



HNRS 2033: Constitutional Conflicts

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The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the U.S. Constitution and its role in provoking, shaping, and (sometimes) resolving high-profile conflicts throughout U.S. history. Each week, we will consider a different such “constitutional conflict,” studying both the political and historical context in which the conflict arose and on the legal and theoretical dimensions to the arguments that participants in these conflicts invoked. We will focus in particular on the role of the U.S. Supreme Court in generating and resolving constitutional conflicts, and we will frequently consider the extent to which the Court does and/or should respond to non-judicial actors in the course of deciding constitutional cases. By the end of the seminar, students should have a firm grasp of the Constitution’s structure and substance, an enduring familiarity with the historical episodes that we consider, an ability to read and understand the Supreme Court’s constitutional decisions, and the analytical skills necessary to develop and support constitutional arguments of their own.

Course topics include:

- The origins of judicial review
- Slavery, secession, and the Civil War
- The New Deal
- Desegregation and the civil rights movement
- *Bush v. Gore*
- Much, much more!