

**Academic Program Assessment Plan
Minor: Legal Studies**

**Department of History, Political Science, Philosophy and Geography
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Colorado State University-Pueblo**

Plan designed by Matt Harris, Director of Legal Studies and Professor of History, May 2023

Mission

The Legal Studies program focuses on a broad view of law in society from an applied perspective as well as a theoretical investigation of the fundamentals of law and how it operates. The program therefore is interdisciplinary by necessity and seeks to prepare graduates for careers in law, government, and law enforcement.

In that context, the Legal Studies minor provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the American judicial and legal system. It is designed to enhance critical thinking, analytic skills, improve research practices, and communication skills, both oral and written. As an interdisciplinary minor, it draws on a wide array of disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences. This includes, but is not limited to, Law, History, Political Science, Sociology, Religion, and Philosophy. Students often pair the Legal Studies minor with Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science programs in History, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, and Criminal Justice.

The Legal Studies program advances the mission of both the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) and the university at large by offering students opportunities to become “ethical, socially responsible, engaged learners . . . prepared to assume leadership in a dynamic global context.”

Legal Studies Program Description

The Legal Studies minor consists of three (3) required courses (with options) and three (3) electives (with options). Each course includes both critical writing and reading skills from a wide array of disciplines that study the law. In addition, each course offers a blend of theoretical and practical objectives to prepare students for graduate school and for a variety of career paths. The formation and establishment of the US Constitution and legal system is a critical component of this program, but the Legal Studies program also explores the practice and application of the Bill of Rights, particularly the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Amendments, as well as the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. The program emphasizes critical topics such as federalism, the creation and structure of the federal judicial system, constitutional interpretation, public and private law, torts, Roman law, Supreme Court decision making, and administrative law. Courses are offered from a wide array of disciplines, including History, Political Science, Sociology, Religion, and Philosophy.

The program also prepares students for law school. CSU-Pueblo students who take the Legal Studies minor have 100 percent acceptance rate into law school. The Legal Studies program prepares students for the Law Standards Admissions Test (LSAT) exam and offers extensive guidance about the law school admissions process.

Legal Studies Minor - AY 2022-2023

Legal Studies Minor = 18 credits	F22	S23	F23	S24	F24	S25	F25	S26
Core Requirements (12 credits)	Shaded boxes indicate not offered.							
1. LEGL 415 Civil Rights								
2. LEGL 322 American Constitutional Law								
3. LEGL 323 Criminal Law and Procedure								
Choose one of the following:								
1. PHIL 204 Critical Reasoning								
2. PHIL 205 Deductive Logic								
Elective courses (6 credits). Choose two of the following:								
LEGL 410 Creation of the US Constitution								
LEGL 432 Religion and Politics in US History								
PHIL 204 Critical Reasoning								
PHIL 205 Deductive Logic								
LEGL 324 Family Law								
LEGL 376 Cyber Law								
LEGL 411 Congress & the Presidency								
LEGL 445 Roman Law								

Notes:

- Only one class taken for the Legal Studies minor can also count toward one of the following: the History major or minor, the Political Science major or minor, or the Philosophy minor.

See the attached curriculum map for curriculum outcomes.

Curriculum Map

Course Designations

- LEGL 322: Constitutional Law
- LEGL 323: Criminal Law and Procedure
- LEGL 324: Family Law
- LEGL 410: Creation of Constitution
- LEGL 415: Civil Rights
- LEGL 432: Religion/Politics
- LEGL 445: Roman Law

Legal Studies Program SLOs	322	323	324	410	415	432	445
SLO 1: Students will be able to demonstrate competence in analyzing and synthesizing Supreme Court decisions.	O	E	O	E			O
SLO 2: Students will be able to discuss the development and structures of law and include the role in shaping government.	O	E		E	O	E	E
SLO 3: Students will be able to explain the major turning points, personalities, and issues in drafting and ratifying the United States Constitution.	O					E	
SLO 4: Students will be able to apply a wide variety of law to real-life situations and hypotheticals.		O		O			E

E=Even years

O=Odd years

Legal Studies Program Goals and Outcomes

1. To provide Legal Studies students with a broad and thorough understanding of the American legal system.
2. To introduce students to case law, particularly law created by the US Supreme Court.
3. To orient students with knowledge how the US Constitution was established, including the major personalities, turning points, and issues who helped draft it.
4. To prepare students for law school and in legal-related fields.
5. To help students think critically, write analytically, and develop oral communication skills and to apply these skills through writing and in-class debates.
6. To highlight and provide critical commentary on the most important Amendments to the US Constitution: 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 14th.

