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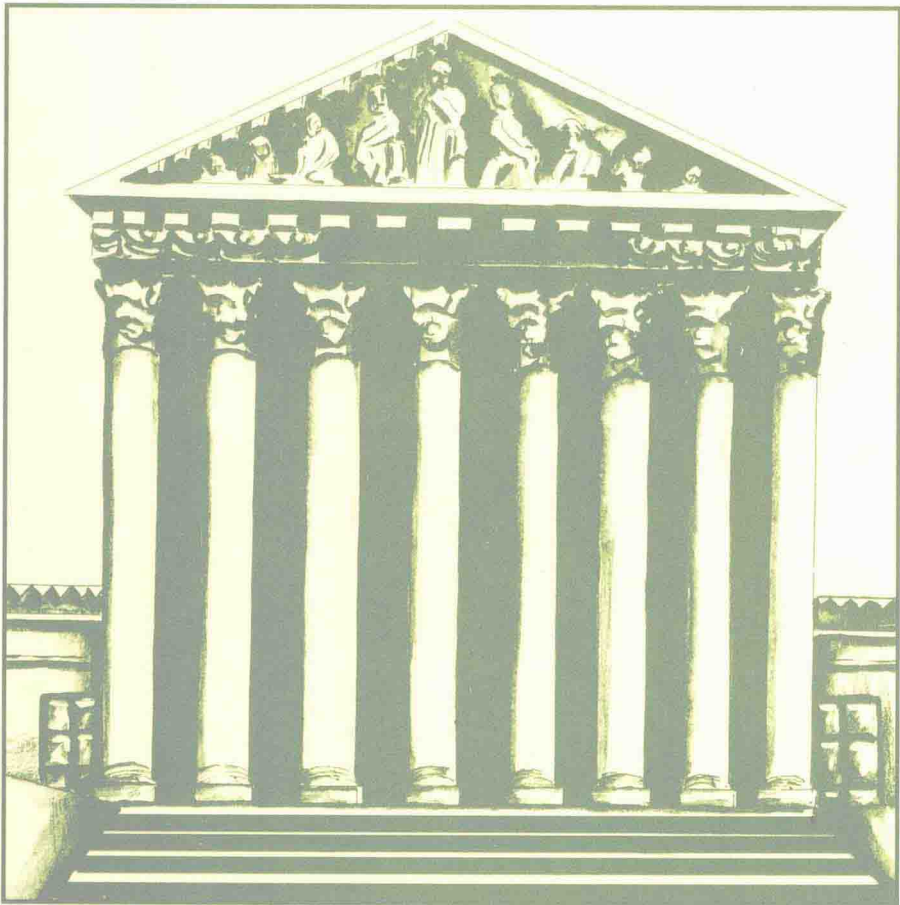
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# Constitutional Law

## National Power and Federalism

Fifth Edition

Christopher N. May and Allan Ides



Wolters Kluwer  
Law & Business

EXAMPLES & EXPLANATIONS

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## National Power and Federalism

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*Fifth Edition*

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**Wolters Kluwer**

Law & Business

AUSTIN BOSTON CHICAGO NEW YORK THE NETHERLANDS

EXAMPLES & EXPLANATIONS

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Aspen Publishers  
Attn: Order Department  
PO Box 990  
Frederick, MD 21705

Printed in the United States of America.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

ISBN 978-0-7355-8827-1

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

May, Christopher N.

Constitutional law : national power and federalism : examples & explanations / Christopher N. May, Allan Ides. — 5th ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-7355-8827-1

1. Constitutional law—United States. 2. Judicial review—United States. 3. Federal government—United States. I. Ides, Allan, 1949- II. Title.

KF4550.M29 2010

342.73—dc22

2009040843

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## National Power and Federalism

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*For our parents*  
*Virginia and Robert May*  
*Frances and Albert Ides*

# Preface

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Most of us arrive at law school with at least a minimal awareness of our constitutional system of government. We know generally that the national government is divided into three branches and that the Bill of Rights protects our fundamental freedoms. That awareness probably began with elementary school Thanksgiving Day pageants, developed substance through various American history and government classes in high school, and finally, for some of us, is topped by an undergraduate course in constitutional law. Outside the educational setting, constitutional law issues ripple through the popular media with frequent references to abortion, free speech, religion, racial and gender discrimination, gay rights, and so forth.

As law students, however, we learn very quickly that the study of constitutional law is anything but a meditation on the commonplace. And therein lies the treachery. The familiar quickly blends with the arcane, and we are forced to grapple with a tumult of doctrines, distinctions, and qualifications. Indeed, the familiar may soon disappear as we trek through justiciability, the commerce power, state action, and various other subjects that never seem to make the headlines. Even those topics that strike a common chord are presented with a treatment that is most uncommon. Add to this a bevy of wavering doctrines, concurring or opposing opinions, and the changing personnel of the Supreme Court, and the complexity can become overwhelming.

