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

**AFR 132 / AMST 132 / PSCI 171 SEM Contemporary Africana Social and Political Philosophy**

Taught by: Neil Roberts  
[Catalog details](#)

**ECON 374 TUT Poverty and Public Policy**

Taught by: Lara Shore-Sheppard  
[Catalog details](#)

**ECON 470 SEM The Indian Economy: Development and Social Justice**

Taught by: Anand Swamy  
[Catalog details](#)

**ENVI 250 / STS 250 SEM Environmental Justice**

Taught by: Laura Martin  
[Catalog details](#)

**ENVI 307 / PSCI 317(F) LEC Environmental Law**

Taught by: David Cassuto  
[Catalog details](#)

**HIST 158 / AFR 158 SEM North of Jim Crow, South of Freedom**

Taught by: Tyran Steward  
[Catalog details](#)

**HIST 167 / AFR 167 / AMST 167 SEM Let Freedom Ring? African Americans and Emancipation**

Taught by: Gretchen Long  
[Catalog details](#)

**INTR 343 / AFR 343 / AMST 343 / WGSS 343 TUT Representations of Racial-Sexual Violence from Enslavement to Emancipation**

Taught by: Joy James  
[Catalog details](#)

**PHIL 114 SEM Freedom and Society**

Taught by: Justin Shaddock  
[Catalog details](#)

**PHIL 119(F) SEM Why Obey the Law? On Democracy and Justice**

Taught by: Jana Sawicki  
[Catalog details](#)
PHIL 122 TUT Philosophical Approaches to Contemporary Moral Issues
  Taught by: Julie Pedroni
  Catalog details

PHIL 228 / STS 228 / WGSS 228(F) LEC Feminist Bioethics
  Taught by: Julie Pedroni
  Catalog details

PHIL 337(S) TUT Justice in Health Care
  Taught by: Julie Pedroni
  Catalog details

PHIL 110(F, S) LEC Introduction to American Politics: Power, Politics, and Democracy in America
  Taught by: Matthew Tokeshi, Justin Crowe
  Catalog details

PSCI 216 / LEAD 216(S) LEC American Constitutionalism I: Structures of Power
  Taught by: Justin Crowe
  Catalog details

PSCI 217 / LEAD 217 LEC American Constitutionalism II: Rights and Liberties
  Taught by: Justin Crowe
  Catalog details

PSCI 223 LEC International Law
  Taught by: Cheryl Shanks
  Catalog details

PSCI 234 SEM Freedom
  Taught by: Mark Reinhardt
  Catalog details

PSCI 236 / WGSS 236(S) SEM Feminist Legal Theory
  Taught by: Nimu Njoya
  Catalog details

PSYC 349 SEM Psychology and Law
  Taught by: Stephanie Cardenas
  Catalog details

PSCI 332 TUT The Body as Property
  Taught by: Nimu Njoya
  Catalog details

PSCI 334(F) SEM Theorizing Global Justice
  Taught by: Nimu Njoya
  Catalog details

PSYC 416 SEM Psychology of Nonviolence
  Taught by: TBA
  Catalog details

REL 203 / JWST 101 SEM Judaism: Before The Law
  Taught by: Jeffrey Israel
  Catalog details

REL 243 / ARAB 243 / WGSS 243 / HIST 302(F) SEM Islamic Law: Past and Present
  Taught by: TBA
  Catalog details

RUSS 331 / COMP 331 / ENGL 371(F) TUT The Brothers Karamazov
  Taught by: Julie Cassiday
  Catalog details

SOC 218 LEC Law and Modern Society
  Taught by: James Nolan
  Catalog details

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

Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2023

LEC Section: 01 MWF 11:00 am - 12:15 pm Alan Hirsch

JLST 272 (F) Free Will and Responsibility (WS)

Cross-listings: PHIL 272

Secondary Cross-listing

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 Contemprorary Value Theory Courses

Fall 2023

TUT Section: T1 TBA Melissa J. Barry

JLST 397 (F) Independent Study: Legal Studies

Legal Studies independent study. Open only under the supervision of a member of the Legal Studies Advisory Committee.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2023

IND Section: 01 TBA Alan Hirsch
JLST 398 (S) Independent Study: Legal Studies
Legal Studies independent study. Open under the supervision of a member of the Legal Studies Advisory Committee.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Spring 2024
IND Section: 01    TBA     Alan Hirsch

JLST 401 (S) The Unwritten Constitution
"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 A. 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