

Interdisciplinary Major Proposal: Law and Society

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Through interdisciplinary studies, I plan to explore the topic of law and society through a multifaceted lens. Rather than focusing solely in one department, I wish to draw from multiple departments with focus on ethics, race and ethnicity, family, criminal justice, constitutional law, and psychology. Utilizing these courses prepare me to not only understand the way in which law functions in daily social interactions, but also the foundations, the reasoning, and the way they come in to play in everyday lives. The rule of law is supposed to act as a catalyst in society to determine what is deemed right and wrong, however, what happens when those laws are created in order to oppress, undermine, or invalidate those they are supposed to protect? A law and society major will allow me to develop my own understanding of how society functions in the macro and micro level so I may be better equipped to advocate and aid LGBTQIA youth who don't have a place to live, parents to support them, or any access to upward mobility.

The law and society major I am creating combines courses varying from philosophy, political theory, sociology, psychology, law, and history. I created this major basing classes off a previously made law and society major, a previously made social justice major, and classes I found to be interesting and most beneficial to my education. Through my major I plan to focus my studies on understanding the causes and cycle of poverty, inequality, human rights, and the way laws are put in place to advance and demote persons/communities. Participation in law and Politics courses will allow me to form a government basis for understanding policies and civil rights, along with the process with which they are created and dismantled. The Philosophy aspect of the major will focus on the ethical basis of the ways laws are proposed into the courts, the reasoning behind socio-economic struggles in society, and the ways people of color are affected by laws and policies put in place. Sociology courses will provide me the understanding of the social interactions and mobilization that takes place within communities affecting economic and public status. Lastly, History courses will uncover the past methods used in order to combat poverty and social inequality, but also those that helped alleviate these issues.

This major, law and society, is constructed to further understand the concerns and problems of laws that have been previously or will be put in place influencing people's lives; the ways laws and systems either further empower or constrain individuals and corporations in societal functions; what values and ethics are used to develop the structure of social institutions and concepts by previous, current, and future laws.

I aspire to pursue this major because of the implications and influences I believe they offer to shaping my future in servicing the community. I am deeply passionate by the way laws are formulated and implemented in society, and the way they affect every day social interactions and behaviors. Along with my internship at the Faulkner County Juvenile Court, future volunteer work with Housing Arkansas, and future work with CASA, these classes offer me the understanding needed to pursue a career for an occupation in social services. As an advocate and social worker, I will need the deeper understanding these courses will offer to help the community to the best of my abilities, and create an environment where young adults and youth are protected by the law and social structures.

Course Requirements:

Ethical Foundations of Law (2 of the following 3 courses)

- PHIL 360: Social and Political Thought
- PHIL 215: Ethics and Society
- PHIL 315: Ethics of Friend, Kin, and Community

Law in Practice (Select 4 of the following 5 courses)

- POLI 322: Constitutional Law: Individual Rights
- POLI 321: Constitutional Law: Federal System
- POLI 320: Criminal Law
- BUSI 350: Business Law
- PSYC 367: Psychology and Law

Law and Society (4 of the following 7 courses)

- PSYC 255: Stereotyping and Prejudice
- HIST 214: Poverty and Welfare in America
- POLI 376: Democracy, Development, and Violence
- POLI 390: Race and American Politics
- PSYC 240: Social Psychology
- SOCI 360: Social Change/Social Movements
- SOCI 325: Race and Mixed Race

Applied Law and Society

- LBST 498: Intern: Faulkner County Juvenile Court

Research Courses

- SOCI 335: Research Methods, PSYC 295: Research Methods, OR POLI 202: Empirical Research Methods
- PSYC 290: Statistics
- Independent Study Capstone: CASA

The Senior Capstone Experience will take place interning with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) by advocating for abused and neglected children in court. Incorporated will be a research project presented in an appropriate setting (on or off campus) the Spring of my Senior year. Dr. Miyawaki will oversee the Independent Study and grade that course. I will do a presentation which both members of my committee will attend; both will then be involved in evaluating the capstone experience and providing a separate grade for that.