



**ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Illinois' first public university

POLITICS *and* GOVERNMENT

LEGAL STUDIES

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Politics and Government offers majors in political science and in legal studies. We maintain 15 to 20 tenure/tenure-track faculty members annually, while serving 300 majors and 150 minors. We offer political science classes in the following areas: American Government, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory, Public Administration, and Research Methodology. Legal studies courses are geared to help students prepare for a paralegal career. Paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public except as permitted by law. The ISU Legal Studies Program is approved by the American Bar Association.

LEGAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Overview

- 120 credits to graduate from Illinois State
- 42 credits of senior-level courses (200 and 300 levels)
- 39 credits of general education (13 classes, no MC-ICL required)
- B.S. or B.A. requirements
- Foreign language requirement (must complete LAN 112 unless you had three years of the same foreign language in high school)

The major

The legal studies major is designed to meet the following learning objectives: foster critical thinking skills; develop general communications skills; acquire legal research and writing skills; expand computer skills; obtain interviewing and investigation skills; acquire an understanding of the paralegal profession and ethical obligations; and develop law office management skills. The major requires 40 credit hours (eight required core courses; three legal studies electives; and three other electives).

The eight required courses are:

- POL 106: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS (3 HOURS)
- LGS 201: INTRODUCTION TO LAW FOR PARALEGALS (3 HOURS)
- LGS 203: LEGAL RESEARCH I (3 HOURS)
- LGS 204: LEGAL RESEARCH II (3 HOURS)
- POL 296: POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (3 HOURS)
- LGS 370: LITIGATION I (3 HOURS)
- LGS 371: LITIGATION II (3 HOURS)
- LGS 398A20: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (3 HOURS MINIMUM)

Three legal studies electives must be chosen from designated legal specialty courses, such as:

- LGS 210: COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS (3 HOURS)
- LGS 216: INTRODUCTION TO TORTS (3 HOURS)
- LGS 311: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (3 HOURS)
- LGS 314: INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES & EVIDENCE (3 HOURS)
- LGS 315: REAL ESTATE LAW (3 HOURS)
- LGS 319: PROBATE LAW (3 HOURS)
- LGS 322: DOMESTIC RELATIONS & FAMILY LAW (3 HOURS)
- LGS 360: CRIMINAL LITIGATION (3 HOURS)
- LGS 372: EMPLOYMENT LAW (3 HOURS)
- The three remaining electives may be chosen from either legal specialty courses, such as the offerings listed above, or from specified law-related courses.
- A maximum of six professional practice (LGS 398A20) credits count toward the major.
- A double major or minor is strongly advised.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The department requires POL 296, a one-credit hour, 9-week course that is to be taken prior to the required internship. This is a professional development course where students will create a resume, develop mock interview skills, receive information on graduate and law schools, and receive further prep for the required internship.

Upon completion of the professional development course, students will be required to fulfill 3 credit hours of an internship (1 credit hour is equal to 45 work hours). The internship will provide students with valuable career experience. The department has a faculty internship director for each major that works with political science students seeking and securing their internship. The department posts requests from a variety of different governmental agencies but also expects students to finalize their own placement. The director of legal studies coordinates internships for legal studies students and political science students who are placed with legal employers.

OUT-OF-CLASSROOM OPPORTUNITIES

Today's current job climate requires students to broaden their educational experience by getting hands-on training. It also allows students to network with individuals that may benefit them in the future. Here are just a few of the out of classroom experiences found in the Department of Politics and Government:

Law related

Law Club—Student-run organization that sponsors numerous law-related activities and events. These events include a tour Chicago law schools; Law School Conference & Forum; and talks with attorneys, law school students, faculty, and judges on various legal topics.

Mock Trial Team—Receive academic credit and practical experience in the roles of lawyers and witnesses in simulated criminal and civil trials. The team is taught and coached by practicing attorneys. There are local, regional, and national competitions for the team.

Pre-Law Advisement Center—Formed to provide students interested in attending law school with a central location to access information relating to legal education (SH 423).

SAMPLE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN LEGAL STUDIES

Primary occupations

Legal assistant
Legal information technology specialist
Paralegal

Law school

Other occupations

Administrative assistant
Closing clerk
Compliance officer
Contract administrator
Court administrator
Court clerk
Court interpreter
Document reviewer
Grant writer
Insurance claims adjuster
Investigator
Judicial assistant
Jury consultant
Law clerk
Legal analyst
Legislative analyst
Municipal clerk
Paralegal instructor
Risk management technician
Title examiner, abstractor and researcher
Trust officer