

Legal Studies Minor

Interdisciplinary curriculum focused on skill development

Goal Description:

The department's Minor in Legal Studies provides alternative approaches to the study of law by exposing the undergraduate to an interdisciplinary curriculum composed of classes in the social sciences, humanities, business, and education. The minor aims to help develop graduates who possess strong thinking, analytical, writing, and research skills.

Providing Department: Legal Studies Minor

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Understand principles of the legal and judicial system

Learning Objective Description:

Students completing the Legal Studies minor will understand the philosophy and principles that form the foundation of the legal and judicial system.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Core courses

Indicator Description:

All students in the legal studies minor must take the following core courses:

- POLS 3334 Judicial Systems
- POLS 4334 Constitutional Law I: Civil Rights and Liberties
- POLS 4335 Constitutional Law II: Government Power / State-Federal Relations

Each of these courses has an objective of introducing students to the philosophical, legal and political contexts in which constitutional questions have been addressed in the United States.

Student performance in these courses is an indicator that they have achieved this objective.

Criterion Description:

We expect that 85% or more of students will pass these courses with a grade of C or better.

Findings Description:

In Summer 2023, we offered one section of POLS 3334. Twenty-three (23) students completed the course. 99% earned a score of C or better.

In Fall 2023, we offered two sections of POLS 4334. Sixty-eight (68) students completed the course. Eighty-five percent (85%) of students earned a score of C or better.

In Spring 2024, we offered two sections of POLS 4335. Fifty-seven (57) students completed the course. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of students earned a score of C or better.

In Spring 2024, we offered one section of POLS 3334. Twenty-five (25) students completed the course. Eight-eight percent (88%) of students earned a score of C or better.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Develop more specific learning objectives for the program and a better plan for assessing them

Action Description:

In the 2024-2025 AY, the legal studies faculty within the department will work to develop a means of assessing student progress on development of thinking, analytical, writing, and research skills in Judicial Systems (POLS 3334), Constitutional Law I (POLS 4334), and Constitutional

Law II (POLS4335) -- the three required courses in the minor.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Plan to assess SLOs in POLS 3334, 4334, and POLS 4335

Performance Objective Description:

Judicial Systems (POLS 3334), Constitutional Law I (POLS 4334), and Constitutional Law II (POLS4335) are the three required courses in the minor. In 2023-2024, the legal studies faculty within the department will work to develop a means of assessing student progress on development of thinking, analytical, writing, and research skills in these courses.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

SLO assessment plan

KPI Description:

Political science faculty teaching within the legal studies minor will meet and, in conjunction with the department chair, develop a plan to assess student learning outcomes for POLS 3334, POLS 4334, and POLS 4335.

Target Description:

Success will be defined as (1) meeting to discuss assessment options for the three courses above and (2) if it is determined that a better measure of SLO is appropriate, developing that measure.

Results Description:

We were not able to make progress on this objective in AY 2023-2024. The plan is to work on this in AY 2024-2025.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

SLO assessment plan

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

Heading into the next assessment cycle (2023-2024) the Legal Studies Minor program has three major goals:

1. Develop a plan to assess student learning outcomes for the three required courses in the minor: POLS 3334, POLS 4334 and POLS 4335.
2. Keep an eye on the balance of demand for face-to-face versus online for LGST minors. In 2021-2022, we began to offer a mix of modalities for the required courses. Our plan is to watch to see if there remains an even split -- initial face-to-face and online have filled at equal rates -- or if demand starts to lean in one way or another.
3. Find new instructors who can teach in the program, particularly the required courses, in order to ease some of the pressure on current program instructors.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

We were not able to make progress on objectives 1 and 3 in 2023-2024.

We have been able to make progress on balancing course demand (#2). We utilize 100% online only attributes on the online courses in order to (1) make designated space for online-only students and (2) try to gently nudge students who are not 100% online into face-to-face sections.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

During the 2024-2025 cycle, we have two primary objectives for this program:

1. The legal studies faculty within the department will work to develop a means of assessing student progress on development of thinking, analytical, writing, and research skills in Judicial Systems (POLS 3334), Constitutional Law I (POLS 4334), and Constitutional Law II (POLS4335) -- the three required courses in the minor.

2. We will work to secure new faculty to teach in the program. Some of this could come through the 3 tenure track lines that are currently open in the department. Progress on this item is essential. The faculty in this program are limited and spend so much time teaching it makes it difficult to make progress on these items of secondary or tertiary importance (e.g., defining assessment-related objectives and indicators).