Legal Studies Assessment Plan

In Alignment with SLU Undergraduate Student Outcomes

*Undergraduate Student Outcomes

*Specific Learning Goals

*Methodology to Achieve Learning Goals

*Identification of Pertinent Courses

*Assessment Measures
Legal Studies Program-Undergraduate Learning
Outcomes and Assessment Measures presented in alignment with the University-wide Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcome #1-Graduates will understand how knowledge is created and shared across forms and contexts.

Specific Learning Goals

#1 Students will have a strong understanding of the structure of the U.S. governmental system including its historical and philosophical underpinnings.
   a. Students will understand the constitutional structure of the U.S. federal government;
      1. Students will have an understanding of the three branches of government, the separation of powers, the concept of federalism and preemption, and the scope of rights accorded to U.S. citizens under the constitution.
      2. Students will understand the federal, state, and local court systems including procedural rules; court rules; and basic pleadings.
#2 Students will also have an understanding of the common law origins of the U.S. system and a basic understanding of the legal methodology utilized in common law systems.
#3 Students will understand the basic issues in jurisprudence and related theories including natural law theory, legal positivism, legal formalism, legal realism, critical race theory, critical feminist theory, originalism as a theory of constitutional interpretation, and the evolutionary approach to constitutional theory.
#4 Students will learn the basics of the primary areas of law; potential causes of action under the various areas of law; and the required elements and defenses to these causes of action.
#5 Students will be trained to conduct legal research in print and using on-line platforms.
#6 Multidisciplinary coursework will be offered to aid the student in achieving a broader understanding of the law.
#7 Students will be taught to identify ethical considerations in law and the rules of professional responsibility.
#8 Students will learn alternative methods of dispute resolution.
#9 Students will have an opportunity to explore international, comparative and domestic law.
#10 Students will be taught about law within the context of a liberal arts curriculum and as such student’s inquiries into law are informed by history, philosophy, rhetoric, religious traditions, sociology, and economics.
#11 The role of law as a force that shapes business, engineering, health care and the sciences will be explored by students.

Methods
Students will be exposed to a variety of courses which introduce and reemphasize this knowledge. Students are introduced to various philosophies of law and ethical considerations in PLS 100. A more in-depth study is provided in PHIL 433-Philosophy of Law. In PLS 100, students attend court proceedings in the state and federal courts and discuss the cases presented with the presiding judge and lawyers. Students who participate in mock trial (PLS 310) will be exposed to a variety of causes of action. Every year the case which the students compete in addresses either a civil or a criminal cause of action. Students who take PLS 300 must participate in a mock negotiation and a mock mediation. Students also observe arbitration. Students who take PLS 410 must complete two court or practice (depositions, meetings) observation opportunities. Students also study the rules of professional responsibility in this class. In PLS 405, there is a focus on domestic legal practice in the United States. In PLS 400, international and regional law is studied. Comparative analysis of different legal systems and the countries within those legal systems are also studied.

**Courses whose primary content facilitates the articulated learning goals:**

**Major in Legal Studies-** PLS 100 Introduction to Law(#1-5; #7-8)-Required course/-POL 210-Constitutional Law I(#1a,b)/-POL 211-Constitutional Law II(#1a,b)/PHIL 343 Philosophy of Law(#3)/POL 475-Seminar in American Political Thought: Imagining Rights(#1b)/ HIST 370 U.S. Constitutional History(#1a,b)/-POL 493-Constitutional Theory and Development(#1a,b)/CMM 422-Freedom of Expression(#1b)/POL 200-Required for all students(#2 & #5)/PLS 300- 9 hours elective credit in major-majority of electives are course offerings from other academic areas.(#6 & #10)/PLS 375-Issues in Law & MGT 218 (#11).

**Minor in Legal Studies-** PLS 100 Introduction to Law(#1-4; 8)/ 6 hours elective credit in minor are course offerings from other academic areas.(#6 & 10)/PLS 200-Introduction to Legal Research & Writing(#5)/PLS 410 Legal Internships-course content centered on professional responsibility(#7)/PLS 375-Issues in Law & MGT 218 (#11).

