

Federal Courts
Professor Bandes
Spring Semester 2009

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Office Hours: Monday 2-4 and by appointment

Course Objective: The course will focus on the constitutional and statutory provisions defining the role of the federal courts in the American system of government. In considering the functions and duties of the federal courts, the course will examine their relationship both to the states and to the other branches of the federal government. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the implications of federal courts doctrines for the underlying principles of federalism and the separation of powers.

Specifically, the course will examine the constitutional and statutory limits on federal court judicial powers, federal court relief against federal, state and local governments and government officials, and the circumstances and conditions under which federal courts may review state court judgments and proceedings.

Evaluation: Students will be graded on the basis of a three hour take home essay exam.

Course Method: I will briefly lecture when necessary to establish a framework, but the majority of class time will be spent in discussion. Each student is expected to participate regularly in these discussions. Excessive absence, frequent lack of preparation or failure to sign the seating chart are grounds for dismissal from the class.

Required Texts: Redish and Sherry, Federal Courts: Cases, Comments, and Questions (6th Edition) and 2008 Supplement.

Non-required Reference Aids: An outstanding, up to date hornbook is available for this course. It is entitled Erwin Chemerinsky, Federal Jurisdiction (Fifth Edition 2007). Other recommended reference aids include James E. Pfander, Principles of Federal Jurisdiction (2006).

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