
Law, Letters, and Society

The Law, Letters, and Society major will resume in Spring Quarter of 2018. This follows an extensive review of the program that has both confirmed the value of the major for the College and the need to enhance the program's teaching and administrative resources. Given these needs, the faculty have decided not to accept applications to the major until Spring Quarter of 2018, with a new admissions process for members of the Class of 2021. Students admitted through that process will begin the program in Autumn Quarter 2018.

For current majors in the Classes of 2017 and 2018, the major requirements (described below) will remain unchanged. The requirements for the Class of 2021 will be announced before selection of the new cohort. For the coming year, all other students interested in the academic and scholarly study of the law should consult with their individual advisers to discuss complementary programs of study.

Program of Study

The program in Law, Letters, and Society is concerned with law in civilian and customary legal systems, both historically and contemporaneously. The program is designed to develop the student's analytical skills to enable informed and critical examination of law broadly construed. The organizing premise of the program is that law is a tool of social organization and control, not simply an expression of will or aspiration, and that it is best understood by careful study of both rhetorical artifacts and empirical consequences of its application. Program requirements are constructed to support the organizing premise, and, because of the nature of the requirements, transfer students are not eligible to register as Law, Letters, and Society majors.

The program requires course work in three areas, although there is a reasonably broad latitude both expected and permitted in satisfaction of the distributional requirement. There is a substantial writing requirement for all majors; majors are expected to produce substantial written work (sometimes called "the BA Paper") under the close supervision of a faculty member whose area of scholarly concern is related to the broad objectives of the program.

Program Requirements

Course work is required in three areas. After successfully completing the Introductory Course, students must take two courses in Letters and two courses in Society. In addition, students must complete six other courses that, while not necessarily offered or listed formally under either rubric, are substantively supportive of the topics, areas, skills, or concerns of the two areas. Courses satisfying the additional requirement are identified on a quarterly basis, and final approval of additional required course work is made by consultation between the student and the program chairman.

The Introductory Course

The Introductory Course establishes the intellectual moorings of the program. The importance of the Introductory Course lies not in its content (indeed, its precise focus and scope may be different from time to time) but on its approach to the nature of law. Recently, for example, the Introductory Course has been LLSO 24200 Legal Reasoning, a study, based primarily on cases, of the classic conventions of legal argument in the Anglo-American legal system. In other years, the Introductory Course might be Roman Law or Greek Law, Medieval Law, or a text-based course on ancient legal philosophy, or a comparison of modern legal categories and policies with those of former societies and cultures. The objective is not so much to establish a historical foundation for modern studies as to demonstrate that legal systems are culturally rooted; that urgent, present concerns may obscure important characteristics of legal ideas and behavior; and that many recurrent themes in Western legal thought are shaped or driven by both common and uncommon features. Unlike many legal studies programs that attempt to orient study of the law primarily in contemporary debates, usually in the field of American constitutional law, the program seeks to organize its exploration of law as a system rather than as a forum or an instrument.

Other Course Work

Students must also take two courses each in the Letters and Society divisions of the program, plus six other courses complementary to the required work, as outlined previously (the other six courses may be ones cross listed in the program or may be from other disciplines). Letters and Society are not meant as fixed or self-defining fields, but instead as organizational categories emphasizing two fundamental modes of examining law in a systemic fashion. Courses under the rubric of Letters (whether based in the program or in English, philosophy, or political theory) tend to be based on the study of literary and historical artifacts, such as cases, tracts, conventional literature, or other texts, and emphasize the ways in which law formally constitutes itself. Questions of interpretative and normative theory, rhetorical strategy, and the like are central to such courses. Society serves to organize studies from a variety of different disciplines (including history, political science, economics, and sociology) that try to measure, with different techniques and at different times, the effect of law on society. The combined objective is to treat law as an intellectual activity and as a phenomenon, and to emphasize that both occur in contexts that help to shape them, whether ancient or modern.

Research

In addition to satisfying the course requirements, each student in the program must produce evidence of sustained research in the form of a substantial research paper during either the junior or senior year and obtain approval of a member of the faculty, although not necessarily a member of the program faculty. Papers may be written in conjunction with Law, Letters, and Society courses, under the auspices of reading and research courses, or in a Research Seminar. (The paper is an independent requirement, however, and need not be accomplished in conjunction with enrollment in a specific course.)

