Institute for Law, Justice and Society
Law, Justice and Society

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The Institute for Law, Justice and Society offers an undergraduate major and minor academic program which looks at the legal system as a vehicle for bringing about social change. By blending law, justice and society (LJS) course offerings with classes from a variety of academic areas including psychology, sociology, history, political science, business, Bible and communications, students explore how laws impact society. As a result, students wanting to make a difference in the world discover ways they can institute legal change for resulting social change and vice versa.

The academic program’s mission is to provide an integrated, multidisciplinary learning in the context of ethics and Judeo-Christian values. This course of study develops practical liberal arts skills and knowledge about the many areas in which the American legal system influences our society.

Distinctives of the Law, Justice and Society Program

When compared to other universities in the United States, Lipscomb’s Law, Justice and Society academic program is unique because:

- We are the only program in the nation that incorporates trips to Washington, D.C., and abroad in the course curriculum. While other schools talk about the places we visit and their impact on the legal system, we experience it firsthand.
- We are the only program in the nation to incorporate an “Education for a Cause” project that spans the entire LJS curriculum. We know students can make a difference in the world today.
- We are one of only a handful of programs to require community service. We recognize the importance of learning through serving.
- We are one of the few programs to require an internship. We know that those with experience are the first to secure career placements.
- We are located in a state capital. We take advantage of our location by incorporating field trips to the legislature and providing opportunities for students to interact with state leaders.

Education for a Cause

Each student in the Law, Justice and Society program selects a social cause of personal significance and works throughout their academic career to improve or eliminate the cause and its effects on society. For example, a student may choose to significantly reduce the homeless population in the United States. In the course, Influencing Change through Civic Engagement, the student would volunteer for a homeless shelter and become familiar with the underlying problems at the core of this issue. Then in the Internship course, the student would work for an organization related to homelessness. Using the information learned from these experiences, the student would create a legal solution to their social issue in the Senior Research Project course.

A Program of SALT Scholars

In Acts 20:35 Paul writes, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” The LJS program values service and believes some of life’s greatest lessons are achieved through giving to others. Therefore, the Law, Justice and Society curriculum has been designed to allow its students to achieve the notable SALT Scholar designation at graduation. T.S. Eliot once wrote, “We had the experience, but missed the meaning.” Carefully planned classroom activities allow students to discuss their service work and ensure that no one misses the lessons learned while serving others.

Connected to the Legal Community

The Law, Justice and Society program allows students to shake hands with federal and state legislators, lobbyists, attorneys and politicians. In fact, many of the class sessions will be taught by these distinguished and accomplished individuals. These connections can aid students with career placement or graduate school admission upon graduation from Lipscomb.
Program Outcomes
At the conclusion of the Law, Justice & Society academic program, graduates should possess these core knowledge, skills and abilities:

• Ability to critically assess the working and implications of law in different social contexts;
• Competence in the historical, comparative and global perspectives on law, justice and society;
• Ability to scrutinize and test theories and concepts taught in class on real-world issues;
• Exhibit substantive knowledge and understanding of socio-legal subject matter;
• Demonstrate legal reasoning while analyzing material from divergent sources;
• Exhibit effective oral and written communication skills;
• Ability to formulate legal solutions that lead to social change; and
• Ability to place legal issues in the broader context of society.

Career Opportunities
Graduates of the program will be prepared for careers in a variety of areas, including work in all three branches of government and with corporate and not-for-profit entities. Specific opportunities may include:

• Corporate compliance officer
• Negotiator or mediator
• Community advocate
• Nonprofit administrator
• Court management
• Risk management and claims adjusting
• Law firm management

Additionally, students will be prepared for graduate studies in other areas such as conflict management, law, public administration, and business.

Joint Law, Justice, and Society/Master of Conflict Management Program
Students majoring in Law, Justice and Society may pursue the Master of Arts in Conflict Management as part of a joint degree program that includes 120 hours of Law, Justice and Society classes and 30 hours of Institute for Conflict Management classes. Students should make this decision in concert with their academic advisor and declare their intent to pursue the joint program at the same time as formal major-minor declaration. Students who choose this direction would need signatures from both the Institute for Law, Justice and Society and the Institute for Conflict Management at the time of declaration. This program does not require students to pursue a minor; however, if a student changes his or her emphasis, a minor must be added. Formal admission to the Master of Arts in Conflict Management program will take into account the student’s undergraduate GPA and GRE scores. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for more information.

