**COURT SYSTEMS: FEDERAL COURTS**

[Slide 1] Picture: Court Flowchart

There are 2 kinds of courts: FEDERAL COURTS and STATE COURTS

* They are mirrored; each has a bottom-level trial court, a middle-level appeals court and a top-level supreme court
* BOTTOM COURTS: These are the original courts where you enter into the system; if you break a state law, you go to a state trial court (99.9% of the cases happen in the states)
* But most of the Supreme Court cases come from the Federal Courts (65%) because usually Supreme Court cases deal with large-scale issues, sometimes Constitutional issues; States have a State Supreme Court that one can go to if one is unhappy with the decision of a state appellate court
* Original Jurisdictions of the Supreme Court of the United States are cases involving ambassadors and diplomats; cases in which state is a party, etc., which makes up 5% of the cases handled by the US Supreme Court

[Slide 2]

Organization of the Courts

* The only court in the Constitution is the Supreme Court
  + Congress makes and reorganizes the other courts
    - Constitutional Courts
      * Courts created by Congress according to Article III
        + Gives Congress the power to create courts as needed for specific tasks. (Ex. Appeals Court)
        + This is all the main courts
    - Legislative Courts
      * Highly-specialized courts – taxes, patents, maritime law
      * created by powers given to Congress but are not explicitly asked for by the constitution but are created in order for the Congress to do its job (Ex. Take care of taxes -> Tax court in case disputes arise)

[Slide 3]

Other Constitutional Powers

* Serve “during good behaviour”
  + Judges serve until they retire or die; there are no elections or term limits
    - Can only be removed by impeachment in Congress like that of the President
  + Independence of Judges
    - Not responsible to any other branch
  + Deals with Specific Subject matter
    - What do federal courts deal with?
      * Constitution issues (Only the federal court can interpret the Constitution)
      * Maritime Issues
      * Controversies with the U.S. Government
      * Disputes between States
      * Disputes with Citizens and States
      * Disputes with States and Foreign Citizens