

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES  
H350R Unique: 39440

SPRING 2012, DAVID OSHINSKY

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Office Hours: Monday 11-12, 3-4, and by appointment  
Garrison Hall, 3.504

This seminar will explore key constitutional issues of the past century, including national security, gun control, capital punishment, privacy, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. The first half of the course will be devoted to a discussion of these issues. Student will be expected to keep up with the reading, participate actively in class, and help lead one class discussion. The second half of the term will revolve around the completion of a term paper, 40-50 pages in length, based on clear writing, original research, and the analysis of primary sources. This paper must be on a subject related to the U.S. Constitution, and the topic must be cleared in advance by Professor Oshinsky. A short summary and outline of this paper is due by MARCH 5. This is a “flag writing course,” which allows you excellent access to the Undergraduate Center.

From March 19 to the end of the term, students will meet individually with Professor Oshinsky to discuss their progress in writing the term paper. A minimum of six new pages of the draft will be required each week; the student and Professor Oshinsky will go over these pages, line by line, until the draft is transformed into a polished finished product. Students will email their weekly pages to Professor Oshinsky no later than 1:00 p.m. each Friday.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Peter Irons, COURAGE OF THEIR CONVICTIONS  
David Oshinsky, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ON TRIAL  
Richard Poe, SEVEN MYTHS OF GUN CONTROL

CLASS SCHEDULE:

- Jan. 23: INTRODUCTION
- Jan. 30: RELIGION  
Irons: Gobitis v. Minersville; Epperson v. Arkansas
- Feb. 6: NATIONAL SECURITY  
Irons: Hirabayashi v. U.S.; Barenblatt v. U.S.
- Feb. 13: RACE

Irons: Shelley v. Kraemer; Bates v. Little Rock

Feb. 20: PRIVACY  
Irons, Hardwick v. Bowers

Feb. 27: THE DEATH PENALTY  
Oshinsky, Entire.

March 5: GUN CONTROL  
Poe, Forward, pp. 1-16, 139-end.

March 12: NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

March 19: FIRST INDIVIDUAL MEETING WITH PROFESSOR OSHINSKY

The Final Paper is due on Friday, May 4. Late papers will not be accepted.