

# Law and Society

## *Interdisciplinary*

Kenyon's concentration in law and society is an acknowledgment of the increasing importance within the best liberal arts institutions of programs that emphasize the study of law, legal institutions and the legal profession. This program is designed to provide students with a comprehensive, coherent curricular structure within which to examine a plethora of law-related issues that emerge across disciplines, and if not to find the correct answers about law, to ask appropriate questions.

Students pursuing a concentration in legal studies will ponder the relationship between law and human behavior and the role of law in society. They will focus their work in three primary areas: philosophies of law, law as a social institution and law and government. The program prepares students to undertake directed research in socio-legal studies under the mentorship of Kenyon faculty.

## The Curriculum

Students will begin their exploration of law in society with LGLS 110 Introduction to Legal Studies and conclude it with a LGLS 410 Senior Seminar in Legal Studies, which will encompass a directed research project within a selected theme or topic.

"Introduction to Legal Studies" is a survey course that exposes students to a variety of disciplinary approaches to the study of law and legal phenomena. It is intended ordinarily for students who have attained at least sophomore standing and have had some exposure to the social sciences, usually through an introductory course. The "Senior Seminar in Legal Studies" is open to juniors and seniors who have taken "Introduction to Legal Studies" and at least two other courses counting toward fulfillment of the concentration requirements (or to students with permission of the director).

## Requirements for the concentration

The Law and Society Concentration requires students to complete five courses of specified "law and society" coursework. These courses comprise the following:

- LGLS 110 Introduction to Legal Studies
- One semester course in a philosophy-of-law subject area (philosophy, political science or history offerings)
- Two courses in two different departments examining law as a social institution
- LGLS 410 Senior Seminar in Legal Studies

## Courses in Law & Society

### Introduction to Legal Studies

LGLS 110 CREDITS: 0.5

This course examines the law, legal profession and legal institutions from a variety of traditional social-science perspectives. The primary frame of reference will be sociological and social psychological. The objective of the course is to expose students to a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives on law and to encourage the examination of law-related phenomena through the literature of multiple disciplines. Topics to be covered include law as a social institution; law as a social-control mechanism; a history of law in the United States; the U.S. criminal justice system; philosophies of law; law and psychology; comparative legal cultures; and law and social change. This survey course is intended to encourage and facilitate a critical study of law in society and serve as a foundation from which to pursue the study of law and legal issues in other curricular offerings. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. This is required for the Law and Society Concentration. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Offered every fall.

## Media and the Law

LGLS 220 CREDITS: 0.5

This is a mid-level lecture/discussion course intended to expose students to the intersection of media and the law within various social institutions and cultural contexts. Students enrolled in this course will examine the significant role that the media play in the American justice system as well as the critical socio-legal issues that journalists and other media figures face in pursuing their craft. Central to the course is an exploration of the meaning of the speech and press clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Topics to be explored include government censorship, libel, invasion of privacy, obscenity, the impact of press coverage upon the right to a fair trial, and law and linguistics. A portion of this course will focus on understanding the media in relation to crime and criminal justice, particularly through the advent of new technologies. Given pervasive depictions and representations of law in popular culture, students will research and examine society's perception of law and justice in both traditional and modern art forms (e.g., literature, film, humor, etc.). This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Offered every other year.

## Exploring Law: Understanding Socio-legal Methods

LGLS 371 CREDITS: 0.5

This course has been designed as a discussion course with a series of mini-research assignments. The course focuses on the role and contributions of sociology and the social sciences to the conceptualization of law and legal policymaking. Course materials will draw upon research performed primarily within the context of the American civil and criminal justice system. We also will examine some prevalent notions about what law is or should be, legal behavior and practices, and justifications for resorting to law to solve social problems. Through the use of mini-research assignments, students will gain an appreciation for the complexity and far-reaching impact that the social sciences have upon social policymaking and legal policymaking as well as the difficulty of determining or measuring law and its impact. This course is highly recommended for students participating in the John W. Adams Summer Scholars Program in Socio-legal Studies. This counts toward the methods requirement for the sociology major as equivalent to SOCY 271. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing. Offered every other year.

