Seminar on Federalism
Spring 2019

Course Description

This seminar will examine a variety of topics in the political economy of constitutional federalism. Issues to be covered include the advantages and disadvantages of political decentralization, competition between state and local governments, the impact of federalism on the status of minority groups, the Founding Fathers’ view of federalism, and the role of the judges in enforcing federalism through judicial review. While most of the course focuses on federalism in the United States, some readings also employ a comparative perspective.

Course Time and Location

Tuesday, 4-5:50 PM
Room TBA

Reading Materials

The readings for the course will be made available in a packet available from the Copy Center. In order to save money for the students, the packet will not include those readings that are from law journal articles, which can be accessed through the class TWEN site. Some other readings are available for free online at the indicated links. To avoid problems, I will also e-mail the first week’s reading to the class.

Many of the issues we cover in the course are closely related to events in the real world. In some cases I will e-mail the class short optional readings about current events that relate to that week’s readings. You are not required to read these optional articles, but skimming them may stimulate your thinking and help you prepare for class discussion.

Grading and Assignments
Each student is expected to participate actively in class discussion and to write an original research paper on a subject related to the focus of the course. In order to participate effectively, you must be prepared to discuss each week’s readings.

There is no set length for the final paper, but about 20-40 pages will be appropriate in most cases. Each student is also expected to make a presentation to the class based on his or her research for the paper. Grades will be based on a combination of the paper, presentation, and class participation. Class participation will be assessed on a combination of quantity and quality. A small seminar like this one cannot function effectively without active student participation.

The final semester grade will be determined as follows:

Final Paper: 40%

Paper Proposal (due around the middle of the semester at a time to be announced): 10%

Class Participation: 25%

Paper Presentation: 25%

Permission to Record Classes

I hereby formally permit students to use any video or audio equipment of their choice to record classes, so long as the resulting video or audio is not reproduced for commercial purposes or financial gain.

January 15

Introduction – Federalism and the Founders

Alexander Hamilton, Federalist 9

James Madison, Federalist 10, 39, 45


January 22

The Tiebout Model and Interstate Competition


**January 29**

**Federalism, Markets, and Collective Action**


**February 5**

**Federalism and Minority Rights**


Ilya Somin, “Fight Over Sanctuary Cities is Also a Fight Over Federalism,” The Hill, Apr. 7, 2018, available at https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/381998-fight-over-sanctuary-cities-is-also-a-fight-over-federalism

**February 12**

**Federalism and Judicial Review**


**February 19**

**Fiscal Federalism**


**February 26**

**Federalism and the Environment**


March 5
Federalism and Local Government


March 19
Comparative Federalism I


March 26
Comparative Federalism II – Using Federalism to Reduce Ethnic Conflict


April 2
Federalism and Secession


April 9
New Frontiers in Federalism & Conclusion of Course
Federalism presentations discussion


April 16
Student Presentations
April 23
Student Presentations