



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Constitutional Law B

2015

1 Introduction

Overview

Constitutional Law B is a semester course that counts as a credit in the LLB degree offered in the Faculty of Law and it is a component course in the Legal Theory II course, a major subject in the Faculties of Humanities, Science and Commerce.

The purpose of the course is to introduce and familiarise students with the rights contained in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the values which underpin the legal order of South African constitutional democracy. The protection of fundamental rights through the court system, and to a lesser extent their protection by Chapter 9 institutions, will thus be the focus of the course.

Constitutional Law B will not deal with certain fundamental rights that will be considered in other courses, for example the right to administrative justice (section 33) will be discussed in Administrative Law and the rights of arrested, detained and accused persons (section 35) will be discussed in Criminal Procedure and the Law of Evidence. The rights considered pertinently in this course will be identified as such in the course outline.

This course forms an important base for all other courses, since section 2 of the Constitution explicitly states that the Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic and section 7(1) designates the Bill of Rights as the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa.

Credit value

10 credits which translate to 10 hours to be spent on this course per week.

1.3 Assumptions of prior learning

It is assumed that students:

- have the ability to communicate in written and spoken English at least at the level of NQF level 4;
- are capable of independent work;
- know how and where to access resources such as textbooks and law reports in the law library;
- know how to read, analyse and extract principles from law reports and other source materials at a basic level;
- have a working knowledge of basic legal concepts and terminology;
- have a basic understanding of legal problem-solving techniques;
- have a working knowledge of legal referencing conventions and the ability to apply these conventions.

2 Outcomes

2.1 Critical outcomes

This course will contribute to students attaining the following critical outcomes:

- 2.1.1 to organise and manage themselves;
- 2.1.2 to collect, analyse and evaluate information;
- 2.1.3 to recognise problem solving contexts;
- 2.1.4 to identify and solve problems;
- 2.1.5 to communicate effectively;
- 2.1.6 to participate as responsible citizens and
- 2.1.7 to be culturally sensitive.

2.2 Intended specific outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 2.1.1 understand and explain the structure, purpose and working of the Bill of Rights;
- 2.1.2 understand and explain approaches to constitutional interpretation and more specifically the interpretative approaches of the Constitutional Court in respect of the Bill of Rights;
- 2.1.3 apply provisions of the Bill of Rights in respect of hypothetical situations;
- 2.1.4 understand and explain the role of Chapter 9 institutions in respect of the protection of fundamental rights.

3 Teaching method

This course is taught by way of two lectures per week that will tend to be relatively formal. Class discussions will be held when the topic of discussion and time permit. **Students are expected to prepare for lectures by doing the prescribed readings beforehand and are encouraged to engage in lecture room discussions. All the prescribed material will not be addressed directly in lectures. Students are expected to take responsibility for their learning by independent study according to the guidance provided by the detailed course outline.** Students are invited to discuss problems with the lecturer.

Legal Theory II has a tutorial programme. **The attendance of tutorials and submission of the tutorial assignments are compulsory.** Details regarding the programme will be supplied in due course.

4 Course content

- A The Bill of Rights: Purpose and Structure
 - 1) The historical and textual context
 - 2) The types of rights
 - 3) The obligations
 - 4) The bodies bound

- 5) The persons benefit from and who may seek the protection (section 38) of the Bill of Rights
 - 6) The radiating effect of the Bill of Rights statute law, common law and customary law
 - 7) States of emergency
- B The Bill of Rights: Application
- 1) Constitutional analysis: the two-stage approach
 - 2) Constitutional interpretation
 - 3) The limitation of rights
- C The Bill of Rights in operation

[Not all the rights listed below will be discussed. The lecturer will give a clear indication as to the rights to be studied.]

- 1) Rights to physical and mental integrity
 - a. Equality
 - b. Life and dignity
 - c. Freedom and privacy
- 2) Rights to intellectual integrity
 - a. Religion, opinion and belief
 - b. Expression
- 3) Associational rights
 - a. Association
 - b. Movement and residence
 - c. Assembly
 - d. Political rights
- 4) Socio-economic rights
 - a. Justiciability of socio-economic rights
 - b. State obligations and international law
 - c. Access to housing
 - d. Access to health care
 - e. Access to social security and social assistance
 - f. Access to education
- 5) Rights to legal and administrative integrity

- a. Just administrative action
 - b. Access to information
 - c. Access to court
 - d. Right to a fair trial
- D Extra-judicial protection of fundamental rights
- 1) Protection by Chapter 9 institutions
 - a. The Public Protector
 - b. The Human Rights Commission
 - c. The Commission on Gender Equality

5 Resources

The prescribed text for this course is:

Currie I and De Waal J *The Bill of Rights Handbook* 6th ed (2013) Juta. This book is referred to as 'Currie' in the reading list.

Additionally, as students are required to read

Harksen v Lane NO 1998 (1) SA 300 (CC)

MEC for Education: Kwazulu-Natal v Pillay 2008 (1) SA 474 (CC)

Test and exam questions may focus on these judgments.

Other materials referred to in the reading list include cases which you may access online and materials available on short loan or through the library website on the online databases.

6 Student assessment

Three pieces of assessment are used to calculate your class mark, but more assessment tasks may be given. All students are required to hand in a class assignment, submit tutorial assignments and to write a test. Three of these marks count 30% towards the final marks obtained by students (class assignment 15%, one of the tutorial assignments 5% and test 10%). Feedback will be provided on these tasks to enable students to identify and rectify problems. The feedback will be provided orally and in writing where possible.

At the end of the semester there is one summative assessment exercise in the form of a 2-hour exam. Students can expect theory and application type questions in this exam. The mark obtained in the exam counts 70% towards the final mark.

R Krüger

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