Legal Studies (MA)

This program is offered by the College of Arts & Sciences. It is available online, at the St. Louis home campus, and at select U.S. campuses. Please see the Campus Locations and Offerings section of this catalog for a list of campuses where this program is offered.

Program Description

The coursework for the master of arts (MA) in legal studies is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the legal environment in which individuals, businesses and the judiciary operates. This degree should be attractive to those individuals who need additional legal knowledge to function more effectively (for example, managers, teachers, government employees and legal assistants). The program in legal studies does not prepare students for the practice of law, and its graduates are not eligible for admission to the bar.

MA degree-seeking students with a declared major in legal studies may seek, concurrently with the degree, a certificate in paralegal studies. All of the coursework is applied toward both the degree and the certificate. Students who are interested in the certificate program should refer to Graduate Certificates.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

• Utilize critical thinking strategies for legal reasoning and analysis.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the Code of Professional Responsibility to guide professional behaviors and decision-making.
• Integrate the skills and knowledge necessary for understanding legal issues working from both theoretical and practical applications.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the essential goals of legal researching, problem solving and logic as applied to legal writing.
• Evaluate legal information to be used in effective written communication for practical problems encountered in a legal environment.
• Analyze the significant role that legal assistants have in the legal world.
• Apply advanced legal knowledge and skills in legal practice.

Program Curriculum

The 39 credit hours required for the MA degree in legal studies must include the following courses:

• LEGL 5000 Introduction to Legal Studies (Requisite Course) (3 hours)
• LEGL 5100 Jurisprudence (3 hours)
• LEGL 5300 Ethics for the Legal Professional (3 hours)
• LEGL 5260 Methods of Legal Research and Writing I (3 hours)
• LEGL 5270 Methods of Legal Research and Writing II (3 hours)
• LEGL 5400 Anglo-American Legal History (3 hours)
• LEGL 5450 American Constitutional Law (3 hours)
• LEGL 5470 Civil Actions (3 hours)
• LEGL 5480 Criminal Actions (3 hours)
• LEGL 5490 Advanced Topics in Law (6 hours)
• LEGL 5800 Computerized Legal Research (3 hours)
• LEGL 6000 Research and Writing Project (3 hours)

The elective requirement can be satisfied by taking LEGL 5850 Advanced Legal Writing, an additional LEGL 5490 Advanced Topics in Law course, or LEGL 5550 Legal Studies Internship.

If a substitution has been approved for a required course, the student must choose either LEGL 5850 Advanced Legal Writing or an additional LEGL 5490 Advanced Topics in Law course.

The required courses and electives listed in this core may be taken as directed studies, subject to the conditions stated in the Directed Studies section listed under Academic Policies and Procedures.

Note: A legal assistant or paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training, or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible. Paralegals or legal assistants may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law. Webster University’s St. Louis area paralegal programs have been approved by the American Bar Association.

Admission

Students who are interested in applying to this degree program should see the Admission Section of this catalog for general requirements.

Send all admissions materials to:

Office of Admission
Webster University
470 E. Lockwood Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63119

Advancement to Candidacy

Students are admitted to their graduate program upon completion of all admission requirements. Students are advanced to candidacy status after successfully completing 12 credit hours of graduate credit, with grades of B- or better. In the MBA program and other specialized programs, courses required as prerequisites to the program do not count toward the 12 credit hours required for advancement.