**Assessment Measures:**

*Common rubric utilized for all constitutional presentations in PLS 100. Constitutional Presentation grades and individual elements are tracked and analyzed on a historic basis including consideration of individual student achievement;*  
*Conduct student and instructor evaluations to track student and faculty perception of achievement of articulated learning goals for the classes designated above;*

**Student Learning Outcome #2-Graduates will understand inquiry as sustained engagement with increasingly complex questions**

**Specific Learning Goals**

**#1 Students will develop critical thinking skills**

a. students need to be clear about their purpose in reading;  
b. students need to be able to discern the author’s purpose in writing.  
c. students will learn legal analysis including fact based analysis and synthesis of various sources of law.
#2 Students will develop strong legal research skills and develop the ability to synthesize disparate research sources in conjunction with a factual understanding of the problem presented and form and explain their conclusions in a cogent and succinct manner. Students will be trained in basic legal research skills as well as the necessary research skills for their primary major.

a. Students will be proficient in conducting legal research both in print and on-line resources;
b. Students will know how to formulate well directed legal research queries which find reference materials cost effectively;

#3 Students will develop strong writing skills

a. in legal writing
b. and in other forms of argumentative or rhetorical writing;
c. Students will be well trained in logical and analytical reasoning.

#4 Students will develop strong argumentation and oral presentation skills.

**Methods-Learning Objective #1**

All students must engage in critical reading throughout the program. At least one assignment in each course must require a written analysis demonstrating the critical reading of a source by addressing various issues, including: (1) What is the main purpose of the reading? Why has the author written this reading?; (2) Figure out the key question in the mind of the author when s/he wrote the article; (3) Figure out the facts, experiences, data the author is using to support her/his conclusions.; (4) Identify the key conclusions the author comes to and presents in the article. (5) What are the key concepts that need to be understood in order to understand the author’s line of reasoning? (6) What are the main assumptions underlying the author’s thinking? (7) What consequences are likely to follow if people take the author’s line of reasoning seriously? (8) What consequences are likely to follow if people ignore the author’s reasoning? (9) What is the point of view presented in this article?” see [www.criticalthinking.org](http://www.criticalthinking.org)

If the reading includes a legal issue especially case law, these questions should also be addressed: (1) What are the pertinent facts presented? (2) If the student is reading a case, what is the procedural history? (3) What is/are the legal issue(s) presented? (4) Synthesizing the various legal sources identified, what is the correct statement of the applicable rule(s) of law? (5) How does this or these rule(s) of law apply to the facts presented in the case? (6) What did the court determine or could the reader determine based on their application of the law to facts of the particular case?

**Courses whose primary content facilitates the articulated learning goal:**

**Major in Legal Studies:** PHIL 404 Symbolic Logic/PHIL 406 Logic for the Preprofessional/ENG 302-Rheteric, Reasoning, & Law/ENGL 393 Law and Literature/SOC 439 Criminal Law and Procedure

**Minor in Legal Studies:** PHIL 4060, Logic for the Pre-professional/ACCT 220-Financial Accounting/ECON 190-Principles of Economics
**Assessment Measures:** Conduct student and instructor evaluations to track student achievement of articulated goals. Use of legal analysis rubrics for paper assignments involving issues of law. Comparison of elements of rubrics and total rubric scores over time and among students

**Methods-Learning Objective #2**
All courses that are part of the Major in Legal Studies and the minor in Legal Studies will require at least one writing assignment that will require research as part of the written product. In PLS courses, research assignments will focus on legal research. In other courses, offered in different departments, research should be specific to the assignment and discipline presented. The level of difficulty of research will depend on the level of the course.

**Courses whose primary content facilitates the articulated learning goal:**
- **Major in Legal Studies-PLS 200-An Introduction to Legal Research & Writing/PLS 390 Introduction to Appellate Practice/CMM 409 Theories of Persuasion/PHIL 380 Language and Argument/ENG 302-Rhetoric, Reasoning, and Law/PLS 400-Comparative Legal Systems/PLS 405 Foundations of Law/PLS 410-Legal Internships**
- **Minor in Legal Studies- PLS200 -Introduction to Legal Research and Writing (#4a, b)/PLS 390-Introduction to Appellate Practice (#4, a, b)/PLS 400-Comparative Legal Systems (#4a, b)/PLS 410-Foundations of Law (#4a, b).**

**Assessment Measures:**
Conduct student and instructor evaluations to track student achievement of articulated goals. Use of legal analysis rubrics for paper assignments involving issues of law. Comparison of elements of rubrics and total rubric scores over time and among students

**Methods-Learning Objective #3**
All courses that are part of the major and minor in Legal Studies will require at least one writing assignment that will require research as part of the written product. In PLS courses, a strong focus will be placed on the reinforcing IREAC (Issue; Rule; Explanation; Analysis; Conclusion) as the basic organizing principle in legal analysis and writing. The basic components of the IREAC technique include identifying the issue, articulating the applicable rule, applying the rule to the facts of the problem and formulating a conclusion based on the application of the law to the facts. PLS courses' writing assignments can include legal drafting of complaints, motions, discovery documents, memorandums in support of motions, sample jury instructions, targeted questions for direct and cross examination, office memorandums, client letters, trial court brief, appellate court briefs, and academic analysis papers. In non-PLS courses, writing assignments will require research and analysis. Expository writing should set forth a clear roadmap and present a precise and concise analysis of the topic presented.

