



PennState

中原大學

Chung Yuan Christian University



## Supreme Voices: American Discussions about the Supreme Court

A short course in Legal English prepared for Chung Yuan Christian University. This course focuses on developing students' Legal English skills through an introduction to U.S. culture around the Supreme Court. Through a combination of reading excerpts from Supreme Court decisions, listening to oral arguments before the Supreme Court, listening to podcast episodes about the Supreme Court, and discussing these cases and topics in class, students will:

- Develop case reading skills
- Broaden Legal English vocabulary
- Develop English listening skills
- Identify persuasive techniques in spoken Legal English
- Deepen their understanding of the U.S. Supreme Court and its role in the lives of Americans

### Day 1, Monday, December 4 | *Baker v Carr* – the one that “broke” two Supreme Court justices

Today, we first discuss the Supreme Court of the United States, its role in U.S. government, and who sits on the Supreme Court. Next, we discuss *Baker v. Carr*, a case famous for the stress it placed on the justices in deciding its outcome. In fact, this case is famous for “breaking” two justices. After listening to oral arguments and podcast excerpts, we discuss why the justices viewed this case as so critical, and how *Baker v. Carr* is viewed today.

### Day 2, Tuesday, December 5 | *Tinker v Des Moines* – the one that affirmed student free speech rights

*Tinker v. Des Moines* gives us one of the most famous Supreme Court quotes – that public school students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”

Today we flex our reading muscles by reading excerpts of this landmark Supreme Court case, as well as commentary written about it both at the time it was decided and since. We discuss the role of unpopular speech in American culture.

### Day 3, Wednesday, December 6 | *Miranda v Arizona* – the one *Law & Order* made famous

If you’ve watched American crime dramas like *Law & Order*, you know the famous outcome of *Miranda v Arizona* because you’ve heard the famous Miranda Warning that police officers must give an individual before a custodial interrogation. We compare the excerpt from the case, the text of the warning today, and the way the Warning is used in American crime dramas. We discuss how rulings such as *Miranda* become an important part of American popular culture.

### Day 4, Thursday, December 7 | *Loving v Virginia* – the one with the most appropriate name

The Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution promises “equal protection of the laws,” and after *Loving v. Virginia* that includes the right of persons of all races to choose to marry a person of another race. We

listen to oral arguments in this case to identify methods of persuasion the advocates tried to use before the court.

**Day 5, Friday, December 8 | The Supreme Court Today – where are you going? Where have you been?**

On this final day of the course, we review all that we have learned about the Supreme Court, about voting rights and gerrymandering, about the First Amendment rights of students in public schools, about Fifth Amendment protections against self-incrimination, about equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment to choose whom you marry, and about the ongoing conversation Americans have with and about the Supreme Court. We also preview, with the help of podcasts and newspaper articles, cases the Supreme Court is hearing in its current sitting.