

LAWS20004 Constitutional Law

Credit Points:	12.50
Level:	2 (Undergraduate)
Dates & Locations:	This subject is not offered in 2011.
Time Commitment:	Contact Hours: Two 2-hour seminars per week. Total Time Commitment: 144 hours.
Prerequisites:	Legal Method and Reasoning; Principles of Public Law or in each case their equivalents.
Corequisites:	None.
Recommended Background Knowledge:	None.
Non Allowed Subjects:	None.
Core Participation Requirements:	For the purposes of considering requests for Reasonable Adjustments under the Disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Students Experiencing Academic Disadvantage Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Description, Subject Objectives, Generic Skills, and Assessment Requirements of this entry. The University is dedicated to providing support to those with special requirements. Further details on the disability support scheme can be found at the Disability Liaison Unit website: http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/ .
Contact:	Melbourne Law School Student Centre Email: law-studentcentre@unimelb.edu.au (mailto:law-studentcentre@unimelb.edu.au) Tel: +61 3 8344 4475
Subject Overview:	<p>This subject continues the analysis of the laws establishing and regulating the Australian state that began in Principles of Public Law and that will continue in Administrative Law. It is structured around the fundamental principles of Australian public law – constitutionalism, representative democracy, the separation of powers, federalism and individual rights – and uses them to examine more closely the institutions of Australian government – the courts, legislatures and the executive. (The examination of the executive branch and the principles of responsible government are taken further in Administrative Law).</p> <p>Topics covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Introduction to Australian constitutions and to constitutional law; # Representative Democracy # Composition, powers and procedures of Australian Parliaments and their constituent chambers; # Political rights and freedoms. # Separation of powers # Legislature and Executive; # Judicial power. # Australian Federalism # Key features of the Australian federation; # Inconsistency of Commonwealth and State law; # The federal division of legislative power, including the scope of state legislative power and, in relation to federal legislative power, types of power, interpretation, characterisation, incidental power, selected heads of power for detailed study; # The federal division of executive power; # The federal division of judicial power including the concept of federal jurisdiction; # Governmental and inter-governmental immunities: statutory interpretation and constitutional principles; # Economic union: finance, trade and free movement in the Australian federal system. # Express rights and freedoms.

Objectives:	<p>On completion of this subject, students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Have developed an understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The structure and operation of the Australian Commonwealth and state constitutions, in theory and practice; - Core provisions of the Australian Commonwealth and state constitutions, constitutional decisions and constitutional principles; - Constitutional skills and techniques, including constitutional interpretation and characterisation; - The relevance of constitutional law to how governments address public policy issues and to how Commonwealth legislation is drafted and interpreted o the impact of constitutional law on the individual and different groups within society; - The main aspects of practice and procedure in constitutional litigation. # Be able to draw on this understanding to o describe and critically analyse the fundamental principles of constitutional law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify relevant constitutional law decisions and state and critically analyse the legal principles that emerge from them; - Critically analyse the relationship between these legal principles and the fundamental principles of constitutional law; - Apply constitutional law principles to new fact situations; - Develop arguments as to what legal principles should be applied when the relevant constitutional provisions or decisions are unclear or in conflict. # Present these descriptions, analyses and applications of principles in the form of written arguments that are appropriately structured, developed, supported and referenced; # Have enhanced general cognitive skills in relation to reading and comprehending legal materials; logical analysis and reasoning; legal research and writing; application of legal principles to factual situations; identifying relevant factual information; identifying and considering options to resolve legal problems; drawing on the knowledge of other disciplines to understand and resolve legal issues.
Assessment:	<p>Hurdle requirement: A written answer to a hypothetical problem due in week 6. 1,200 words. AND Written examination. Open book. Duration: 30 minutes reading time and 3 hours writing time. Worth 100% of the final mark in the subject.</p>
Prescribed Texts:	<p>Blackshield and Williams. Australian Constitutional Law and Theory: Commentary and Materials (Federation Press, 4 th edition 2006) (abridged edition);Printed materials will be available from the Melbourne Law School.</p>
Breadth Options:	<p>This subject is not available as a breadth subject.</p>
Fees Information:	<p>Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees</p>
Generic Skills:	<p>On completion of the subject, students should have developed the following generic skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Attitudes towards knowledge that include valuing truth, openness to new ideas and ethics associated with knowledge creation and usage; # The capacity for close reading and analysis of a range of sources; # The capacity for critical and independent thought and reflection; # The capacity to solve problems, including through the collection and evaluation of information; # The capacity to communicate in writing; # The capacity to plan and manage time; # The capacity to participate as a member of a team; # Intercultural sensitivity and understanding. <p>In addition, on completion of the subject, students should have developed the following skills specific to the discipline of law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Case reading and analysis, including an ability to: # Read complex constitutional cases, including unedited cases in the law reports; # Extract important features from judgments; # Reconcile judgments; # Evaluate the development of legal principles;

- # Apply legal principles arising from case law to new situations;
- # Statutory reading, interpretation and analysis, including an ability to:
- # Extract important features from statutes (and in particular constitutions);
- # Use, interpret and apply statutory (and in particular constitutional) provisions to new situations;
- # Apply the distinct principles of constitutional interpretation;
- # Legal analysis and problem-solving, including an ability to:
- # Critically analyse legal rules with reference to fundamental principles;
- # Identify and analyse constitutional issues arising in complex fact situations;
- # Apply constitutional principles and provisions to unfamiliar fact situations;
- # Develop and present an appropriately structured and supported legal argument;
- # Legal research skills, including an ability to:
- # Find primary historical sources relevant to constitution-making and amendment;
- # Find case law;
- # Find statutes and constitutions;
- # Find secondary sources;
- # Identify the most relevant and up-to-date primary and secondary sources and justify the research process;
- # Legal writing skills, including an ability to:
- # Use case law as part of legal analysis;
- # Use statutes and constitutions as part of legal analysis;
- # Use secondary sources as part of legal analysis;
- # Identify and summarise legal principles;
- # Identify and summarise fundamental principles;
- # Use proper referencing and citation;
- # Present an appropriately structured and supported complex legal argument;
- # Oral communication skills in participating in classroom problem solving and discussion;
- # An ability to work in groups to solve problems and critically analyse legal materials in a classroom setting.

Related Course(s):

Bachelor of Computer Science and Bachelor of Laws