**Courses whose primary content facilitates the articulated learning goal:**
- **Major in Legal Studies-PLS 200 Introduction to Legal Research and Writing/ PLS 310 Introduction to Trial Practice/PLS 390 Introduction to Appellate Practice/ CMM 305-Argumentation and Debate/CMM 409 Theories of Persuasion/PHIL 380 Language and**
Argument/PHIL 4080-Logic for the Preprofessional/ ENG 302-Rhetoric, Reasoning and Law/ PLS 400-Comparative Legal Systems/PLS 405-Foundations of Law/PLS 410 Legal Internships

Minor in Legal Studies-PLS 200[Introduction to Legal Research and Writing]*/ PLS310-Introduction to Trial Advocacy/PLS 390 Introduction to Appellate Advocacy]/ PLS 400-Comparative Legal Systems/PLS 405-Foundations of Law/PLS 410-Legal Internships

Assessment Measures:
Conduct student and instructor evaluations to assess achievement of academic goals.
Use of legal analysis rubrics for paper assignments involving issues of law. Comparison of elements of rubrics and total rubric scores over time and among students
Use of case brief rubrics. Comparison of elements of rubrics and total rubric scores over time.

Methods-Learning Objective #4
Oral presentations will be a primary requirement in all PLS courses. In some PLS courses, the oral presentation requirement will be satisfied by the use of the Socratic method as a pedagogical tool. Other PLS courses may require small group work with a subsequent presentation. Experience as an attorney and/or witness will be provided in the PLS Mock Trial and Appellate Practice courses. Negotiation and mediation exercises will be provided in the PLS Alternative Dispute Resolution skills course. Students with difficulty in projecting their voice, body stance, and presence will be encouraged to take THR 254 Voice & Diction. It is hoped that presentation opportunities will be made available for students in the recommended communication and philosophy courses.

Courses whose primary content facilitates the articulated learning goal:
Secondary Major in Legal Studies: PLS 310 Introduction to Trial Advocacy/PLS 390 Introduction to Appellate Advocacy/PLS 300 Alternative Dispute Resolution/CMM 305-Argumentation and Debate/CMM 409 Theories of Persuasion/PHIL 380 Language and Argument/THR 254 Voice & Diction

Minor in Legal Studies: PLS 310 Introduction to Trial Advocacy/PLS 390 Introduction to Appellate Practice/PLS 300 Alternative Dispute Resolution

Assessment Measures:
Common rubric utilized for all oral presentations in PLS courses. Oral Presentation grades and individual elements are tracked and analyzed on a historic basis including consideration of individual student achievement;
Conduct student and instructor evaluations to track student and faculty perception of achievement of articulated learning goals for the classes designated above;

Student Learning Outcome #3-Graduates will understand themselves in solidarity with and for others locally, nationally, and globally.

Specific Learning goals
#1 Students will use law-local; state; and federal as a lens through which to view and understand the City of St. Louis from a historical and current perspective.

#2 Students will learn how to do ordinance level research; the role of a city charter; the structure of local government; the role of zoning and variances; comprehensive city planning; and state and federal resources impacting urban development.

#3 Students will also learn how to find and analyze data (federal census data; other federal, state, or local agency data; nonprofit university or organizational studies; GeoSt.Louis; NGO, EU & UN studies) to fully define and understand both domestic and global public policy issues and to identify how the law (domestic, foreign, and international) currently impacts these issues and how amended laws could help to drive structural change.

#4 Domestically, legal issues will be studied from a comparative perspective that identifies and analyzes different state solutions.

#5 Globally students will study law from an international and comparative perspective.

#6 Students will learn how to conduct research into international law; regional law (i.e., European Union); and the law of different countries. Students will be taught the methodology of comparative legal analysis.

**Methods**

In PLS 220-Law-A Service Learning Experience, students use data to define and understand local, state, national, and global public challenges. The role of law in causing or contributing to these issues is studied. Legal solutions to the problems are also explored. In PLS 400, students learn how to research international law; regional law; and the law of other countries. Many of the organizations where our students intern are nonprofits who not only provide legal services; they also actively seek possible solutions and attempt to achieve those solutions through litigation or lobbying for legislative change.