Program Curriculum
Students majoring in law, justice and society can earn either a Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Arts degree. The major requires the completion of 45 hours specific to the Law, Justice and Society program. In addition to the specific required classes for all law, justice and society majors, students must select an emphasis area for the remaining 12 hours in the program. Each emphasis is comprised of numerous classes from which students may select. To minor in law, justice and society, students would need to complete 18 hours selected from the program’s curriculum.

Requirements for Majors

Law, Justice and Society Major-Conflict Management Emphasis
B.A. or B.S. degree program
Total hours required— 45

Specific courses required—
Law, Justice and Society 2103, 2203, 3103, 3203, 3303, 390V, 4103 and 4203
Political Science 3433, 4203
Social Work 4513

Specific courses required—
Law, Justice and Society 3403, 3413, 3503, 4403

Law, Justice and Society Major-Law and Ethics Emphasis
B.A. or B.S. degree program
Total hours required— 45

Specific courses required—
Law, Justice and Society 2103, 2203, 3103, 3203, 3303, 390V, 4103 and 4203
Political Science 3433, 4203
Social Work 4513

Select four courses from:
Law, Justice, and Society 3503, 4303, 4413, 490V
Philosophy 3433, 3533, 366V
Bible 421V
Communication 3433

Law, Justice and Society Major-Social Change Emphasis
B.A. or B.S. degree program
Total hours required— 45

Specific courses required—
Law, Justice and Society 2103, 2203, 3103, 3203, 3303, 390V, 4103 and 4203
Political Science 3433, 4203
Social Work 4513

Select four courses from:
Law, Justice and Society 3513, 4303, 4413, 490V
Communication 2133, 3023
Philosophy 2013
Political Science 3413
Sociology 2113
History 4173

Note: Students pursuing the social change emphasis may want to consider a minor in social entrepreneurship, which is offered in cooperation with the College of Business.
Law, Justice and Society Major-
Customizable Emphasis
B.A. or B.S. degree program
Total hours required—45
Specific courses required—
  Law, Justice and Society 2103, 2203, 3103, 3203, 3303, 390V, 4103 and 4203
  Political Science 3433, 4203
  Social Work 4513

Note: In consultation with the Law, Justice and Society director, students can customize a 12-credit hour emphasis using courses consistent with the student’s articulated career plan.

Law, Justice and Society Major-
Master of Arts in Conflict Management
B.A. or B.S. degree program/M.A. degree program
Total hours required—75
Specific courses required—
  Law, Justice and Society 2103, 2203, 3103, 3203, 3403, 3413, 3503, 390V, 4103, 4203, 4303, 4403
  Integrated Studies 4103
  Political Science 3433, 4203
  Conflict Management 5003, 5013, 5023, 5073, 6073, 6083, and four ICM electives

Requirements for Minor

Law, Justice and Society Minor
Total hours required—18
Specific course required—
  Law, Justice & Society 2103
  Fifteen additional hours selected from the LJS curriculum

Course Descriptions

Law, Justice and Society (LJS)

2103 Society and the Law (3) F
This course introduces the central themes for the Law, Justice & Society program. Students gain an understanding of how law relates to society and how legal change relates to broader social change. Students explore the sociological and historical perspective on law and legal change. Focus is given to social and legal theory and to critically analyzing law and legal institutions in relation to equality, justice and fairness. The course blends class discussion, guest speakers, film clips and local field trips.

2203 Introduction to American Law (3) SP
This course is a basic introduction to the common and statutory law of the U.S. federal and state systems of law. It is designed to develop the students' understanding of American legal concepts and issues and to broaden understanding of American law and its processes. The course will highlight selected substantive areas in American law. The class will travel to Washington, D.C., to observe and to interact with the judicial, executive and legislative branches of our government. A travel fee will be assessed.

3103 Dispute Resolution (3) F
This course examines the principles and methods of dispute resolution, including negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and formal adjudication. Students will be able to describe the advantages and disadvantages of different types of dispute resolution. Using case-study methods, students will be able to analyze and to provide resolution for a variety of disputes using numerous techniques.

