

LAW, SOCIETIES, AND JUSTICE

Law, Societies, and Justice is an interdisciplinary program committed to challenging students to understand the forms and functions of law in an increasingly globalized world. The program engages students in critical and comparative examination of legal institutions, principles, practices, and power around the world, with a particular emphasis on the role of rights in shaping contemporary political and legal conflicts.



Law, Societies, and Justice students work alongside inmates at the Washington State Reformatory in Monroe. Photo by Sy Bean/*The SeattleTimes*.

Education

Law, Societies, and Justice offers opportunities for students to understand the complex roles of law in society. Law takes multiple forms and performs a wide array of important functions. At the same time, the work of law is shaped by numerous political, economic, social, cultural, and geographic factors. Because of this, law “on the books” is not the same as law “in action.” Students in the LSJ major develop a deep appreciation for the variety of dynamics that shape the translation of law “on the books” to law “in action.”

LSJ faculty are trained in many of the social sciences—anthropology, geography, political science, and sociology. As a consequence, students develop a strong interdisciplinary orientation to the study of law in society. Coursework emphasizes close reading of key texts, active classroom engagement with complex ideas, and the development of the capacity to articulate arguments in oral and written communication. In this way, LSJ courses are designed to assist students to develop the core skills of a liberal arts education, rather than to prepare them for a particular professional path such as law school.

Beyond its interdisciplinary orientation, LSJ emphasizes the importance of analyzing socio-legal dynamics in comparative perspective. Courses explore legal traditions and transformations in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as North America. Attention also falls on the increasing development of global regimes of law and regulation.

Several LSJ courses emphasize the increasing role of rights discourse in contemporary politics, particularly human rights. Much activity done in the name of law is currently framed in the language of rights. Because of this, the relationship between rights and law is of notable significance.

LSJ offers popular introductory courses along with a large, diverse menu of smaller classes and seminars in upper level topics courses. LSJ majors are required to take at least one specialized class to fulfill a senior seminar option; many take several. Students are also required to complete an internship in a justice-related organization.

Students are encouraged to take courses outside of LSJ. Indeed, more than half of all LSJ majors complete a major in another discipline.

Given the comparative and global focus of LSJ, opportunities for study abroad are available for credit. At the graduate level, LSJ features an interdisciplinary certificate program for PhD studies.

STUDENTS (Autumn 2016)

177	Undergraduate majors
90	Undergraduate minors

DEGREES AWARDED (August 2015-June 2016)

99	Bachelor of Arts degrees
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MAJOR STUDENT AWARDS (Since 2008)

1	Harry S. Truman Scholar
1	Rhodes Scholar (and 1 finalist)
1	Henry Luce Scholar
1	Dean's Medalist
4	Gates Public Service Law Scholars
6	Mary Gates Scholars
3	Bonderman Travel Scholarships
1	Beinecke Scholarship
2	Humanity in Action Fellows
3	Ronald E. McNair Scholars
3	Fulbright Fellowships
2	Husky 100 Scholars

Faculty

There are seven core LSJ faculty members and one lecturer, most of whom are jointly appointed with another unit. In addition, three adjunct faculty members provide considerable support through their teaching, research, and service. The LSJ faculty possess a well-deserved reputation for teaching innovation and scholarly productivity. LSJ faculty members have received the University's Distinguished Teaching Award and other recognitions for high-caliber teaching. Many have had their scholarly achievements recognized with major book and paper awards from professional associations. An LSJ faculty member recently served as president of the Law and Society Association, the major international scholarly organization for socio-legal scholars, one serves as Director of the University of Washington Human Rights Center, and another serves as Chair of the Harry Bridges Labor Center. Two recent winners of the University of Washington's Public Service Award are members of the LSJ faculty.

Research

The LSJ undergraduate program is deeply connected to the Comparative Law and Society Studies (CLASS) Center. CLASS sponsors seminars, colloquia, and workshops. It is especially well-recognized as a campus leader in sponsoring research and events addressing human rights. The vibrant research culture in CLASS contributes enormously to the exciting intellectual experience of students in the LSJ program.

CLASS also organizes a Fellows program, enlisting about 25 students at a time. The Fellows pursue an interdisciplinary graduate certificate along with a disciplinary PhD. Graduate students affiliated with CLASS have produced award-winning research and earned positions at several national and international universities. CLASS Fellows also frequently serve as teaching assistants and instructors in LSJ courses.

Outreach

Law, Societies, and Justice sends each of its undergraduate majors into the community as part of the longest-standing internship requirement for any baccalaureate degree at the UW. The internships help ground scholastic knowledge with service to the community in human rights organizations, public defenders' and prosecutors' offices, law firms, law enforcement, correctional facilities, civil rights groups, and others. The LSJ Group Honors course enables students to work with a local justice-oriented organization to complete a research project designed by that organization.

LSJ also offers annually a "mixed enrollment" course inside the Washington State Reformatory, a medium-security prison in Monroe. This course combines LSJ students and inmate students in the same classroom for an upper-division seminar. In addition, many LSJ faculty regularly take groups of students on study abroad excursions. In recent years, groups have travelled to Guatemala, Israel, Rome, Amsterdam, and Iran to participate in research.

Our faculty, students, and alumni are active in the Puget Sound region and beyond, collaborating with a host of non-profits, humanitarian associations, government organizations, and the mass media.

"The LSJ Program truly provides a phenomenal experience for students to debate, gain knowledge, and pursue experience on major issues in society today. The professors in the program are clearly passionate about what they teach, and the advisers seek to support students' experience within this program. I never would have imagined the impact the LSJ program would have on me."

— LSJ Graduate, 2016

FACULTY (Autumn 2016)

- 3 Professors
- 2 Associate Professors
- 2 Assistant Professors
- 1 Lecturer
- 3 Adjunct Professors

AREAS OF RESEARCH

- Human Rights
- Policing and Social Control
- Politics and Practices of Punishment
- Law and Violence
- Comparative Law
- Politics of Rights
- Women's Rights
- Health and Human Rights
- Racial Inequality and Law
- Immigration and Citizenship
- Forgiveness and Reconciliation
- Law and Mass Culture



Professor Angelina Godoy doing field work in Guatemala.

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