Outcomes Assessment Activities

1. The Legal Studies Director will maintain a writing portfolio for each student in the program. Portfolios include at least one major paper and one minor paper from each students' coursework after they declare the minor. The portfolios will be evaluated either when the student completes all requirements for the minor or when students prepare to graduate. Faculty from the LS program may assist in the assessment reviews. Papers will be evaluated according to a rubric (see below) on a basis according to the cycle on SLO map. At least 75% of students completing the LS minor will be proficient or better in each SLO.
2. The Legal Studies Director will observe at least one class annually from each faculty in the LS program. Following the class, the Director will consult with the instructor in question and discuss student outcomes as well as strengths and weaknesses in meeting said outcomes.
3. At the beginning of each semester, the Legal Studies Director will review all syllabi from instructors in the LS program to make sure program SLOs will be followed. The Director will provide follow-up throughout the academic years, as needed, to ensure that program objectives and initiatives are achieved.

Grading Rubric
A Highly Proficient paper is clearly written with no grammatical lapses or major stylistic infelicities; it has an interesting and original argument, which is supported consistently by well-integrated and well-chosen evidence, including relevant court cases; it demonstrates a comfortable command over the course material.
A Proficient paper adequately answers the assigned question or topic. It might be marred by problems of presentation, a lackluster argument, or evidence that is used inconsistently or poorly. It demonstrates a general command over court cases and other relevant evidence.
A Below Proficiency paper has some significant flaw. There is no argument; evidence is used poorly; the argument is not proven; the paper ignores obvious and important court cases; the argument is unbalanced; there are some major writing problems.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

This assessment plan defines the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and how they are assessed for the Legal Studies minor in the Department of History, Political Science, Philosophy and Geography in the College of the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS). It applies practical methods and concepts to real-life learning but also provides students with a strong theoretical foundation in the law.

The SLOs are drawn principally from the Law School Admissions Council website (LSAC) and through a combination of Best Practices from Legal Scholarship and Practitioners. The SLOs further align with CSUP's Vision 2028, specifically the Guiding Principles. By drawing on these sources, the SLOs ensure that students in the Legal Studies program both meet the highest

professional standards and fulfill the program’s charge to both support and enrich CSUP’s strategic goals.

SLOs for the Legal Studies minor
SLO 1: Students will be able to demonstrate competence in analyzing and synthesizing Supreme Court decisions.
SLO 2: Students will be able to discuss the development and structures of law and include the role in shaping government.
SLO 3: Students will be able to explain the major turning points, personalities, and issues in drafting and ratifying the United States Constitution and demonstrate competence in applying those principles to modern-day applications.

SLOs will be assessed on a rotating schedule. During odd-numbered years, odd numbered SLOs will be assessed. During even-numbered years, even-numbered SLOs will be assessed.

SLOs will be assessed through a rubric-based evaluation of a representative sample of coursework of Legal Studies minors. The Assessment will take into consideration the individual rubrics, draw conclusions, and analyze the data in a report to Assessment stewards. The Director, in cooperation with the Department Chair, and with feedback from general university Assessment feedback, will make improvements as required. If a particular SLO has been previously assessed, the committee will also determine if previously implemented improvements have had the desired effect, and will recommend continuation or modification as required.

This assessment plan will be reviewed and approved by the relevant stakeholders at a minimum every four years or as needed in consultation with the Legal Studies Director and Chair of the History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Geography department.

**Legal Studies Minor Assessment Plan Summary
Academic Year 2023-2024**

Student Learning Outcome	Measure description	Expected level of proficiency	Timeline/Cycle
SLO 1 Students will be able to demonstrate competence in analyzing and synthesizing Supreme Court decisions.	<u>Direct</u> : Students will demonstrate understanding of issues relevant to the LS program via course discussion, papers, and exams. <u>Indirect</u> : Students are required to engage in critical discussion.	75% of students will score at the proficient level.	3-year cycle, SLO 1: 2023-24, 2026-27
SLO 2 Students will be able to discuss the development and structures of law and include the role in shaping government.	<u>Direct</u> : Students will construct independent research projects and be able to convey the arguments orally in class presentations. <u>Indirect</u> : Students will field questions from peers who will engage with the presentation during the Q and A portion.	75% of students will score at the proficient level.	3-year cycle, SLO 2: 2024-25, 2027-28
SLO 3 Students will be able to explain the major turning points, personalities, and issues in drafting and ratifying the United States Constitution and demonstrate competence in applying those principles to modern-day applications.	<u>Direct</u> : Students will evaluate pertinent primary sources and defend them through debate and discussion. <u>Indirect</u> : Students will participate in a class debate strategizing, forming arguments and counter-arguments.	75% of students will score at the proficient level.	3-year cycle, SLO 3: 2023-24, 2026-27