## Individual Study

LGLS 393 CREDITS: 0.5

The Law & Society Program's approach to the individual study course (IS) option is to emphasize flexibility while maintaining the academic integrity of the program's curriculum. The specific details of an IS course plan are to be negotiated between and among the students, faculty members and the program chair. IS courses may be offered within the Law & Society Program upon the request of a qualified student, depending primarily upon faculty interest and availability to supervise the student applying to take such a course. While we expect that a few highly motivated students will broach the possibility of doing individual study, faculty will bring to bear their concept of how any individual study course is to be conducted during the course of the semester. We view this as an exceptional opportunity that we provide our students and, as such, we emphasize that this option is never to be expected as an ordinary course of events. Because we believe that such courses are likely to and should require more than the customary amount of work, student time, initiative and commitment, students must think seriously about whether they have sufficient time within their schedules to pursue such a rigorous undertaking. Faculty considering supervising such a course should consider whether the student's prior academic performance and reasons for wanting to do an individual study suggest that the student is adequately prepared and motivated to succeed in its pursuit. Thus, IS course approval should be seen as the exception rather than the rule. While we do not wish to dampen the tenor of our students' enthusiasm to investigate novel approaches or subjects that are not ordinarily part of our curriculum in any given academic year, we do reserve the right to decline requests for individual study.

Individual study courses take one of a few forms in the Law & Society Program. For the majority of the program's faculty, an individual study is a chance for both faculty development and, in some cases, a test run of a course that may turn into a permanent curricular offering intended for a larger body of students. On other occasions, the IS course will explore a topic of interest to both the faculty member and the

student(s). For these models of an IS course, the faculty member ideally knows something about the topic to be explored, but s/he need not be an expert on the topic. Thus, the individual study can become an opportunity for both the student(s) and the faculty member to become more familiar with the literature, prevailing theories, and methods on the topic at issue. The student will customarily submit discussion papers prior to each meeting with the faculty member guiding the individual course of study. In some cases, this may obviate the need for a final paper at the end of the semester.

For a few of us, the IS is a type of mini-honors course wherein the faculty guides one or two students through a focused and narrow subset of questions and issues on a given topic within that faculty member's teaching and/or research expertise. At the end of the semester, a substantial paper of 30-40 pages is to be submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the course.

Whatever form the IS course is to take, individual study is to be based primarily upon the concept of independent work to be performed by the student. The IS is not meant to be a mini-tutorial wherein the faculty is expected to lecture each week on the topic at issue. Each meeting between the faculty member and the student(s) is to be a discussion based upon the material that has been assigned for the time period in question, whether the course meets weekly or bi-weekly during the course of a semester. In some cases, the students will be responsible for taking the preliminary steps toward determining the course of study for the semester because s/he will do the necessary research to determine

### Senior Seminar Legal Studies

LGLS 410 CREDITS: 0.5

This is an upper-level seminar that offers students in the concentration an opportunity to integrate the various topics and approaches to which they were exposed in the law-related courses they have taken. Each year, the senior seminar will be designed around a specific substantive theme or topic; the themes as well as the format and approach to the course will change from year to year, depending upon the faculty members teaching the course and their interests. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. Offered spring semester every year.

### Individual Study

LGLS 493 CREDITS: 0.25 - 0.5

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## Concentration

Courses that meet the requirement for this concentration:

CLAS 220 Illegal Antiquities  
HIST 209 History of North American Indians  
HIST 322 Human Rights in Latin America  
HIST 411 The Civil Rights Era  
HIST 458 Gandhi and Civil Disobedience  
PHIL 115 Practical Issues in Ethics  
PHIL 235 Philosophy of Law  
PSCI 300 Congress and Public Policymaking  
PSYC 221 Abnormal Psychology  
SOCY 226 Sociology of Law  
SOCY 231 Issues of Gender and Power  
SOCY 232 Sexual Harassment: Normative Expectations and Legal Questions  
SOCY 243 Social Justice: The Ancient and Modern Traditions  
SOCY 244 Race, Ethnicity and American Law  
SOCY 255 Women, Crime and the Law  
SOCY 291 Special Topic  
SOCY 421 Gender Stratification