3203 Legal Research and Reasoning (3) F, SP, SU
This course teaches students the fundamentals of legal reasoning through a series of research and writing exercises. Students learn how to use available research resources, including computer databases. Emphasis will be given on improving analytical writing about social issues and legal change.

3303 Influencing Change through Civic Engagement (3) F, SP, SU
This service-learning course allows students to volunteer with a not-for-profit agency, designed to assist with a societal issue such as homelessness, legal aid for the poor, teen pregnancy or domestic violence. Through class discussions and reflective journaling, students will explore how the law facilitates or inhibits significant social change. This course may satisfy the SAL Tier II requirement.

3403 Conflict Management (3) F
This course provides an understanding of conflict in the context of the people involved and their relationship to each other. It draws from both the fields of psychology and sociology to provide a framework for understanding and assisting those parties to acute conflict, who often end up in the legal system. Cross-cultural conflict, communication in conflict and the psychology of conflict will be explored. Case studies, simulations and role-playing exercises will be utilized.

3413 International Conflict Management (3) SP
This course explores key questions and concepts in the study of international negotiations and conflict management. Students will learn how different factors and contexts can influence the negotiation process and its outcome. Students will better understand the complexity of conducting international negotiations and mediations by participating in simulations and studying actual cases involving peace and security issues, trade agreements and access to humanitarian aid.

3503 Ethics and the Laws of Compliance (3) F, SP, SU
This course applies ethical theories, research and practice to the law and justice system. Students will examine the moral dimensions of corporate law, ethical enforcement systems, issues in compliance and a variety of controversial issues associated with the civil and criminal justice systems applicable to business dealings.
The Social Enterprise (3) F
This course focuses on utilizing entrepreneurial approaches to address global challenges. Socio-legal students will be challenged to think creatively about potential solutions to public challenges; entrepreneurially inclined students will be challenged to analyze rigorously the economic, social and political context that defines entrepreneurial opportunity. All students will design a social enterprise and devise approaches for assessing its impact. Skills developed in the course will enable students to act as effective leaders of change effected both through new ventures and through existing for-profit, nonprofit and government institutions.

Internship (1-3) F, SP, SU
This applied learning course allows students to seek a greater understanding of the legal system as an intern in a law-related agency. On-site work hours, written assignments and regular meetings are required. Credit varies according to the number of hours worked during the semester. This course may satisfy the SALT Tier III requirement.

Law in the Global Community (3) SU
This course explores the tensions between a global economy that deliberately seeks to transcend geographic borders and the law which is historically bound by national jurisdictions. This course will analyze the structures, processes and principles of different kinds of legal systems. An international class trip to observe first-hand another country’s legal system is required.

Senior Research Project (3) F, SP, SU
This capstone course requires students to complete a senior research project under the direction of a faculty member. The project should build upon the service work done in Law, Justice and Society 3303, allowing the student to influence society through the law and legal change. Students must demonstrate the ability to design a study, conduct a scholarly literature review, review laws and legal precedents, gather and analyze data, present findings and create a law-based solution to the societal issue. Written research reports will be presented at a Law, Justice and Society Symposium open to government and community leaders. This course may satisfy the SALT Tier IV requirement.

Mediation: Process, Skills and Theory (3) SP
This course examines the theory, law, and practice related to third party intervention in the resolution of legal disputes. The course explores mediation as a collaborative process of resolving conflict as well as the legislative, ethical and practical constraints on its use. The course equips students with the skills needed to serve in a mediation capacity. There is an emphasis on learning through simulation and role-playing exercises.

Financial Management of the Social Enterprise (3) SP
This course focuses primarily on the financial management of new social enterprises and established nonprofits, exploring topics such as fundraising, grant writing, revenue generation through the provision of services provided, and capital acquisition. Students, many of whom will not have a background in accounting and finance, will explore the practical business implications gained from financial statements and will learn how to manage the firm’s finances to create the best possibility for long-term success. At the end of the course, they will develop a three year financial plan for a start-up social venture and determine how to garner the resources needed to start the venture.

Independent Study (1-3)
Offered upon request
This course is designed to provide the student with a major or minor from the Institute for Law, Justice and Society the opportunity to pursue independent study or research. Variable credit offered at one, two or three hours according to individual need. Prerequisite: permission of program director.