The Court’s Customs, Chemistry and Rules of Operation

The Fromm Institute
Spring 2015
Professor Curtis Caton
Old Supreme Court Chambers – 1810-1860
1935: Finally, A Home Of Its Own
The Courtroom
The Center of the Action
U.S. Supreme Court Agenda and Procedure

- Highest court decides only what it wants to: discretionary review determined by the “Rule of 4.”

- 10,000 plus annual applications (petition for writ of certiorari), supported by 30 page briefs.

- Only 75-85 cases accepted for review and decision.

- Next steps: a completely new round of briefing (50 pages); oral argument before the full Court; conference of Justices to take votes, assign responsibility for writing of majority and dissenting opinions; announcement of decision.
The Current Supreme Court