You will be introduced to the fundamentals of the federal constitution, including the institution of judicial review, the limitations on federal judicial power, the constitutional roles of the legislative and executive branches, due process of law, and individual rights under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Possible future trends of the U.S. Supreme Court will also be explored. This course will focus on individual civil liberties and 42 U.S.C. section 1983 claims, emphasizing redress for violations of the Fourth, Fifth, and Eighth Amendment rights of the US Constitution.

INSTRUCTOR: Daire Irwin

OBJECTIVE: This six lesson course is designed to provide an introduction to the United States Constitution and its Amendments. Students will study the allocation of powers, the system of checks and balances, and the concepts of individual rights, liberties, and protection. Through this course students will also develop a better understanding of the Bill of Rights.

Expectations: You will be expected to spend an average of 10 hours per week reading and completing writing assignments. Please note that, barring extenuating circumstances, extensions will not be granted for this online course. 70% is the minimum passing score on all tests and assignments for this course. Students may consider working ahead in the curriculum if they have the time. Coursework in Constitutional Law is equivalent to 45 clock hours of study.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Paralegal I and II, or equivalent, or experience.

Required Texts:
- Barron & Dienes, Constitutional Law in a Nutshell, Most recent edition. St Paul: West Group

Highly Recommended Legal Resources:
- WESTLAW legal research access, available for the duration of the course for only $75. Order Online Now
  To order, call The Center for Legal Studies at 800-522-7737 or Order Online Now.

Reading Assignments for Lesson Topics:

Lesson One: The Constitution and Judicial Review
Read Twice, employing the use of a highlighter with your second reading
The Constitution of the United States, which occurs immediately after the Table of Cases in Constitutional Law in a Nutshell (Nutshell)
Read the Introduction and Chapter 1 in Nutshell

Lesson Two: The Allocation of Powers
Read Chapters 2, 3 & 4 in Nutshell

Lesson Three: Due Process
Read Chapter 5 in Nutshell
Lesson Four: Equal Protection
Read Chapter 6 in Nutshell


Lesson Five: Freedom Of Expression
Read Chapter 7 in Nutshell

Lesson Six: Freedom Of Religion; State Action; Congressional Legislation in Aid of Civil Rights and Liberties
Read Chapters 8, 9 & 10 in Nutshell

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: For each lesson you will submit a 50-point short answer assignment covering the topics in that lesson’s reading. These assignments are due by 9:00 a.m. each Friday.

EXAMS: You will complete two exams. Each is worth 100 points. The Midterm exam is to be submitted with your Lesson Three Assignments; the Final exam is to be submitted with your Lesson Six Assignments.

BULLETIN BOARD ASSIGNMENTS: You will also post your responses to six class participation assignments. These assignments are referred to as Bulletin Board Submissions and will be submitted by either selecting Bulletin Board Submission from within the lesson material, or by selecting ‘Forums’ under Activities on the Left Hand Block.

All lesson objectives, assignments, and tests can be found in the Lesson Materials.

GRADING: Your grade will be based on your completion of six writing assignment assignments, two exams, and class participation/Bulletin Board Submissions. The exams and writing assignments can be accessed from within the lesson material, or by selecting ‘Assignments’ under Activities on the Left Hand Block. You will have the opportunity to engage in “class participation” by using the Bulletin Board tool to respond to the bulletin board assignments throughout the course. Also, participating in the bulletin board assignments will enhance your understanding of the reading material.

Your final grade will be figured as follows:

- The six writing assignments are worth 50 points each and comprise 40% of your grade.
- The two exams are worth 100 points and comprise 40% of your grade.
- Your participation in class participation assignments comprises 20% of your grade.