz**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST

**WEEK TWO**: June 9 – June 15

* **Assigned Reading**: The remainder of Chapter 2 (you do not need to read past p. 201)
* **Initial Discussion Board Post**: Due Thursday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Two Responsive Discussion Board Posts**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Chapter 2 Quiz**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST

**WEEK THREE**: June 16 – June 22

* **Assigned Reading**: Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 (stop on p. 643 before §7.4 What Procedures Are Required)
* **Initial Discussion Board Post**: Due Thursday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Two Responsive Discussion Board Posts**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Chapter 6 Quiz**: Due Sunday by 11:49 PM CST

**WEEK FOUR**: June 23 – June 29

* **Assigned Reading**: Remainder of Chapter 7 and Chapter 9 (stop on p. 795 before §9.3.4 Remedies: The Problem of School Segregation)
* **Initial Discussion Board Post**: Due Thursday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Two Responsive Discussion Board Posts**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Chapter 7 Quiz**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST

**WEEK FIVE**: June 30 – July 6

* **Assigned Reading**: Remainder of Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 (stop on p. 895 before §10.2 Constitutional Protection for Family Autonomy)
* **Initial Discussion Board Post**: Due Thursday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Two Responsive Discussion Board Posts**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Chapter 9 Quiz**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST

**WEEK SIX**: July 7 – July 13

* **Assigned Reading:** Remainder of Chapter 10
* **Initial Discussion Board Post**: Due Thursday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Two Responsive Discussion Board Posts**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Week 10 Quiz**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST

**WEEK SEVEN**: July 14 – July 20

* Assigned Reading: Chapter 12
* **Initial Discussion Board Post**: Due Thursday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Two Responsive Discussion Board Posts**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST
* **Chapter 12 Quiz**: Due Sunday by 11:59 PM CST

**WEEK EIGHT**: July 21 – July 26

* **FINAL EXAM**: Due Wednesday by 11:59 PM CST
* **FINAL PROJECT**: Due Friday by 11:59 PM CST

**OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:**

* Census Date: June 9
* Last Day to Drop w/ “W”: July 7
* Last day to drop w/ “WP/WF”: July 18
* Last day of term: July 26
* Final Grades Posted: July 29