

## The Judicial Branch

### 1. Structure

#### a. U.S. District Courts

- i. Federal Trial Courts; can have juries; original jurisdiction

#### b. U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal

- i. Federal appellate courts; divided into regional 'circuits'; appellate jurisdiction

### 2. U.S. Supreme Court

#### a. Structure

- i. 1 Chief Justice and 8 Associate Justices
- ii. President nominates Justices and Senate confirms
- iii. Federal judges have lifetime tenure
- iv. Can be impeached for misconduct

#### b. Jurisdiction

- i. Original Jurisdiction (rare)
  - 1. All cases between U.S. States, with states acting as parties
  - 2. All cases with foreign diplomats
- ii. Appellate Jurisdiction (common)
  - 1. All cases appealed to highest court
- iii. Judicial Review
  - 1. Power to declare law or act Unconstitutional
  - 2. Established in Marbury V. Madison

#### c. Procedures of the U.S. Supreme Court

- i. Grants 'writs of certiorari' to few cases
  - 1. This formally asks to hear the case
- ii. Briefs
- iii. Oral argument
- iv. Justices discuss case and opinions behind closed doors
- v. Majority and dissenting opinions (reasoning)