

Law and Society Major Assessment Plan
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
2011-2012 Academic Year

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I. MISSION STATEMENT

Organized around the central theme of understanding law as an instrument of political and social change, the Law and Society major advances students' knowledge of law and legal phenomena in social terms from a perspective outside the discipline of law. The major addresses questions concerning how law matters in people's lives; how law and law-like systems of rules empower and constrain individuals, groups, organizations and communities; and how the structures and values in social institutions shape and are shaped by law. It enables students to become both producers and critical consumers of social science research on topics pertaining to law and society and prepares students for advanced work in graduate and professional schools. The major is interdisciplinary, offering a broad range of courses that will allow students to gain the descriptive, analytical and methodological knowledge to fulfill this mission.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY

On October 31, 2011, the New York State Department of Education gave final approval to the College's new major, Law and Society, to replace the existing Legal Studies major. With the significant overlap in courses offered in the two majors, students now in the Legal Studies major will be advised to move into Law and Society. While we expect many to do so, existing Legal Studies majors nonetheless have the option to remain in that major until graduation.¹ However, new students will not have the option of becoming Legal Studies majors.

The Law and Society curriculum is set forth in Appendix A and reflects two new Law and Society courses developed for the major – LAS 200 (Introduction to Law and Society) and LAS 425 (Colloquium for Research in Law and Society). LAS 200 will be offered for the first time in the Spring 2012 semester, and we anticipate that LAS 425 will be offered for the first time in the Spring 2013 semester. Both of these courses are required for all majors. The remaining courses included in the major are currently offered at the College, and, as noted above, many are part of the current Legal Studies program.

The Law and Society major's learning outcomes are set out below. Although students will not enroll in the major until the Spring 2012 semester, we will begin assessment this semester using a course currently offered in Legal Studies that also will be offered in Law and Society. Specifically, in the Fall 2011 semester, our assessment efforts will focus on POL 430 (Seminar in Civil Rights and Liberties), a senior-level capstone course in Legal Studies (one of three capstone courses available) that is offered as an option in Law and Society. This course is significantly related to the mission of the Law and Society major, and we believe it will be a popular choice for future Law and Society majors. In the Spring 2012 semester, we will assess LAS 200 – Introduction to Law and Society. The learning objectives for these courses are linked to the learning outcomes for the major in the Curriculum Map included as Appendix B.

We anticipate assessing the Law and Society learning outcomes in the future on a cycle using three courses offered regularly in the major. These will include the two LAS prefix courses that all majors must take and, given the focus of the major on law and an instrument of social and political

¹ We expect that numerous juniors and seniors near completion of their Legal Studies major requirements will choose to remain in that major.

change, one of the upper-level courses offered in Part Five of the major (“Societal and Political Change”).²

Regarding direct assessment tools, the three learning outcomes will be evaluated through papers written by students in these classes. For POL 430, where there is an emphasis on the development of research skills, we will utilize a rubric to evaluate students’ research projects (a 9-12 page end-of-semester research paper). We will focus only on papers written by Legal Studies majors enrolled in the class. For LAS 200 offered in the Spring 2012 semester, we will utilize a rubric to evaluate a random sample of students’ short papers. The assessment criteria to be included in the rubrics are set out below in Part IV (Assessment Plan and Schedule). Eventually, we will use the Law and Society capstone course for assessment of the major.

This year’s assessment program is designed to generate information that will be used to begin to identify the major’s strengths and weaknesses. That, in turn, will allow us to identify areas where improvements might be necessary or desirable.

III. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following are the learning outcomes for the Law and Society major:

- A. Students will demonstrate knowledge of law, legal phenomena and legal institutions from a variety of perspectives outside the discipline of law, with a focus on the relationship between law and political and social change.
- B. Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research addressing and analyzing the relationship between law and society.
- C. Students will develop written and oral communication skills to express informed opinions about issues in law and society.

III. ASSESSMENT PLAN AND SCHEDULE

With the Law and Society major being approved only recently and its capstone course not likely to be offered until Spring 2013, we will undertake more limited assessment activities this academic year than we will once the major is fully implemented. Although the assessment rubrics have not yet been developed, most of the measurement criteria have been identified. The criteria for each outcome to be incorporated into the rubrics are set out below under each outcome:

Learning Outcome #1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of law, legal phenomena and legal institutions from a variety of perspectives outside the discipline of law, with a focus on the relationship between law and political and social change.

² POL 430, the course through which the major is being assessed in Fall 2011, is an option in Part Five of the Law and Society major.

Criteria:

- a. Explain the interdisciplinary nature of the study of law and society;
- b. Describe the basic institutions and procedures of formal law;
- c. Identify the rights and remedies available in society to address social conditions and conflict;
- d. Compare the similarities and differences between formal and informal legal institutions;
- e. Summarize the principal competing theories of justice underlying law and authority;
- f. Describe how legal systems empower and constrain individuals and groups;
- g. Identify and analyze multiple theories in law and society scholarship; and
- h. Understand and analyze how law and legal systems promote or hinder political and social change.

