

LEGAL STUDIES (LAW)

LAW 103: Introduction to the American Legal System (3 credits)

This course introduces students to basic legal concepts, the structure of the American state and federal court systems, basic legal theory and practice, and provides an overview of several areas of law. This course is required for all legal studies majors, minors, and certificate students.

LAW 205: Paralegals: The Essentials (3 credits)

The paralegal field is constantly evolving and has become one of the fastest-growing occupations in the United States. This course is designed to give aspiring paralegals as much information as possible as they learn to become a successful paralegal. Upon completing this course, students will be able to define what a paralegal is, explain what paralegals do, and will have the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in the paralegal profession.

LAW 220: Business Law (3 credits)

This course studies the legal environment of business, including an examination of the format and characteristics of corporations, partnerships, and agency law. The law of contracts is studied in detail.
Prerequisite or corequisite: LAW 103

LAW 228: Conviction of the Innocent (3 credits)

This course is designed to facilitate students' development of a nuanced understanding of how race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, and ability affect the operations of and experiences within the US criminal justice system by educating students on the serious issue of wrongful convictions. It focuses specifically on the issues affecting cases of those who are actually innocent of the offense(s) for which they have been convicted and incarcerated. It is an interdisciplinary course that examines this problem from the broad perspectives of law, criminal justice, public policy-making, psychology, forensic science, and race and gender studies.

LAW 232: Principles of Litigation (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the principles and process of civil litigation from pre-suit investigation through trial. Students will gain insight into the litigation process from lecture and class discussion, reading assignments, examination of actual-case documentation, and the drafting of pleadings and motions and other documents.
Prerequisite or corequisite: LAW 103

LAW 240: Legal Research and Writing (3 credits)

This course surveys published sources and materials of the law. Students are trained in the research and analysis of legal problems and in the practical applications of legal writing. This course includes drafting correspondence, case briefs, and legal memoranda.
Prerequisite or corequisite: LAW 103

LAW 241: Computer Assisted Legal Research (3 credits)

This course provides an opportunity for hands-on experience in legal research and fact investigation. Topics covered include citation and searching methods, types of resources, Web site evaluation, and a comparison of print and electronic research tools. Students will perform tasks similar to those expected of them in a legal setting. Print, electronic, and Web-based resources from information providers such as WESTLAW and LEXIS-NEXIS are included.
Prerequisite: LAW 240 or permission of Department Chair

LAW 246: Tort Law (3 credits)

This introductory course covers basic tort law, including assault, battery, trespass, conversion, infliction of emotional distress, products liability, and negligence. Classroom work will be reinforced by assignments in which students research and brief a variety of tort cases.
Prerequisite: LAW 232 and LAW 240

LAW 248: Principles of Criminal Procedure (3 credits)

This course provides an overview of criminal procedure with special focus on the respective rights and duties of the defense and prosecution. It covers the development and present state of the law as it applies to arrest, search and seizure, statements by the accused and others, the right to counsel, trial proceedings and issues, sentencing, punishment, and appeal. The course is designed to give students an understanding of the history and development of the constitutional dynamics of a criminal case and the current state of the law from the perspective of legal practitioners. Students will use a text supplemented with outside readings that include criminal case law, law-review articles, court pleadings, and fiction. Instructional materials also include videotapes, such as 'The Thin Blue Line.' Students will be required to brief cases and write short papers.

Prerequisite or corequisite: LAW 103, sophomore status, or permission of the Department Chair

LAW 249: Principles of Criminal Law (3 credits)

This course provides an overview of the history and structure of criminal law and focuses on the elements of common crimes, common defenses, the concepts of criminal liability, criminal intent, and conduct punishable by the criminal law. The course is designed to give students an understanding of the development and current state of criminal law and the similarities and differences between criminal and civil law. Students will use a text supplemented with outside readings that include case law, jury instructions, law-review articles, and fiction.

Prerequisite or corequisite: LAW 103, sophomore status, or permission of the Department Chair

LAW 250: Wills, Estates, and Trust Management (3 credits)

An examination of the law of property and how it is obtained, held, and disposed of during life and at death. The course includes preparation and drafting of various estate planning documents. Instruction includes using computer software in the writing of wills.

Prerequisite or corequisite: LAW 103, sophomore status, or permission of the Department Chair

LAW 255: Contract Law (3 credits)

Contract law is critical in all legal and business transactions. The existence and validity of a contract is determined by specific rules. Students will learn about formation through offer and acceptance, contract enforceability, the necessity of consideration, and breach of contract and will draft contract provisions as a paralegal might in a law office.

