



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

# POLITICS *and* GOVERNMENT

## LEGAL STUDIES

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### ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Politics and Government offers majors in political science and 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 (nine required core courses, three legal studies electives, and two other electives).

The nine 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 (1 HOUR)
- LGS 313: LAW OFFICE TECHNOLOGY (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 two 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, nine-week course. 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.

Students are required to fulfill three credit hours of an internship (one credit hour is equal to 45 work hours). The internship provides students with experience working under the supervision of a practicing attorney. Although the director of legal studies may provide guidance, students must finalize their own placement.

All legal studies students participate in the expungement clinic. The clinic provides hands-on legal experience in assisting low-income clients seeking to expunge and seal old criminal records. The clinic gives these individuals access to employment, rental, and lending opportunities necessary for moving forward with their lives. This venture is a collaborative project with the Bloomington office of Prairie State Legal Services.

### 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*

**Pre-Law Club**—Student-run organization that sponsors numerous law-related activities and events. These events include a tour of Chicago law schools; Law School Fair; as well as 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. Students must complete POL 283: Trial Advocacy to be eligible to try out for the team. Interested students should contact the director of legal studies to get an override to register in POL 283 if they are unable to enroll in the course.

### SAMPLE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN LEGAL STUDIES

#### Primary occupations

Private sector paralegal  
Public sector 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  
Legal assistant  
Legal information technology specialist  
Legislative analyst  
Municipal clerk  
Paralegal instructor  
Risk management technician  
Title examiner, abstractor, and researcher  
Trust officer