Learning Outcome #2: Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research addressing and analyzing the relationship between law and society.

Criteria:

- a. Write clear thesis statements;
- b. Be familiar with, cite and evaluate the literature relevant to their research topic;
- c. Collect evidence relating to the thesis; and
- d. Analyze data and draw appropriate conclusions.

Learning Outcome #3: Students will develop written and oral communication skills to express informed opinions about issues in law and society.

Criteria:

- a. Use proper grammar in writing and oral communication;
- b. Present ideas in an organized manner;
- c. Present arguments in support of and in opposition to positions; and
- d. Ground positions and arguments in scholarly research.

Although we expect to amend this plan during or before 2012-2013 academic year as the major becomes more established, the current five-year cycle of assessment activities is described below. Eventually, we will assess the major through two courses each academic year- LAS 4XX each year and through LAS 200 and a Part Five course in alternate years. All three learning outcomes will be assessed.

2011-2012 Academic Year

- Approve Assessment Plan for the major as detailed in this document.
- Finalize learning outcomes for LAS 2XX.
- Create a scoring rubric for assessing three learning outcomes using POL 430 and a scoring rubric for assessing three learning outcomes using LAS 2XX.
- Collect papers from Legal Studies majors enrolled in one section of POL 430 (Fall 2011) and undertake assessment.
- Collect random sample papers of students enrolled in LAS 2XX (Spring 2012) and undertake assessment.
- Revise Assessment Plan and rubrics as needed.
- Write annual report on assessment outcomes and activities and submit to Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.

2012-2013 Academic Year

- Report on the analysis of assessment activities and any recommended curricular adjustments to the Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.
- Gather learning outcomes for courses offered in the major from their departments.
- Add one foundation course from each category to curricular map.
- Identify course in Part Five of the major to include in major assessment (may possibly be POL 430) and identify other possible direct assessment tools for LAS 2XX and LAS 4XX.
- Complete writing the learning outcomes for the Law and Society capstone course (LAS 4XX).
- Prepare model syllabi for LAS 2XX and LAS 4XX incorporating their learning outcomes.
- Implement the direct assessment tool (rubric for papers) in LAS 2XX (Fall 2012).
- Create a scoring rubric for assessing the three learning outcomes in LAS 4XX and undertake assessment using random sample of end-of-semester research papers (Spring 2013).
- Revise Assessment Plan and tools as needed.
- Write annual report on assessment outcomes and activities and submit to Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.

2013-2014 Academic Year

- Report on the analysis of assessment activities and any recommended curricular adjustments to the Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.
- Pilot (Fall 2013) and implement (Spring 2014) an additional direct assessment tool in course other than LAS 2XX and LAS 4XX (tool developed and course identified in 2012-2013 academic year).
- Implement the direct assessment tool (rubric for papers) in LAS 4XX (Spring 2014).
- Revise Assessment Plan and tools as needed.
- Write annual report on assessment outcomes and activities and submit to Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.

2014-2015 Academic Year

- Report on the analysis of assessment activities and any recommended curricular adjustments to the Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.
- Implement the direct assessment tool (rubric for papers) in LAS 2XX (Fall 2014).

- Implement the direct assessment tool (rubric for papers) in LAS 4XX (Spring 2015).
- Revise Assessment Plan and tools as needed.
- Write annual report on assessment outcomes and activities and submit to Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.

2015-2016 Academic Year

- Report on the analysis of assessment activities and any recommended curricular adjustments to the Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.
- Implement the direct assessment tool in the course other than LAS 2XX and LAS 4XX previously developed in 2013-2014 academic year (Fall 2015).
- Implement the direct assessment tool (rubric for papers) in LAS 4XX (Spring 2012).
- Revise Assessment Plan and tools as needed.
- Write annual report on assessment outcomes and activities and submit to Political Science Department, Law and Society Curriculum Advisory Committee, and College Administration.
- Write end-of-cycle assessment report on three learning objectives, including results and recommendations from prior four years.
- Recommend curricular changes to be considered a part of the five year review of the major.

Appendix A: Law and Society Curriculum

Law and Society Major (36 credits) (prerequisites in parentheses)

Prerequisites: POL 101 and SOC 101. Students are strongly urged to complete POL 101 and SOC 101 during their first year in the College. These courses will fulfill the College's general education requirement in the social sciences.

