

LEGAL STUDIES (CONCENTRATION)

Overview

Program Mission and Guidelines

Legal Studies is an interdisciplinary field that draws from the humanities and social sciences to consider the purposes and structures of legal systems and how we negotiate principles of justice, rights, and obligations. Law is both an abstract ideal and a lived reality. It is also a social institution, constructed and maintained by fallible human beings, that permeates our everyday lives in myriad ways. It emerges from social, political, and cultural values, which vary across time and place; it affects different people differently; and law both shapes society and is shaped by it.

Legal Studies students learn a holistic way of thinking about the relationship among law, society, and justice that will serve them well whether they seek to practice law or work in another field. They are exposed to different ways of thinking about the law, the nature of various legal systems and institutional forms, different theories of law and justice, and the lived reality of law in different social, cultural, and historical contexts. They learn to question the nature of law and authority, to study the gaps between law-on-the-books and law-in-action, and to interrogate the relationships between law and hierarchies of power based on race, gender, and other identity categories.

The concentration consists of six classes: LS 101 - Introduction to Legal Studies, plus five additional courses selected from an approved list (available each semester from the Director of Legal Studies).

It is important to note that this is not a “pre-law” concentration, but it is eminently suitable for and should be of great interest to students who are considering law school. It should also appeal to students seeking to work with nonprofit organizations, in policy analysis, and various other careers. Any student interested in pursuing law school and a legal career should contact Emily Pelphrey (pelphrey@denison.edu), the pre-law career coach in the Knowlton Center.

Director

Professor Megan Threlkeld (<https://denison.edu/people/megan-threlkeld/>)

Committee: Professor Taku Suzuki, Associate Professors Heather Pool and Melissa Huerta, Assistant Professor Lindsey Schwartz, and Emily Pelphrey.

Legal Studies Concentration Requirements

Complete a minimum of six courses:

- LS 101 - Introduction to Legal Studies (preferably taken in the first or second year)

Five additional courses from an approved list (available each semester from the Director of Legal Studies):

- No more than two courses may come from the same department or program

- At least three courses must be at the 200 level or above

At least one course on theories or philosophies of what law as a concept means, what social purpose it serves, to what spheres of life it ought to extend, and how it ought to function in society. These courses encourage students to examine law as an abstract ideal. Examples of courses that fulfill this distribution might include:

Code	Title
COMM 324	The Rhetoric of Citizenship
ECON 201	Economic Justice
PHIL 121	Ethics: Philosophical Considerations of Morality
PHIL 126	Social and Political Philosophy
PHIL 250	Philosophy of Law
PHIL 272	Ethics of Data and Information
PHIL 285	Biomedical Ethics
PHIL 326	Theories of Justice
PPA 132	Introduction to Theorizing About Political Life: Normative Issues Common to Democratic Systems
REL 102	Ethics, Society and the Moral Self

At least one course on lived realities of the law in the United States. Those courses examine how the law works or has played out in reality and might focus on case law, case studies, legal ethnography, policy analysis, institutional law/policy, or similar content. Examples might include, among others:

Code	Title
COMM 328	Communication Law
EDUC 215	Legal Issues in U.S. Education
DA/PHIL 272	Ethics of Data and Information
HIST 194	Citizenship & Belonging in U.S. History
HIST 290	Advanced Studies in Modern United States History (Drugs in Modern America only)
HIST 392/BLST 332	The Fourteenth Amendment and the Meanings of Equality
PPA 319	Topics in the Study of American Politics (U.S. Constitution & Judicial Politics only)
PPA 375	Race and Law in US Politics
PSYC 306	300-level Special Topics courses (Psychology and the Law only)
SES 262/PPA 319	Environmental Dispute Resolution

At least one course on international law or a legal system other than common law. Students gain an important understanding of laws and legal systems that emerge differently in different times and places. These courses consider international law or systems other than the common law. Examples of courses that fulfill the international/comparative requirement might include, among others:

Code	Title
AGRS 340	Ancient Athenian Law and Democracy

AGRS 341	Roman Law: Delict/Torts
AGRS 342	Roman Law: Family Law
ANTH 321	Anthropology of Human Rights
HIST 205	Sophomore Seminar in History (Refugee & Humanitarian History only)
HIST 357	Violence in Early Modern Europe
HIST 358	Witches, Saint & Skeptics
PPA 345	Human Rights in Global Perspectives
PPA 349	Terrorism and Political Violence
PPA 359	Topics in the Study of International Policies (International Law only)
REL 302	Ethics of Peace and War
REL 327	Women and Social Ethics: In the Global Context
WGST 276	Gender, War and Conflict

Courses

LS 101 - Introduction to Legal Studies (4 Credit Hours)

Law is simultaneously everywhere, all at once, and nowhere in particular. What is law, exactly? Where does it come from? Why and how does it matter? Drawing on a variety of disciplinary and scholarly traditions (including history, philosophy, politics, and others), students in this course will consider some of the ways that law organizes contemporary life. We will pay particular attention to the law's historical evolution, legal institutions and actors, and questions about the law's authority and legitimacy. Readings and discussions focus on the United States but briefly address comparative and global perspectives as well. This course serves as the foundation of the Legal Studies concentration.

LS 150 - Pre-Law Practicum (1 Credit Hour)

This course offers an introduction to the possibilities and practicalities of pursuing a legal career. Students will learn about applying to and being successful in law school, networking opportunities with current professionals, and exploring their own interests and values. If you think you might want to go to law school, or if you are curious about a career in law, this course will help you understand what that entails.

LS 199 - Legal Studies Transfer Course (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

LS 299 - Legal Studies Transfer Course (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

LS 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

A student in good standing may work intensively in areas of special interest under the Directed Study plan. A Directed Study is appropriate when, under the guidance of a faculty member, a student wants to explore a subject more fully than is possible in a regular course or to study a subject not covered in the regular curriculum. A Directed Study should not normally duplicate a course that is regularly offered. Directed Studies are normally taken for 3 or 4 credits. A one-semester Directed Study is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Directed Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

LS 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

A student in good standing may work intensively in areas of special interest under the Directed Study plan. A Directed Study is appropriate when, under the guidance of a faculty member, a student wants to explore a subject more fully than is possible in a regular course or to study a subject not covered in the regular curriculum. A Directed Study should not normally duplicate a course that is regularly offered. Directed Studies are normally taken for 3 or 4 credits. A one-semester Directed Study is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Directed Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

LS 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Independent Study engages a student in the pursuit of clearly defined goals. In this effort, a student may employ skills and information developed in previous course experiences or may develop some mastery of new knowledge or skills. A proposal for an Independent Study project must be approved in advance by the faculty member who agrees to serve as the project advisor. Note: Independent Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

LS 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Independent Study engages a student in the pursuit of clearly defined goals. In this effort, a student may employ skills and information developed in previous course experiences or may develop some mastery of new knowledge or skills. A proposal for an Independent Study project must be approved in advance by the faculty member who agrees to serve as the project advisor. Note: Independent Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

LS 399 - Legal Studies Transfer Course (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.