

Legal Studies Program Format for Assessment of Student Learning

The purpose of this assessment is to ascertain as adequately as possible the degree to which the Legal Studies Program ("LSP") is meeting the goals that LSP has set for itself and the goals of its students. As presently formed, LSP is an undergraduate program in the College of Letters and Science. Although only three years old, LSP is a growing major with several hundred students. LSP is not a department, but rather a "cluster program" with three core cluster slots and several affiliated faculty.

I. Introduction and Background

The Legal Studies Program's mission is to provide a:

[L]iberal education across traditional disciplines, focusing on legal process, the law, legal institutions, and how they operate in society. The courses expose students to the many facets of the law as a social phenomenon - its evolution, its function, and its effects. This major is not a pre-law program, since students will be exposed to a broad social science perspective which is unlike the professional program encountered in law school. It is, however, a suitable program for pre-law students and for those who plan to concentrate in law-related study to prepare for public service careers or graduate training.

(See LSP "Program Overview" at: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/clsj/lsp/home.html>)

As prerequisites for the LSP major, students must take three courses with a grade of 'C' or better: 1) a Communication A course; 2) a Quantitative Reasoning A course; and 3) a "Gateway" course, which must be either Sociology 131 (Criminal Justice in America) or Political Science 217 (Law, Politics, and Society). To fulfill the requirements in the major, students must take at least ten (10) courses with Legal Studies credit (not counting the gateway course). Two courses must be from the Legal Institutions Theme Group, and four courses must be distributed across at least three of the other four basic Theme Groups in the major: Processes of Legal Order and Disorder; Law and Social Structure; Law and Culture; and Law and Theory. In addition, students must take two courses in methods: a research design course and a basic statistics course. Students must also take a Capstone course consisting of either Legal Studies/Sociology 641 (Sociology of Law), or Legal Studies 661 (Law, Culture, and the Humanities), **and** one of the following alternatives: a senior thesis of 6-8 credits, **or** two additional courses drawn from the five Theme Groups. Finally, students must take at least one course that has substantial content dealing with countries or cultures other than the United States.

The courses and Theme Groups of Legal Studies are designed to familiarize students with the following core themes:

- The social, political, economic, and cultural determinants of law.
- The social, political, and economic impacts of law at the macro level.

- The impact of law and other rules on individual level decision-making (the micro level).
- The dynamics of legal ideas and ideologies.
- The practical skills needed to analyze legal phenomena and to access legal resources, broadly defined.
- The nature of legal reasoning and analysis in both common law and civil law systems.
- The functioning of legal institutions, and how those institutions differ from other societal institutions.

II. Method of Analysis

The method of analysis for assessing student learning will be to conduct an email survey of graduating seniors with a major in Legal Studies. The survey questions will be based upon typical questions that such surveys ask, as well as questions tailored specifically to the goals, requirements, and experience of students in Legal Studies. [Question: also do a comparison to the UW L&S survey of 160 graduating seniors in 2000 University Undergraduate Survey conducted by the UW Survey Center.???]

Students will be asked to rate how well specified goals were met, using a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 representing “excellent” and 5 representing “poor”).

Sample Questions

- 1) Below are questions relating to how a Legal Studies major might benefit you as a student. How well did the program do in contributing to these goals for you? [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
 - a) Did you gain significant knowledge of legal institutions, legal reasoning, and the processes (political, cultural, social) in which they are embedded?
 - b) Did you develop better critical, methodological, and analytical skills in thinking about legal phenomena?
 - c) Did you become more interested in law and legal phenomena?
 - d) Did you become more personally involved in participating in or reading about legal issues?
 - e) Did you learn better writing skills?
- 2) Overall, how much did the courses you took in Legal Studies challenge you to think and be more curious about the law and legal phenomena? [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
- 3) Considering all the courses you have taken in Legal Studies, how would you rate the overall quality of instruction?
 - a) By faculty [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
 - b) By teaching assistants [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
 - c) By lecturers [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
- 4) How would you rate the content of the curriculum and courses in Legal Studies?
- 5) How would you rate the availability of courses in the Legal Studies Program?
- 6) What useful to your education were the following courses?