The scope, method, and objective of the paper, as well as its length, are subject to negotiation between the student and the instructor.

Summary of Requirements

LLSO 24200	Legal Reasoning (Introductory Course)	100
Two Letters courses (List II)		200
Two Society courses (List III)		200
Six Complementary courses *		600
Total Units		1100

* Complementary courses are courses from other departments that support work done in the major. Some students prefer to concentrate their work on a specific issue or problem, e.g., urban politics and policy, historic societal discrimination, or the role of international institutions in policy implementation. Other students prefer to examine a series of discrete topics that are not directly related but that concern the operation of regimes of social control. Lists of Pre-Approved Complementary Courses are published quarterly, and students who believe that a course not so listed nonetheless supports work in the major may petition the program chair for approval at any time while enrolled in the course or within one quarter of completing the course. Courses taken in Autumn Quarter of the second year simultaneously with the Introductory Course may count as Complementary Courses.

Honors

Students who wish to be considered for honors must notify the program chairman and their faculty supervisor in writing no later than two quarters before the quarter in which they expect to receive their degree. Eligible students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.50 both overall and in the major, and they must write a distinguished research paper. The paper must be submitted by noon on Friday of fifth week in the quarter of proposed graduation (other papers must be submitted by noon on Friday of seventh week), and the student's faculty supervisor and a second reader must agree that honors are merited. It should be noted that honors are awarded sparingly.

Reading and Research Courses

For students with a legitimate interest in pursuing study that cannot be met by means of regular courses, there is an option of devising a reading and research course to be supervised by a member of the faculty and taken for a quality grade. Such courses may not be used to satisfy the requirements of either the two-course Letters or two-course Society requirements, but may be used to satisfy part of the other six required courses, with the written permission of the program chairman obtained in advance of initiation of the work. Only two research courses may be used within the major. LLSO 29400 Research Seminar may also be used as one of the six Complementary Courses.

Grading

Two of the six complementary courses required in the program may, with consent of instructor, be taken for *P/F* grading. Students who enroll in LLSO 29400 Research Seminar, offered annually, are graded on a *P/F* basis, and the seminar counts as one of the two *P/F*-graded complementary courses.

Advising

Students who wish to major in Law, Letters, and Society must register for LLSO 24200 Legal Reasoning in Autumn Quarter of their second year. *This requirement is not negotiable.* Students should note that, as an interdisciplinary major, the program has a strictly limited enrollment and that registration for the Introductory Course is determined during the preceding Spring Quarter. Upon deciding to major in Law, Letters, and Society, students should arrange to consult with the program chairman on their course of study in the program. Students should continue to consult with their College advisers on general education degree requirements.

Course Distribution Lists

I. The Introductory Course

LLSO 24200	Legal Reasoning (Not offered Autumn 2017)
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II. Letters

LLSO 20019	Mesopotamian Law
LLSO 20601	American Revolution, 1763 to 1789
LLSO 21710	Machiavelli: Discourses on Livey and The Prince
LLSO 22401	Topics in Judicial Studies
LLSO 22403	Free Speech and the First Amendment
LLSO 22612	Introduction to Political Philosophy
LLSO 23501	History of Information
LLSO 24300	American Law and the Rhetoric of Race
LLSO 24711	Lincoln: Slavery, War, and the Constitution

III. Society

LLSO 20019	Mesopotamian Law
LLSO 20116	Global-Local Politics
LLSO 21001	Human Rights: Contemporary Issues
LLSO 21002	Human Rights: Philosophical Foundations
LLSO 21400	Health and Human Rights
LLSO 23100	Environmental Law
LLSO 23262	International Human Rights
LLSO 24011	The Political Nature of the American Judicial System
LLSO 24901	U.S. Environmental Policy
LLSO 26201	Economics and Environmental Policy
LLSO 26802	Public Opinion
LLSO 26804	Insurgency, Terrorism, and Civil War
LLSO 27012	Histories of Violence in the United States
LLSO 27801	Media Ecology: Embodiment and Software
LLSO 28010	United States Legal History
LLSO 28710	Democracy and the Politics of Wealth Redistribution
LLSO 28802	United States Labor History
LLSO 29050	Youth Law and Policy: Child Welfare and Juv. Just. in the U.S.
LLSO 29120	Poverty Law and Policy Reform
LLSO 29122	Comparative Law and the Welfare State

IV. Research and Reading

LLSO 29400	Research Seminar
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Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.