

Constitutional Law

OVERVIEW

The Constitutional Law Center at Drake Law School features programs and activities designed to broaden perspectives on fundamental national issues. Focusing on how constitutional law intersects with culture – including religion, race, politics, poverty, criminal justice, and free speech – the Center prepares students to participate in national life as influential lawyer-citizens. Learn more at drake.edu/law/clinics-centers/conlaw.

BACKGROUND

The Constitutional Law Center is one of only four such centers established by Congress and funded by the federal government. The permanent endowment was created by Federal Law in 1987 to commemorate the Constitution's bicentennial and encourage graduate study of the American Constitution. By legislative mandate, the director of the center is led by a nationally recognized scholar, lecturer and teacher, the "James Madison Chair in Constitutional Law" whose work enhances public understanding of the Constitution.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

KEY LECTURES & EVENTS

Distinguished Lecture Series

This series brings the nation's leading constitutional scholars, jurists, and political voices to campus to deliver formal lectures, teach classes, and engage with students in small groups.

Past Speakers Include: Jack Balkin (Yale), Orin Kerr (George Washington), Adam Liptak (The New York Times), Mary Dudziak (Emory), Emma Coleman Jordan (Georgetown), Eric Posner (Chicago), Samuel Issacharoff (New York University), Norman Ornstein (American Enterprise Institute), and Justice Richard Goldstone (South African Constitutional Court).

Dwight D. Opperman Lecture

Named for a 1951 alumnus, this is one of the nation's most prestigious legal education events. Eleven U.S. Supreme Court Justices have delivered this distinguished lecture at Drake.

Annual Symposium

This annual, day-long event gathering of prominent scholars, civil libertarians, policy analysts, lawyers, and judges who participate in lectures and panel debates on a designated constitutional issue. Supported by the Nathan S. McCay (LW'80) Endowment and the Drake Constitutional Law Fund.

Judge James Grant Iowa Constitution Lecture Series

This event focuses exclusively on the Iowa Constitution, made possible by Patrick Grant (LW'76) and the Grant family.

Speakers: Inaugurated by the late Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark Cady. Past speakers include Professor Sandy Levinson (University of Texas), Iowa Supreme Court Justice Brent Appel (University of California Berkley), trial lawyer Roxanne Conlin (LW'66), and Professor James Gardner (Buffalo).

Academic Offerings and Community

Certificate in Constitutional Law and Civil Rights: Students can complete a 21-credit program building on Drake's commitment to research and symposia, which includes an advanced writing requirement.

Community Forums and Constitutional Debates: Public forums bringing together students, the bench, the bar, and the community to debate critical issues such as school prayer, hate speech, death penalty, voting rights, and religious liberty.

FACULTY

Mark Kende, Director of the Constitutional Law Center; James Madison Chair in Constitutional Law; Professor of Law; JD, University of Chicago; an internationally prominent scholar on comparative and U.S. constitutional law.

Miguel Schor, Associate Director of the Constitutional Law Center: Professor of Law; Class of 1977 Faculty Scholar; JD, Tulane University; an expert in constitutional theory, the First Amendment, and Latin American studies.

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@DrakeLawSchool

515-271-2782
lawadmit@drake.edu