- a) The Gateway courses in Legal Studies (Sociology 131 or Political Science 217) [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
- b) The Captstone course that you took. [Here, provide room for written responses as well] [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
- 7) How would you rate the quality of advising in Legal Studies?
 - a) For academic advising [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
 - b) For career preparation and planning, including graduate school or work. [excellent/very good/good/fair/poor]
- 8) Students choose a Legal Studies major for several reasons and with varying expectations and goals. What were your expectations and goals when choosing political science as a major? [Here, provide room for written response]
- 9) How well have these expectations been met?

___Extremely well Well___ Somewhat well___ Not very
 well___ Very poorly___

- 10) Are you completing any other major or certificate programs? If so, which ones? [Written response]
- 11) What are your immediate plans upon graduation? [Written response]
- 12) What are your longer-range career plans? [Written response]
- 13) If you could start your undergraduate education over again, would you choose Legal Studies as a major?

Definitely___ Probably___ Maybe___ Probably Not___ Definitely
 Not___

- 14) What is your cumulative GPA?
- 15) What is your Legal Studies GPA?
- 16) What would you recommend changing in the Legal Studies program?
- 17) What has been particularly good about the Legal Studies program?
- 18) What services, resources, courses, or other opportunities do you wish the Legal Studies Program offered that it currently does not offer?
- 19) Do you have any other suggestions or comments?

CRIMINAL JUSTICE FIELD OBSERVATION
SUMMER _____
COURSE EVALUATION

This evaluation is **anonymous**, and responses will not be used in any way to assign grades. Please give us candid answers. Some information may be shared in the future for purposes of improving the program. If you need more space write on the backsides of pages.

In what type of agency were you placed? (please check one)

- Law Enforcement (Police, Sheriff,)
- District Attorney's Office and Programs (Deferred Prosecution, Domestic Violence, Investigation, etc.)
- State Public Defender, Legal Defense Program (Client Services, Investigation)
- Adult Community Corrections (State Probation & Parole, Intensive Sanctions (DIS), Federal Probation and Pretrial Services)
- Adult Community Services (Attic, ARC, Domestic Abuse Intervention Service, Wisconsin Correctional Service, etc.)
- Adult Correctional Facility (Prison)
- Juvenile Community Services (Juvenile Group Homes, SPRITE, Community Adolescent Programs, Mendota, etc.)
- Juvenile Court-Linked Programs (Juvenile Reception, Juvenile Detention, Home Detention)

A. Orientation and Informational Meetings

You will recall that we held three field observation meetings during the school year. Please comment on the effectiveness of these meetings.

1. Do you feel the process adequately prepared you for selecting a placement?

Yes *Not sure* *No*

Comments:

2. Do you have suggestions for improving the field observation meetings for next year?

B. Site Visit

1. How helpful was the field instructor site visit to you?

Very helpful *Helpful* *Not very helpful* *Would have been better to spend the time differently*

Comments:

C. Assignment- Learning Goals and Objectives

1. Overall, how helpful were your learning goals and objectives in developing an understanding of your agency, clients and the criminal justice system?

Very helpful

Helpful

Not very helpful

Would have been better to spend the time differently

Comments:

2. How far did you get in realizing your learning goals? Did you realize:

All

Most

Some

Few

None

Comments:

D. Assignments- Agency Organization, Clients, Professionalism and Cultural Competence

1. In your opinion was this assignment (check all that apply):

- extremely helpful for learning about agencies and clients
- helpful for learning about agencies and clients
- somewhat helpful for learning about agencies and clients
- not helpful in learning about agencies and clients

Any additional comments on assignments:

E. Seminar-Small Groups

Please answer the following questions on the operation of your small group. Circle your choices; we urge you to write comments.

