

**CONSTITUTIONAL LAW I:
JUDICIAL REVIEW AND CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETATION
POLITICAL SCIENCE 307
SPRING 2024
MICRO-ESSAY #1**

Write a 750 word essay on the following topic. Your essay is due in the Google folder by 4 PM on FRIDAY February 9. Use the course pack pages for citation—you can cite direct quotations with page numbers in parentheses at the end of the sentence. Be sure to include at least one claim-objection-rejoinder sequence.

Which side has the better view of the Constitution, those who emphasize an interpretation of its rights as “rooted in our Nation’s history and tradition” (21) or those who emphasize an interpretation in which “the Framers defined rights in general terms” (108)? The issue matters because on the one side are those who support the court opinion in *Dobbs* and on the other those who support the dissent. **In short, which is the better ground for constitutional interpretation, history and tradition or general principle?**

What do I mean by a micro-essay?

Micro-essays are short (750-950 word) persuasive essays in which the writer explores a specific issue, problem, or puzzle shared by a group of readers. In our case, the group of readers is our class. Your audience is this class. It is best to begin with a one sentence restatement of the problem you are going to address and to then launch immediately into your first claim. In a micro-essay it is important to realize that (1) claims are statements you want to persuade your reader to accept, and that (2) claims need support with evidence or reasoning to be persuasive. In the standard claim, the support appears following the word ‘because’. Forcing yourself to state a claim and defend it is a tool you can use in any situation to clarify what you mean when taking a stand.

What do I mean by a "claim-objection-rejoinder sequence"?

*Technically, a claim is the conclusion of an argument. To be persuasive, it is crucial that you defend your claims with evidence and reasoning. It is also important to understand that many claims about the world which matter to us are **contested** and do not follow as straightforwardly, e.g., as the deductive conclusion above based on uncontested empirical premises. **In fact, each essay you write for this class is designed to feature questions that arise from contested claims.** Thus it is incumbent on you to indicate to your reader that you understand there is more than one plausible answer to the question under debate. This is sometimes called arguing from both sides of a question. It requires that you supply an objection to your claim. An objection is just a claim—complete with evidence and reasoning in its support—that offers a reason not to believe the claim you just articulated.*

Where will the assignments appear when they are not handed out on paper in class?

They will appear on my webpage: www.iwu.edu/~jsimeone/menu. The menu page lists my classes at the top. The links are to the syllabi. Below the list of syllabi is the word ASSIGNMENTS. This link takes you to the assignments page where the assignments are listed.