JUSTICE AND LAW STUDIES (Div II)
Chair: Lecturer in Humanities Alan Hirsch

Advisory Committee

- Melissa J. Barry, Professor of Philosophy; on leave Fall 2022
- Justin Crowe, Chair of Leadership Studies and Professor of Political Science; affiliated with: Leadership Studies Program
- Sara Dubow, Associate Dean of the Faculty, Professor of History; affiliated with: History Department
- William M. Gentry, Carl Van Duyne Professor of Economics
- Nimu Njoya, Lecturer in Political Science
- James L. Nolan, Washington Gladden 1859 Professor of Sociology; on leave 2022-2023
- Cheryl Shanks, Professor of Political Science

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 132 SEM Contemporary Africana Social and Political Philosophy
  Taught by: Neil Roberts
  Catalog details
AFR 318 / PSYC 334 SEM Defining and Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline
  Taught by: Kelsey Jones
  Catalog details
AMST 401 SEM Policing Nations: Indigenous Nations and the Carceral State
  Taught by: Margaux L Kristjansson
  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
ENGL 407 / COMP 407 SEM Literature, Justice and Community
  Taught by: Christopher Pye
  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 152 / WGSS 152 SEM The Fourteenth Amendment and the Meanings of Equality
  Taught by: Sara Dubow
  Catalog details
HIST 158 / AFR 158(S) SEM North of Jim Crow, South of Freedom
  Taught by: Tyran Steward
  Catalog details
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 (S) 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)

Spring 2023

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

**JLST 272 (S) Free Will and Responsibility (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** PHIL 272  JLST 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? Must it be unaffected by any outside influences? If so, freedom may seem impossible since 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 real question, then, seems to be 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

**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:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year
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)

Not offered current academic year

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 2023

IND Section: 01 TBA Alan Hirsch

"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 2023

SEM Section: 01 MWF 8:30 am - 9:45 am Alan Hirsch

Recent high-profile killings of civilians by the police, including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, 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 study the potential avenues for changing how police operate and the systemic issues that impede reform by using films, articles, case law, and guest lectures. We will begin by looking at the historical responses to police misconduct, including internal affairs investigations and criminal prosecution of individual officers. We will also analyze the affirmative privileges provided to the police and the impact of these procedural protections on accountability. We will then explore current appeals for structural reform by examining recent federal investigations of police departments, including Newark, NJ and Ferguson, MO. 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: 10-page paper
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: sophomores and juniors
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 discipline of officers and conducting investigations into discrimination claims. She is a graduate of Williams College and Columbia Law School.

Winter 2023
LEC Section: 01 TR 1:00 pm - 3:50 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 2023
IND Section: 01 TBA Alan Hirsch