1. Small Group Coordinator: *Dan Randi Carolyn Jane Harold Other*

Comments:

2. How useful were the small group sessions, in helping you to understand agency and client characteristics?

Very useful

Useful

Not very useful

Would have been better to spend the time differently

Comments:

3. How useful were the small group sessions, in helping you to understand interagency problems?

*Very
useful*

Useful

*Not very
useful*

*Would have been better to
spend the time differently*

Comments:

4. Was the opportunity to hear about other students' experiences and observations helpful in understanding other agencies and other clients in the criminal justice system?

*Very
helpful*

Helpful

*Not very
helpful*

*Would have been better to
spend the time differently*

Comments:

F. Seminar- Workshop

How helpful were the afternoon presentations in contributing to your self-awareness, skills, and understanding of criminal and juvenile justice?

1. "Professionalism and Ethics in the Criminal Justice System-Part I"

*Very
helpful*

Helpful

*Not very
helpful*

*Would have been better to
spend the time differently*

Comments:

2. "Professionalism and Ethics in the Criminal Justice System-Part II, Cultural Competency"

*Very
helpful*

Helpful

*Not very
helpful*

*Would have been better to
spend the time differently*

Comments:

3. Do you have suggestions for other topics for future afternoon programs?

4. Would you prefer other kinds of workshops (for example, workshops on criminal thinking, violence control, AODA)?

Yes

Not sure

Maybe

No

If yes, what subjects would you prefer?

G. The Course in General

We established four objectives for the summer internships--to enhance understanding of; **(a)** criminal justice

agencies, **(b)** clients, © the criminal justice system and **(d)** Professionalism and Cultural Competence.

1. How well do you feel you have accomplished these goals?

Very well *Well* *Not so well* *Poorly*

Comments:

2. Would you recommend the internship program to other students?

Yes *Not sure* *Maybe* *No*

Comments:

3. Do you have suggestions for improving the program next year?

Thank You!

CRIMINAL JUSTICE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM
SUMMER _____
EVALUATION OF PLACEMENT

This evaluation will be used by the Criminal Justice Certificate Program staff for planning purposes, and it will be made available to next year's interns. Where questions give options, please circle the selected responses, and briefly explain your reasons.

Placement

_____ Agency (Unit if applicable)

_____ City

1. List and briefly describe your work duties.

2. What were the positive and negative aspects of these activities at the placement?

a. **Supervision:** *Excellent* *Adequate* *Inadequate* *Very poor*

Please explain:

b. **Responsibilities:** *Too much* *About right* *Not enough*

Please explain:

c. **Range of experiences in the agency:** *Too narrow* *About right* *Too wide*

Please explain:

d. **Range of experiences with other criminal justice agencies:**

Adequate (received help and time off work)

OK (agency was flexible, but I was on my own to work them out)

Inadequate (received no help or time off work)

Other (please explain)

e. **Amount of work:** *Too much* *About right* *Too little* (not enough to do)

f. **Other comments on the placement** (exciting, boring, diverse, etc.)

3. Overall, was this internship a good learning experience? What do you feel you learned about criminal justice in America and about a criminal justice career?

4. Prior to accepting this placement, did you have adequate opportunity to interview and observe staff and clients? *Yes* *No*

What else would have helped?

5. Did you have sufficient information about this agency before interviewing and accepting the placement? *Yes* *No*

What else would have helped?

6. Did you have prior volunteer experience in a criminal justice agency? *Yes* *No*

If yes: Where?

Did it help?

If no: Would it have helped?

7. Would you recommend this placement to next summer's interns?

Strongly Yes *Yes* *Maybe* *No* *Strongly No*

Please comment:

8. What suggestions or tips about this placement would you like to communicate to next year's intern?

10. Any other comments about the placement?

THANK-YOU