The first part of the term will be devoted to classroom discussion of constitutional issues that shaped American law and culture in the 20th Century and beyond. Students will be expected to keep up with the readings and to participate actively in class discussion. Each student will help lead one class meeting. The bulk of the grade will be based on a term paper, approximately 40-45 pages in length, concerning an aspect of the Constitution or constitutional history since 1900. All topics must be cleared with Professor Oshinsky.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Brian Doherty, GUN CONTROL ON TRIAL
Peter Irons, A PEOPLE’S HISTORY OF THE SUPREME COURT
David Oshinsky, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ON TRIAL
Philippa Strum, WHEN THE NAZIS CAME TO SKOKIE

CLASS SCHEDULE:
JANUARY 24: INTRODUCTION

JANUARY 31: WAR AND THE CONSTITUTION:
IRONS, 265-281; 333-364

FEBRUARY 7: RACE AND THE CONSTITUTION:
IRONS, 365-408; 450-463.
FEBRUARY 14: FREE SPEECH AND THE CONSTITUTION:
STRUM, 1-149

FEBRUARY 21: FREE ENTERPRISE AND THE CONSTITUTION
IRONS, 235-264; 294-330

FEBRUARY 28: THE SECOND AMENDMENT
DOHERTY, 1-116

MARCH 7: CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT?
Oshinsky, 1-125 (TERM PAPER PROPOSAL DUE)

MARCH 14: SPRING BREAK

MARCH 21: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS BEGIN WITH PROFESSOR OSHINSKY

From March 21 forward, students will meet individually with Professor Oshinsky each Monday to discuss their progress in writing the term paper. Six new pages of the draft are required every week. The student and Professor Oshinsky will go over these pages, line by line, until the draft is transformed into a polished finished product. Students will email their pages to Professor Oshinsky no later than noon each Friday.

The final paper is due no later than WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, at 4:00 p.m. Late papers will not be accepted.