

Interdisciplinary Major Proposal: Law and Society

Anna Walker

Class of 2017

At Hendrix College, I have explored the topic of law and society through the study of ethics, race and ethnicity, family, criminal, and US Constitutional law, and psychology. Through these courses I have learned that the rule of law is a structure for an ideal society acting as a mediator of society, but sometimes that is an ideal society fails to live up to. A law and society major will help me better understand the interaction between society and the law in order to have a post-grad career at a non-profit helping at-risk youth either as an attorney or in social services.

My interdisciplinary study, law and society, combines courses in philosophy, political theory, psychology, sociology, and law. This interdisciplinary major is proposed based on law and society major requirements from the University of Southern California, University of California San Diego and Florida State University. The aim of the major is to gain a strong grasp on the issues of poverty, inequality, and human rights and the role of law in both promoting (and limiting) justice in those realms. The ability to focus on law and race courses in the Politics department will allow me to demonstrate knowledge of law, legal phenomena and legal institutions from a variety of perspectives outside the discipline of law. Sociology will allow me to view the social and human aspects of the law and society. Philosophy will provide me a perspective on the ethical foundation of human rights, theorizing society, the individual, and the law. Psychology will allow me to analyze decision-making capacity, prejudice and stereotyping, and the assessment of evidence and eyewitness accounts. The major, law and society, is structured around understanding questions concerning how law influences people's lives; how law and law-like systems of rules empower and constrain individuals, groups, and organizations; and how the structures and values in social institutions shape and are shaped by law. While the disciplines interact and overlap, they also offer unique perspectives and methodologies.

I wish to pursue this combination of classes because I have always found how the law affects the behavior of the society it governs and reflects the values of that society deeply interesting. Along with my internship at the Faulkner County Juvenile Court and volunteer work for Conway Cradle Care, these classes will give me the experience required for an occupation in social services. As an attorney or someone in public service I will need a deeper understanding of how race, ethnicity and socialization interact with the law.

Course Requirements:

Ethical Foundations of the Law (2 courses)

- PHIL 201: Focus: Ethics in the Face of Poverty+
- PHIL 200: Sanity & Madness

Law in Practice (5 courses)

- POLI 322: American Constitutional Law: Individual Rights*
- POLI 224: Family Law*
- POLI 320: Criminal Law*
- BUSI 350: Business Law

Law and Society (5 courses)

- SOCI 208: Race and Mixed Race+
- PSYC 255: Stereotyping & Prejudice*
- EDU 220 Educational Psychology
- PSYC 367: Psychology and Law
- POLI 226: Social Deviance, Crime & Punishment*

Culminating the Major in an Internship and Undergraduate Research (4 courses)

- PSYC 290: Statistics*
- POLI 400: Research Methods*
- Internship at Faulkner County Juvenile Court+
- POLI 497: Senior Research Seminar

*Notes course already taken

+Notes course currently underway

The Senior Capstone Experience will take place in POLI 497 in which I will conclude in a thesis paper that will be reviewed by members of my committee. The topic will be determined summer 2016 but will likely involve juvenile justice. The senior research seminar will allow me to initiate, develop, and present independent research addressing and analyzing the relationship between law and society. Presenting my research will allow me to develop written and oral communication skills to express informed opinions about issues in law and society.

Jay BARN

Advisor Name


Advisor Signature

Leslie Zornich

Faculty Sponsor Name


Faculty Sponsor Signature