

**RECENT SUPREME COURT DECISIONS SEMINAR**  
**Spring 2014**  
**Professor José F. Anderson**  
**(410)837-4398 – 1107 Angelos Law Center**

[janderson@ubalt.edu](mailto:janderson@ubalt.edu)

**CLASS: Tuesday 6:15p.m.- 9:00**

**MATERIALS:** Howard Law Journal 39.3 Symposium on Federalism (Professor Anderson, et al.) (Provided by Professor Anderson) Printed materials to be distributed throughout the course including, the relevant recent Supreme Court Cases

**Requirements:**

Recent Supreme Court Decisions is a three-credit seminar designed to encourage students to critically analyze recently decided cases of the United States Supreme Court. The course seeks to develop each student's understanding of: the general impact of the Court's decisions on American society, the specific legal issues addressed by the Court, the ideological, philosophical and jurisprudential approach of each member of the Court, and the effect of each decision on previously decided cases. The selection of justices by the court and its relationship to the other branches of federal and state government will also be explored.

Each student is expected to fully participate in class discussion, and is expected to be fully prepared to each seminar.

In addition to class participation, each student will be required to prepare one term paper of approximately 5-10 pages on a subject of interest to the student regarding a person, Justice or subject related to the work of the Supreme Court. You will be expected to make a 15 minute presentation on your book later in the semester. This project is intended to permit students to explore a board range of interests in the Court, its people, and its workings. A list of sources from the University of Baltimore library is attached to assist students in developing ideas.

The final paper may comprise any **one** of the following:

- (1) An **amicus curiae**, Petitioner or Respondent's brief for a case which has been appealed to the United States Supreme Court.
- (2) A hypothetical Supreme Court opinion for a case in which briefs have been filed but in which no Court opinion is expected prior to May 1, 2014 or a case in which the Court has denied the petition for certiorari.

- (3) A term paper analyzing one or more of the Court's decisions during the 2010-2013 terms.

This paper should discuss all aspects of the decision, including but not limited to, oral arguments, all briefs and lower court decisions, significant precedents and the impact and relevance of the decision to society, or a particular aspect thereof.

(4) Any other idea which would lead to a research project of similar quality and substance as (1), (2) or (3), after consultation with the professor (e.g., a case note on a case that was decided in the last two terms but we did not cover as a selected case). Each brief, opinion or final paper should be as complete and comprehensive as possible. It should exhibit an in-depth understanding of the legal issues presented and show that the topic has been fully researched, and should be between 25-30 pages. The students may decide to take opposite sides of a particular issue.

**Administrative Matters:**

The course will be graded as follows:

**First written project 25%**

**(Final) Second written project 50%**

**Class participation 25%**

Professor Anderson's office hours for the spring semester will be Tuesdays 4:30 – 6:15 p.m. and Thursdays 12:00-1:30 p.m., subject to meetings of the faculty and its committees.

Other meeting times may be obtained by appointment. Regular and punctual attendance is expected. A student whose unexcused absences exceed three (3) classes may be compelled to withdraw from the course. Since other people are relying on your attendance and participation for the course to properly work, it cannot be overemphasized that attendance is **critical**.

The Professor reserves the right to modify the Syllabus in order to properly cover the assigned material and present possible guest speakers. A typical Supreme Court opinion is lengthy and replete with detailed analysis, thus careful reading of the opinion rather than skimming will be obvious to those who have prepared for class. Reading cases referred to in the assigned opinions is strongly encouraged. Many controversial topics will be discussed and candid and vigorous participation is strongly encouraged. In expressing points of view, however, students are expected to conduct themselves as learned professionals possessing good judgment. No student should fear that a well supported but unpopular opinion expressed in class will have a negative effect on his or

her class participation grade. If a topic presents special sensitivity for a student, the professor should be consulted prior to the relevant class session.

**FIRST CLASS ASSIGNMENT- Go to the United States Supreme Court Website and review the Supreme Court Rules to begin getting comfortable with them like other procedural rules you have encountered during your law school and professional training.**