We're here to help. We have written two volumes designed to give you a foundation in the doctrines and methods of constitutional law and constitutional argument. This volume, *National Power and Federalism*, covers the powers of the federal courts, Congress, and the President; the doctrines of separation of powers and federalism; and some of the limitations that the Constitution imposes on state power. The second volume, *Individual Rights*, covers the provisions of the Constitution that protect us against the government, including the Takings and Contracts Clauses; the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses; and the Speech, Press, and Religion Clauses of the First Amendment.

These books try to provoke you into thinking about the larger issues of constitutional law with some depth and perception. They are not outlines. Nor are they research treatises on all the nuances of constitutional law. Rather, they present a problem-oriented guide through the principal doctrines of constitutional law—those covered in typical constitutional law courses—with an emphasis on how one might think about issues that



## Preface

arise within the various contexts in which these doctrines operate. Lawyers, after all, are problem solvers. These books are tools for constitutional law problem solvers (and students confronted with the reality of final exams).

We must include the usual caveat. Our books are not a substitute for your constitutional law class or for a basic casebook. Nor are they a substitute for reading those cases. We hope, however, that they will make the classroom experience richer and more accessible. In fact, our experience is that students who have read these materials along with traditional cases have found the cases more understandable and more easily digested. They have also found that class participation is less threatening and more fruitful. We are confident that you will have the same experience.

The approach we suggest is quite simple. As you begin a new topic in your constitutional law course, read the related chapter in either *National Power and Federalism* or *Individual Rights*. This will give you an overview of the area and a preliminary sense of how doctrines are applied within the area. In reading the chapters, however, don't just *read* the problems—*do them!* In other words, consider the problem and try to anticipate how it will be solved before you read the accompanying explanation. This will develop your analytical skills. Next, as you read your cases, refer back to the related chapters and chapter sections and assess how each case fits into the overall framework developed by the Court. See if the case comports with the problems and explanations. Be critical. Finally, when you complete the coverage of a topic, review the chapter again. This will give you confidence that you know the material. Students have also found these materials useful as study aids when preparing for their final exams. After all, finals are simply problems to be solved. In any event, don't just read these books; use them to develop your understanding and your skills.

Good luck in your studies and in your careers as problem-solving students of the Constitution.

Christopher N. May  
Allan Ides  
September 2009

# Acknowledgments

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We would like to express our appreciation to several people who provided assistance in the preparation of these books, beginning with a special thanks to our student research assistants at Loyola Law School and Washington and Lee University: Lilly Kim (LLS '98), Lauren Raskin (LLS '98), Eric Enson (LLS '99), James V. DeRossitt IV (W&L '96), Ashley DeMoss (W&L '97), Lawrence Striley (W&L '95), Kristen Strain (LLS '01), Kasha Arianne Harshaw (LLS '02), Jessica Levinson (LLS '05), Daniel Costa (UCLA '11), Mario Grimm (LLS '11), Mashashi Kawaguchi (LLS '11), Vanda Long (UNC '11), and Jacquelyn Mohr (LLS '11). Thanks also to our secretaries, Ruth Busch and Diane Cochran. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by Washington and Lee University and by Loyola Law School.

# Summary of Contents

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<i>Contents</i>		<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>		<i>xxi</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>		<i>xxiii</i>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	Judicial Review	1
<b>Chapter 2</b>	Congressional Power to Limit the Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and Inferior Federal Courts	61
<b>Chapter 3</b>	Justiciability	97
<b>Chapter 4</b>	Special Limitations on Judicial Review of State Laws	157
<b>Chapter 5</b>	The Powers of the National Government	211
<b>Chapter 6</b>	The Supremacy Clause	271
<b>Chapter 7</b>	The Separation of Powers	297
<b>Chapter 8</b>	The Dormant Commerce Clause	355
<b>Chapter 9</b>	The Privileges and Immunities Clause of Article IV	399
<i>Table of Cases</i>		421
<i>Index</i>		433

# Contents

---

<i>Preface</i>	<i>xxi</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xxiii</i>

