Advisory Committee

- Melissa J. Barry, Professor of Philosophy
- Justin Crowe, Chair of Leadership Studies and Professor of Political Science; affiliated with: Political Science, Leadership Studies
- Sara Dubow, Professor of History; on leave 2023-2024
- William M. Gentry, Carl Van Duyne Professor of Economics
- Nimu Njoya, Lecturer in Political Science
- James L. Nolan, Washington Gladden 1859 Professor of Sociology
- Cheryl Shanks, Professor of Political Science; on leave Fall 2023

Justice and Law Studies is an interdepartmental program designed to give students a background in and framework for understanding the ways that philosophers, government officials, and others think about justice, and the related ways in which societies marshal power and implement law. This liberal arts program provides tools for thinking critically and arguing about what justice might entail, how it works in practice, and how rules, aspirations, laws, and norms evolve over time and in different parts of the world.

THE CONCENTRATION

The concentration in Justice and Law Studies consists of six courses: an interdisciplinary introductory course, four electives taken from at least two departments, and a senior seminar. Electives are listed below. Other courses, not listed below, may be approved by the Chair.

Students may declare a program concentration at any point during their academic career.

Senior Seminar

In 2018-19, the senior seminar will be *The Unwritten Constitution* taught by Professor Hirsch.

Electives

**STUDY ABROAD**

Students who study abroad should consult with the program chair to ensure that they can complete the requirements. Courses abroad may qualify as JLST electives if appropriate.

**JLST 101 (F) Introduction to Justice and Law**

This course will examine various aspects of America's legal system, including its historical and constitutional underpinnings; the processes of resolving disputes, e.g., trials, plea-bargaining, and civil settlement; and the roles of diverse participants in the system, e.g., judges, jurors, litigants, lawyers, and legislators. The course will emphasize the deeply interdisciplinary nature of law, exploring the law's intersections with politics, history, economics, anthropology, statistics, psychology, philosophy, art, sports, science, religion, and cyberspace.

**Class Format:** lecture-discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** three papers, a final exam, and class participation; attendance is mandatory; Williams' honor code applies to all assignments

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 40

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-years and sophomores

**Expected Class Size:** 40

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Our practice of holding people responsible seems justified as long as their choices are free. But when does a choice qualify as free? We're all deeply influenced by factors ranging from the general laws of nature to specific features of our genetic endowment and social environment (including religion, political ideology, and advertising). These affect not only our particular choices but also, more fundamentally, who we are and what we value. The key question, then, is whether, and how, free choice is possible amidst all of these influences. We'll attempt to answer this question by examining recent philosophical work on the nature of free will and responsibility.

Requirements/Evaluation: Five tutorial papers (5-6 pages in length) and five critiques (2-3 pages in length)

Prerequisites: one PHIL course (or permission of instructor; please email with any questions)

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: current and prospective Philosophy majors

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

PHIL 272(D2) JLST 272(D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will write a tutorial paper (5-6 pages in length) every other week, and a peer critique (2-3 pages in length) in alternating weeks, evenly spaced throughout the semester. The instructor will provide timely comments on writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Attributes: JLST Theories of Justice/Law PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses
"The eight thousand words of America's written constitution only begin to map out the basic ground rules that actually govern our land." So begins Akhil Amar's book *America's Unwritten Constitution*. Amar recasts the debate over whether America has a "living Constitution," a debate usually revolving around whether change in constitutional meaning requires resort to the formal amendment process or can be achieved through judicial interpretation. Amar supports the latter view, but proposes something far-reaching: history itself effectively amends the Constitution. Thus, for example, he argues that speeches by Martin Luther King and precedents set by George Washington, as well as the daily activities and assumptions of ordinary Americans, have become constitutional subtext requiring consideration when we interpret the Constitution. Is that notion convincing? Preposterous? A healthy way of understanding the inevitable intersection of law, history, and politics? A transparent excuse to read one's own views into the Constitution? Through a careful reading of Amar, and other important constitutional theorists, we will probe different ways of thinking about the supreme law of the land.

Requirements/Evaluation: three papers and class participation
Prerequisites: PSCI 216 or PSCI 217 (or consent of the instructor)
Enrollment Limit: 19
Enrollment Preferences: Justice and Law Studies concentrators
Expected Class Size: 19
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Spring 2024
SEM Section: 01  MWF 11:10 am - 12:15 pm  Alan Hirsch

Winter Study .................................................................

JLST 10  (W)  Policing the Police

Recent high-profile killings of civilians by the police, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tyree Nichols, have led to increased public scrutiny of law enforcement. Police departments are also facing unprecedented challenges in hiring and keeping officers. In this course, we will analyze current doctrines addressing police misconduct and potential avenues for future reform by using films, articles, podcasts, and case law. We will examine customary responses to police misconduct, including internal affairs investigations and criminal prosecution of individual officers, as well as present appeals for structural reform. Topics will include bias in policing and the intersection of law enforcement and mental health. Class will meet twice per week, and students will choose an aspect of the issues engaged with as a subject for their final research paper.

Requirements/Evaluation: Paper(s) or report(s)
Prerequisites: None
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: Preference to students concentrating in Justice and Law Studies
Expected Class Size: NA
Grading: pass/fail only
Unit Notes: Samantha Soto is a civil rights and employment attorney whose practice includes advising police departments on officer discipline and conducting investigations into discrimination claims. She is a graduate of Williams College and Columbia Law School.
Materials/Lab Fee: $25
Attributes: STUX Winter Study Student Exploration

Winter 2024
LEC Section: 01  TR 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm  Samantha W. Soto

JLST 99  (W)  Independent Study: Legal Studies

Open to upperclass students. Students interested in doing an independent project (99) during Winter Study must make prior arrangements with a faculty sponsor. The student and professor then complete the independent study proposal form available online. The deadline is typically in late
September. Proposals are reviewed by the pertinent department and the Winter Study Committee. Students will be notified if their proposal is approved prior to the Winter Study registration period.

**Class Format:** independent study

**Grading:** pass/fail only

Winter 2024

IND Section: 01 TBA Alan Hirsch