Program Overview

The legal studies major/minor and the pre-law scholars program serve as excellent preparation for the first year of law school. The programs also aid students who decide to practice in their primary major profession. These students' practical skills will be enhanced by their rigorously developed analytical expertise, along with their ability to recognize legal issues and understand the impact of the law on the practice of their primary profession. In addition, law is also studied from a liberal arts perspective, engaging students in an understanding of political and legal systems and the student's responsibility as a citizen of a country or countries and of the world. Other academic disciplines are also examined with respect to their influence or insight they provide on the law and the legal process.

The American Bar Association does not endorse a specific undergraduate curriculum. These programs allow students to pursue their primary degree programs that interest them most while supplementing their education with a legal studies curriculum.

Offered as a secondary major, students pursue the legal studies degree in combination with another major. The area of the second major varies according to the student’s interests and can include history, philosophy, English, criminal justice, sociology, political science, theatre, modern languages, engineering, health care or the sciences.

Prospective freshman seeking admission to the pre-law scholars program must complete a separate application through the office of admission.

Curriculum

The pre-law program is very multidisciplinary and includes pre-law studies coursework plus coursework from a variety of disciplines, including accounting, economics, history, philosophy, political science, English, sociology, criminal justice, communications and theatre. Legal studies coursework enhances a student's ability to articulate legal arguments (both in written and oral communication) while critically analyzing conflicts from opposing perspectives.

The coursework for the major and minor in legal studies and the pre-law scholars program focuses on analytical problem solving skills, critical reading skills, writing skills and research skills. Experiential learning is a hallmark of the pre-law program. Students have the opportunity to learn about alternative dispute resolution, trial practice and appellate practice through academic texts and mock trial competitions, negotiation and mediation exercises, and a capstone oral appellate argument. Service learning courses address real world problems and articulate legal solutions. Shadowing and internship experiences expose our students to the courts and various areas of legal practice. Students explore a variety of legal specialties in our courses, Introduction to Law and Introduction to Legal Careers.

Students develop strong oral and written communications skills through a variety of courses including legal research, legal writing, trial practice and appellate practice. The primary focus is on the American legal system, but students also study the Anglo-American common law tradition; other legal systems including civil law both in the Romanistic and Germanic legal families; religious based legal systems including Sharia law, Cannon law, Talmudic law and Hindu law; Chinese law rooted in the Confucian and communist systems; and chthonic legal traditions in Comparative Legal Systems. The legal studies major requires 36 credit hours, the legal studies minor requires 24 credit hours and the pre-law scholars program requires 17 credit hours.

About the Faculty

Students are taught by professors in the pre-law program, faculty and staff at the law school, and professors in other relevant academic areas.
Admission Requirements

Freshman: All applications are thoroughly and carefully reviewed. Solid academic performance in college preparatory course work is a primary criterion in reviewing a freshman applicant’s file. College admission test scores (ACT or SAT) are used as an additional indicator of the student’s ability to meet the University’s academic requirements and to qualify the student for certain University scholarship programs. To be considered for admission to any Saint Louis University undergraduate program, the applicant must be approaching graduation from an accredited high school or have an acceptable score on the General Education Development (GED) test.

Admission to the pre-law scholars program requires a composite ACT score of 28. Strong applicants will also have a high school GPA of 3.6 or higher. Any admission consideration will take into account a review of the applicant’s high school transcript.

Transfer: Applicants must be a graduate of an accredited high school or have an acceptable score on the GED. An official high school transcript and official test scores are required only of those students who have attempted fewer than 24 transferable semester hours (or 30 quarter hours) of college credit. Those having completed 24 hours or more of college credit need only submit a transcript from previously attended college(s). In reviewing a transfer applicant’s file, the office of admission holistically examines the student’s academic performance in college-level coursework as an indicator of

Scholarships and Financial Aid

There are two principal ways to help finance a Saint Louis University education:
+ Scholarships: awarded based on academic achievement, service, leadership and financial need.
+ Financial Aid: provided in the form of grants and loans, some of which require repayment.

For priority consideration for merit-based scholarships, applicants should apply for admission by Dec. 1 and complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1.

For more information, visit the student financial services office online at finaid.slu.edu.

Internships and Careers

The legal studies program recognizes the importance of an internship and its ability to provide an important bridge between academic and professional worlds. To aid students in participating in this rewarding and beneficial experience the legal studies program maintains connections with a variety of legal organizations; law firms; and state, local and federal governmental institutions.

These organizations, firms and agencies include:
+ The American Civil Liberties Union
+ The Equal Housing Opportunity Council
+ The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
+ Hein Law Firm
+ Interfaith Legal Service
+ St. Louis City and St. Louis County public defender’s offices
+ Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
+ St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles Count prosecuting attorney’s offices
+ St. Louis City Juvenile Court

Students are also offered shadowing opportunities with Catholic Legal Assistance Ministries, the 22nd Judicial Circuit of the State of Missouri, the Federal District and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

While preparing students for law school, the legal studies program also provides students with a broad base of knowledge applicable to numerous fields and occupations, including legislative analyst, labor negotiator, affirmative action officer, trust officer, land use examiner, police administrator, communications consultant, human resources professional, contract manager and regulatory compliance manager.