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Judicial Review</b>	<b>I</b>
§1.1	Introduction and Overview	1
§1.2	The Background of <i>Marbury v. Madison</i>	2
§1.2.1	Independence and the Articles of Confederation	3
§1.2.2	The First State Constitutions	3
§1.2.3	The Emergence of Judicial Review	5
§1.2.4	Creating a New National Government	6
§1.2.5	The Federalist Era, 1789-1801	7
§1.2.6	The Republican Assault on the Judiciary	8
§1.3	<i>Marbury v. Madison</i> : Judicial Review of the Coordinate Branches	10
§1.3.1	Judicial Review of Acts of Congress	10
§1.3.2	Judicial Review of Executive Conduct	12
§1.3.3	The Constitution as Paramount Law in Court	13
§1.3.4	Marshall's Textual Defense of Judicial Review	14
§1.3.5	The Legitimacy of Judicial Review	17
§1.4	Federal Judicial Review of State Conduct	18
§1.4.1	Challenges Initiated in Federal Court	19
§1.4.2	Supreme Court Review of State Judgments	19
§1.4.3	Adequate and Independent State Grounds	22
	What Constitutes an "Adequate" State Ground?	23
	What Constitutes an "Independent" State Ground?	26
	In Case of Doubt: <i>Michigan v. Long</i>	27
	Cases Filed in the Federal Courts	30
§1.5	The Role of Judicial Review in a Democratic Society	31

## Contents

§1.6	The Debate over Constitutional Interpretation	34
§1.6.1	Interpretivism versus Noninterpretivism	34
§1.6.2	Textualism	36
§1.6.3	Originalism	37
§1.6.4	Nonoriginalism	38
§1.6.5	Approaching Consensus	39
§1.6.6	Sources and Levels of Generality	41
§1.7	The Techniques of Constitutional Interpretation	43
§1.7.1	Constitutional Text	44
§1.7.2	Original Intent	44
§1.7.3	Constitutional Structure	45
§1.7.4	History and Tradition	46
§1.7.5	Fairness and Justice	47
§1.7.6	Political Theory	48
§1.7.7	Social Policy	48
§1.7.8	Foreign, International, and State Law	49
§1.7.9	Supreme Court Precedent	49
§1.8	Authoritativeness of Judicial Interpretations	51
§1.8.1	The Supreme Court's Interpretations as Law	51
§1.8.2	Binding Effect on Other Courts	54
§1.8.3	Binding Effect on Nonjudicial Officials	55

<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Congressional Power to Limit the Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and Inferior Federal Courts</b>	<b>61</b>
§2.1	Introduction and Overview	61
§2.2	The Power to Make Exceptions to the Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court	63
§2.2.1	Defining the Scope of the Exceptions Power	64
	The Traditional or Plenary Power View	64
	Mandatory Interpretations	64
	Historical Practice	66
	Precedent	67
§2.2.2	Structural Limits on Exercises of the Exceptions Power	68
§2.2.3	External Limits on Exercises of the Exceptions Power	73
§2.2.4	A Comment on Ambiguities in the Jurisprudence of the Exceptions Clause	75

## Contents

§2.3	The Power to Create Article III Courts Inferior to the Supreme Court	75
§2.3.1	Defining the Power to Constitute Inferior Tribunals	76
§2.3.2	The Implicit Authority to Regulate Jurisdiction	79
§2.3.3	Structural Limits on the Power to Create Inferior Tribunals	80
§2.3.4	External Limits on the Power to Create Inferior Tribunals	83
§2.4	The Power to Create Non-Article III Courts	84
§2.4.1	The Argument Against Non-Article III Courts	84
§2.4.2	The Justification for Non-Article III Courts	85
§2.4.3	Territorial Courts	86
§2.4.4	Military Courts	87
§2.4.5	Adjunct Courts	87
§2.4.6	The Public Rights Exception: Original Form	90
§2.4.7	The Public Rights Exception: Modern Form	92

## Chapter 3      **Justiciability**      **97**

§3.1	Introduction and Overview	97
§3.2	The Elements of a Case or Controversy	99
§3.2.1	Constitutional Minimum Applied: Advisory Opinions and Collusive Suits	100
§3.2.2	Constitutional Minimum Applied: Declaratory Relief	101
§3.2.3	Constitutional Minimum Applied: Supreme Court Review of State Decisions	102
§3.3	Prudential Considerations: Beyond the Constitutional Minimum	103
§3.4	The Standing Doctrine	104
§3.4.1	Injury-in-Fact	106
§3.4.2	Causation	114
§3.4.3	Redressability	116
	General Federal and State Taxpayer Standing	121
§3.4.4	The Prohibition Against Generalized Grievances	122
	Taxpayer Standing and the Establishment Clause	124

## Contents

§3.4.5	The Rule Against Third-Party Standing	126
§3.4.6	The Zone of Interests Test	134
§3.4.7	Organizational Standing	135
§3.4.8	Legislative Standing	136
§3.5	The Timeline of Justiciability: The Ripeness and Mootness Doctrines	139
§3.6	Ripeness Applied	140
§3.7	Mootness Applied	143
§3.7.1	Variations on the Mootness Doctrine	144
	Collateral Consequences	144
	Wrongs Capable of Repetition yet Evading Review	145
	Voluntary Cessation	146
	Class Actions	147
§3.8	The Political Question Doctrine	147

