

GOVT 322 - American Constitutional Law

Paper assignment

A major theme of our course has been how con law relates to you directly - either your personal political interests or your career path/field of interest. This assignment gives you two choices - you can write a detailed letter or you can write an analysis of the con law connections to your business/career path. You choose either one. Important dates right up front:

- **29 March 2020:** please email me a 150-200-word paragraph describing your topic choice and your ideas/initial plans for the paper (please identify a couple of the cases you plan to use). Email address is whitakra@cobleskill.edu.
- **26 April 2020:** Your final paper is to be successfully submitted through the dropbox.

Your final paper will be a minimum of at least five (5) full pages in length, double-spaced with 12-point font and standard 1-inch margins. More nuts-and-bolts details follow. First, here's the topics:

1. **Write a paper describing in detail your business interests or career plans and how constitutional law applies to them.** Build on what you discussed in your introduction on the first discussion board. Describe in detail what kind of business you want to own/operate or what occupational field you want to work in. Then describe at least three ways in which constitutional law applies to your business/field. For example, suppose your business needs property for its operations. You could explain how the constitutional law concept of eminent domain applies here and how it would effect your business. Think about some of the cases we've read and how they apply. One eminent domain case is *Kelo v. New London*. What type of business would qualify for eminent domain? Would yours? Why or why not? (think about the similarities and differences between your business venture and the business involved in *Kelo*. What type of business venture would you be involved in? Would it be interstate or intrastate commerce? Which level of government would have some power to regulate your business or industry, based on the commerce distinction? Why? **These are some suggested areas to look at; feel free to add/substitute others. If you plan to hire employees, you should look think about the Court's rulings that relate to racial and gender discrimination. For many students, federalism and commerce will be really important.**

2. **Pick a social issue you feel strongly about - immigration, equality, abortion, or any other social issue we have looked at in the course. Write a 1200-word letter (note 1200 words is about 5 full pages) to an elected official.** The letter should a) describe your personal views on the issue and how you developed those views; b) identify at least three (3) related U.S. Supreme Court cases we have discussed in the course that relate to your topic and summarize the main points of these cases, and c) explain whether you think the Court decided these cases correctly, or not. **Be absolutely sure to include specific quotes from opinions and dissents from at least four separate cases we have read and explain their relationship with each other.** Lastly, in the conclusion of your letter, be sure to make a recommendation - tell the elected official what you would like them to do and what changes you would like them to make. You should remind them of some of the specific points you raised in your analysis of the cases.

Guidelines for all papers

- minimum of at least five (5) full pages in length
- Double-spaced
- 12-point font
- standard 1-inch margins
- Number the pages
- No cover page; just type your name and “GOVT 322 final paper” at the top, the date, and start writing
- Sources: make sure to cite any direct quotes or paraphrasing with in-text citations in APA or Chicago formats.
- Include a works cited page at the end of your paper, listing all your sources in APA or Chicago format.
- Due dates:
 - **Right now:** begin thinking about your topic. Contact me right away with any questions or if you would like help with any aspect of this assignment.
 - **29 March 2020:** please email me a 150-200-word paragraph describing your topic choice and your ideas/initial plans for the paper (please identify a couple of the cases you plan to use). Email address is whitakra@cobleskill.edu.
 - **26 April 2020:** Your completed paper is to be successfully submitted through the dropbox.