PART ONE: Introductory Course (3 credits) – Required:

LAS 200 - Introduction to Law and Society (ENG 101, POL 101, SOC 101)

PART TWO: Skills (3 credits) – Required:

SSC 325 - Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences (ENG 102 or 201, PSY 101 or SOC 101, and junior standing or above)

PART THREE: Foundations (12 credits) – No more than two of the four courses at the 200-level

Category A – American Legal Foundations - Select two (with no more than one at the 200-level):

POL 230³ - Principles of Constitutional Government (ENG 102, POL 101)

LAW 206 - The American Judiciary (ENG 101 and sophomore standing or above)

HIS 277 - American Legal History (ENG 101 and sophomore standing or above)

POL 308 - State Courts and State Constitutional Law (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101 and junior standing or above)

Category B – International Legal Foundations - Select one:

ANT 315 - Systems of Law (ENG 102 or 201, a course in either ANT or LAW, and junior standing or above)

POL 250 - International Law and Justice (ENG 101, POL 101)

POL 320 - International Human Rights (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101, and junior standing or above)

Category C – Sociological Foundations - Select one:

SOC 206 - The Sociology of Conflict and Dispute Resolution (ENG 101, SOC 101)

SOC 232 - Social Stratification (ENG 101, SOC 101)

SOC 302 - Social Problems (ENG 102 or 201, SOC 101 and junior standing or above)

PART FOUR: Philosophy/Jurisprudence/Ethics (3 Credits) -- Select one:

³ A proposal to revise POL 230 to POL 330 is being prepared by the Political Science Department.

- POL 270** - Political Philosophy (ENG 101 and sophomore standing or above)
- POL 371** - American Political Philosophy (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101, and junior standing or above)
- POL 375** - Law, Order, Justice and Society (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101, and junior standing or above)
- LAW 301** - Jurisprudence (ENG 102 or 201 and junior standing or above)
- LAW 310/PHI 310** - Ethics and Law (ENG 102 or 201 and junior standing or above)
- PHI 302** – Philosophical Issues of Rights (ENG 102 or 201, PHI 231)

PART FIVE: Societal and Political Change (12 credits) –Select four or two plus an internship (POL 406, 407 or 408); however, all students must take at least one course dealing with social change and race, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity (POL 313, 319 or 318 or LLS 322 -courses are marked with an asterisk).

- ANT 330** - American Cultural Pluralism and the Law (ENG 102 or 201)
- ECO 215** - Economics of Regulation and the Law (ENG 101, ECO 101)
- *POL 313** - The Law and Politics of Race Relations (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101 and junior standing or above)
- POL 316/LAS XXX** - The Politics of Rights (ENG 101 and POL 101)
- *POL 318** - The Law and Politics of Sexual Orientation (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101 and junior standing or above)
- *POL 319** - Gender and the Law (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101 and junior standing or above)
- POL 406** - Seminar and Internship in New York City Government and Politics (ENG 102 or 201, senior standing, permission of the instructor)
- POL 407** – New York State Assembly/Senate Session Program (ENG 102 or 201, senior standing, permission of the instructor)
- POL 408** – CUNY Washington, D.C. Summer Internship Program (ENG 102 or 201, senior standing, permission of the instructor)
- POL 430⁴** - Problems in Civil Rights & Civil Liberties (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101, and senior standing)
- POL 435** - Judicial Processes & Politics (ENG 102 or 201, POL 101, and senior standing)
- *LLS 322** - Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in the Urban Latina/o Communities (ENG 102 or 201 and junior standing or above)
- SOC 305** - The Sociology of Law (ENG 102 or 201, SOC 101 and junior standing or above)

PART SIX: Senior Capstone (3 credits) – Required:

- LAS 425** – Colloquium for Research in Law and Society (ENG 102 or 201, LAS 2XX, SSC 325, and senior standing).

⁴ A proposal to revise POL 430 to POL 330 is being prepared by the Political Science Department.

Appendix B: Curriculum Map for Selected Courses

This curriculum map links the learning objectives of courses to the learning objectives of the major.

Courses	Program Learning Outcomes		
	Students will demonstrate knowledge of law, legal phenomena and legal institutions from a variety of perspectives outside the discipline of law, with a focus on the relationship between law and political and social change.	Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research addressing and analyzing the relationship between law and society.	Students will develop written and oral communication skills to express informed opinions about issues in law and society.
Course Learning Objectives			
LAS 200: Introduction to Law and Society	<p>-Students will know that law simultaneously plays complex constitutive, regulative and coercive roles in societal and individual domains.</p> <p>-Students will know that there are simultaneously existing state and non-state legal systems.</p> <p>-Students will know that individuals, groups, and institutions use different tactics and strategies to induce social and institutional change through law.</p> <p>-Students will know that people in underserved communities need to overcome unique barriers in order to gain access to institutions of justice and to utilize the benefits of law and justice services.</p>	<p>-Students will possess the basic methodological and epistemological tools necessary to begin to conduct interdisciplinary research in the socio-legal field.</p> <p>- Students will be able to critique and apply competing theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding and studying topics related to the field of law and society.</p>	<p>-Students will be able to structure and write an essay and to critically evaluate, use, and cite outside sources.</p>

<p>POL 430: Seminar in Civil Rights and Liberties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrate knowledge of major US Supreme Court decisions in the areas of civil liberties and rights. -Demonstrate knowledge of the structures, processes, and decisions of the federal courts. -Identify, comprehend, and evaluate legal arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop an independent research paper demonstrating knowledge of major US Supreme Court decisions in the areas of civil liberties and rights and the structures, processes, and decisions of the federal courts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectively write and present a paper integrating major U.S. Supreme Court decisions in civil liberties
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