**Courses whose primary content facilitates the articulated learning goal:**

Major and Minor in Legal studies: PLS 220-Law: A Service Learning Experience; PLS 400-Comparative Legal Systems/PLS 410-Legal Internships

**Assessment Measures**

Reflective journaling is required for PLS 220 and PLS 410; These journals can provide a valuable insight into student experiences. PLS 400 requires a seminar paper of 15-20 pages addressing a particular legal issue typically grounded in a public policy concern. Students are required to also look at how the problem is addressed nationally, regionally, and internationally. These papers also demonstrate student understanding of the complex nature of issues and the laws written to address them.

**Student Learning Outcome #4-Graduates will understand their relationship with the transcendent**

**Specific Learning goals**

#1 Students will develop a solid understanding of the philosophical basis of ethical behavior.
#2 In addition, students will be familiar with the basic principles of professional responsibility for lawyers.
#3 Through internships and service learning, students will also understand and experience the role of law as a means for achieving social justice in accordance with the Jesuit mission.

**Methods:** All PLS courses will include an ethics strand. To the extent possible, non-PLS courses that qualify for minor and/or major credit will address ethical issues presented. Both the minor and major in legal studies provide opportunities for service learning and public service internships. Through internships and service learning, students will also understand and experience the role of law as a means for achieving social justice in accordance with the Jesuit mission.

**Courses whose primary content facilitates the articulated learning goal:**
**Major in Legal Studies:** PLS 100 Introduction to Law/ PHIL 343 Philosophy of Law/SOC 431/531-Issues in Jurisprudence/PLS 410 Legal Internships/PLS 220-Law: A Service Learning Experience/SWRK 703 Ghana or Mexico Experience/SOC 400 Field Work Practicum(#8d)/POLS 380 Structure of Poverty/PHIL 343 Philosophy of Law
**Minor in Legal Studies:** PHIL 343 Philosophy of Law/PLS 410 Legal Internships/PLS 220-Law: A Service Learning Experience/THEO 361 Social Justice

**Assessment Measures:** In the Legal Internship course, students will be required to take an ethics test that addresses issues of ethical decision making and standards of professional responsibility. The scores will be assessed to determine the extent of student understanding of their ethical duties and requirements of professional responsibility. In all internships and service learning experiences, client and supervisor evaluations will be administered at the midterm and the end of the semester. These evaluations will be complied and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the student in bringing about social change. In the capstone course, students will be asked to write a reflection paper defining their understanding of social justice and their experiences as an undergraduate at SLU seeking to achieve social justice.

*Conduct student and instructor evaluation to assess achievement of academic goals.*
Legal Studies Assessment Plan

Standard Rubrics

* Oral Presentation rubric
  * Case Brief rubric
  * Legal Analysis Paper rubric
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 6: Writing Style</th>
<th>Level 5: Grammatical</th>
<th>Level 4: Content</th>
<th>Level 3: Organization</th>
<th>Level 2: Ideas</th>
<th>Level 1: Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The piece is the best it can be.</td>
<td>The piece is well written, but the language is not entirely effective.</td>
<td>The piece is somewhat effective, but the language is not entirely effective.</td>
<td>The piece is not thoroughly effective, but the language is not entirely effective.</td>
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<td>Depth and complexity</td>
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<td>The incorporation of ideas is developed and fully explained. The fact situation is not developed or not well explained. Ideas are unclear.</td>
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<td>Evidence and supporting details</td>
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<td>The fact situation is not developed. Ideas are unclear.</td>
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<td>Analysis</td>
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<td>Evidence and supporting details</td>
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<td>Issue</td>
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- **Criteria**: Writing Style
- **Criteria**: Sentences
- **Criteria**: Word Order
- **Criteria**: Vocabulary

- **Copy Rubric**: Created by Taskstream

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**Legal Analysis Paper**
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<th>Organizational coherence</th>
<th>End or Unearnt</th>
<th>Weak organization of Ideas</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
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<td>Conclusion is there, but too brief</td>
<td>No conclusion</td>
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<td>Relevant information</td>
<td>Conclusion is there, but too brief</td>
<td>No conclusion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Levels</td>
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Legal Studies Assessment Plan

PLS Course and Instructor Evaluations

For every PLS course, each student and instructor evaluation assesses achievement of the course specific learning objectives.