## Chapter 4      **Special Limitations on Judicial Review of State Laws**      **157**

§4.1	Introduction and Overview	157
§4.2	The Eleventh Amendment	157
§4.2.1	The Eleventh Amendment and Sovereign Immunity	157
§4.2.2	Suits Filed by the United States	161
§4.2.3	Suits Filed by Another State	162
§4.2.4	Bankruptcy Proceedings	163
§4.2.5	Supreme Court Review of State Court Decisions	163
§4.2.6	The Stripping Doctrine	164
	<i>Ex parte Young</i> and the Fiction of Stripping	164
	Designating the Proper Defendant	167
	Prospective versus Retroactive Relief	168
	Holding Officials Personally Liable in Damages	170
	No Stripping for State Law Claims	173
	Congressional Restriction of the Stripping Doctrine	174
§4.2.7	Suits Against Governmental Entities	177
	Classifying a Governmental Entity	177
	Stating a Cause of Action: §1983	179
§4.2.8	Congressional Abrogation	181
§4.2.9	State Waiver by Consent to Suit	186
§4.2.10	The Eleventh Amendment Anomaly	188

## Contents

§4.3	The Siler Doctrine	190
§4.4	The Pullman Doctrine	192
§4.5	The Younger Doctrine	195
§4.5.1	The Basic Doctrine	195
§4.5.2	“Pending” State Proceedings	196
§4.5.3	The Nature of the State Proceedings	200
	Proceedings of a Judicial Nature	200
	Implicating Important State Interests	202
§4.5.4	Opportunity to Raise the Federal Claim in the State Proceeding	203
§4.5.5	Exceptions to the Younger Doctrine	204
	Bad Faith or Harassment	204
	Patently Unconstitutional	205
	Extraordinary Circumstances	205
§4.5.6	Returning to Federal Court	205
§4.6	Common Law Immunity	207

## Chapter 5 The Powers of the National Government 211

§5.1	Introduction and Overview	211
§5.2	The Necessary and Proper Clause	212
§5.3	The Power over Interstate Commerce	216
§5.3.1	A Brief History of Commerce Clause Jurisprudence	218
§5.3.2	The Modern Law of the Commerce Clause	223
§5.3.3	The Commerce Clause and Civil Rights	229
§5.3.4	Closer Judicial Scrutiny: <i>Lopez</i> and <i>Morrison</i>	232
§5.4	The Power to Tax and Spend	238
§5.4.1	What Constitutes a Tax for Purposes of the Taxing Power?	240
	The “Some Revenue” Test	240
	Is the Law Penal or Prohibitory?	241
§5.4.2	Specific Limitations on the Power to Tax	244
	The Requirement of Uniformity	244
	Direct Taxes and Proportionality	245
	Prohibition on Taxes or Duties Laid on Exports	246
§5.4.3	What Constitutes an Expenditure for Purposes of the Spending Power?	246
§5.5	The Power over Foreign Affairs	252
§5.5.1	The Foreign Commerce Power	252
§5.5.2	The Treaty Power	253
§5.5.3	Executive Agreements	259
§5.5.4	The War Powers	262



§5.6	The Constitutionally Enforceable Principle of Federalism	264
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>The Supremacy Clause</b>	<b>271</b>
§6.1	Introduction and Overview	271
§6.2	The Preemption Doctrine	274
§6.2.1	Types of Preemption	274
§6.2.2	Conflict Preemption	275
§6.2.3	Field Preemption	282
	Express Field Preemption	282
	Implied Field Preemption	286
§6.3	Federal Immunity from State Regulation	289
§6.4	Federal Immunity from State Taxation	290
§6.5	State-Imposed Limits on Election to Federal Office	293
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>The Separation of Powers</b>	<b>297</b>
§7.1	Introduction and Overview	297
§7.2	“Checks and Balances” and the Commingling of Powers	298
§7.3	Textual versus Structural or Functional Arguments	300
§7.3.1	Textual Separation of Powers Arguments	300
§7.3.2	Structural Separation of Powers Arguments	301
§7.3.3	Analyzing Separation of Powers Problems	302
§7.4	The Domestic Arena	303
§7.4.1	Presidential Exercise of Lawmaking Power	303
	The Nondelegation Doctrine	306
	The Item Veto	308
§7.4.2	The Legislative Veto	309
§7.4.3	The Administrative State	312
§7.4.4	The Appointment of Federal Officers	312
	Classifying Particular Government Positions	313
	Interbranch Appointments	317
	Appointments Made by Congress	317
	Setting Qualifications for Office	319
§7.4.5	The Removal of Federal Officers	320
	Congressional Participation in the Removal Process	321
	Other Interbranch Removals	322
	Assigning Removal Authority to an Executive Official Other than the President	322
	Limiting the Executive’s Grounds for Removal	322