Prerequisite or corequisite: LAW 103, sophomore status, or permission of the Department Chair

LAW 260: Real Estate Law (3 credits)

This course introduces the student to the following areas: ownership interests, methods and problems of co-ownership, contracts for the sale of real estate, deeds, mortgages, title examinations, brokerage contracts, leases, and landlord and tenant rights and liabilities. The course includes preparation of a title examination and various real estate documents, including RESPA forms.

Prerequisite or corequisite: LAW 103, sophomore status, or permission of the Department Chair

LAW 299: Paralegal Internship (3 credits)

The student chooses a law office or other legal setting that offers a varied exposure to all aspects of paralegal work to gain practical experience within a realistic setting. The internship has been designed for those students who will be entering the legal assistant profession after completing the associate degree program. This course is graded Pass/Fail.

Prerequisite: A minimum CGPA of 2.0, sophomore status, and approval of the Department Chair. Open only to paralegal or legal studies majors. Required of associate degree paralegal majors.

LAW 330: Advanced Litigation (3 credits)

Building on the information learned in Principles of Litigation, students will explore topics raised there in greater detail, focusing on the key to the process of civil litigation, the gathering of potential evidence and the presentation at trial of admissible evidence. Students will also concentrate on processes likely to be encountered in a litigation practice, such as discovery and dispositive motions.

Prerequisite: LAW 232 and three legal specialty electives

LAW 371: Evidence (3 credits)

This course examines the rules of evidence in both civil and criminal proceedings, focusing on the gathering of potential evidence and the presentation to a judicial tribunal of admissible evidence. Topics include relevancy, competency, impeachment, real and demonstrative evidence, best evidence (original writing), judicial notice, expert testimony, character evidence, the hearsay rule and its exceptions, privileged communications, admissions and confessions, and civil rights. Using federal and state rules of evidence, students will analyze and evaluate possible pieces of evidence and argue orally and in writing through dispositive motions, for inclusion or exclusion at trial.

Prerequisite: LAW 103, LAW 232, LAW 248, junior status, or permission of the Department Chair

LAW 405: Constitutional Law (3 credits)

Students are introduced to Constitutional Law through study of actual Supreme Court cases from Marbury v. Madison to the most recent decisions of the court. Through case briefing and class discussion, the cases are put in an historical perspective with emphasis on pertinent court doctrines. Students will prepare memoranda, complaints, and other legal documents appropriate for constitutional claims. Topics covered include judicial review, separation of powers, the Bill of Rights, procedural and substantive due process and privacy.

Prerequisite: LAW 232, three legal specialty electives, and senior status or permission of the Department Chair

LAW 415: Advanced Legal Research and Writing (3 credits)

Building on the skills learned in Legal Research and Writing, students will research and analyze state and federal statutes, cases, common law, regulations, and rules. Based on their research, students will prepare legal memoranda for the office and the court.

Prerequisite: LAW 240, three legal specialty electives, and senior status or permission of the Department Chair

LAW 450: Legal Studies Capstone (3 credits)

This course has two primary purposes: 1) to reinforce the core curriculum and key subject matter relating to the legal studies and paralegal studies majors, and 2) to complete the preparation of legal and paralegal studies majors for law school, graduate school, and their professional careers. To address the former purpose, we will read and discuss foundational texts from the fields of legal philosophy, critical legal studies, legal history, constitutional civil liberties, and socio-legal studies. We will also discuss the lifestyles and pitfalls of law school, the practice of law, and working as a paralegal. As to the latter purpose, the course will review and reinforce the important steps in high-level legal research, citation, and writing. This intellectual program will culminate in a research paper that will take the form of a law review comment or graduate-level seminar paper.

LAW 490: Legal Ethics (3 credits)

This course offers an in-depth examination of the ethical considerations and dilemmas faced by paralegals and lawyers in their work environment. Building on the ethics learned in earlier courses, students will explore complex ethical issues using case studies, literature, and potentially films.

Prerequisite: LAW 232, LAW 240, and three legal specialty electives

LAW 498: Legal Studies Internship (3 credits)

This extensive internship places students in a law office or law-related setting in corporations, courts, banks, government agencies, etc., to further enhance their legal training in a work environment under the supervision of professionals and college faculty. Open only to legal studies majors. This course is graded Pass/Fail.

Prerequisite: LAW 240, three legal specialty electives, a minimum CGPA of 2.0, junior status, and approval of the Department Chair

LAW 499: Legal Studies Internship (6 credits)

This extensive internship places students in a law office or law-related setting in corporations, courts, banks, government agencies, etc., to further enhance their legal training in a work environment under the supervision of professionals and college faculty. Open only to legal studies majors. This course is graded Pass/Fail.

Prerequisite: LAW 240, three legal specialty electives, a minimum CGPA of 2.0, junior status, and approval of the Department Chair