

# Legal Studies

## Program Description

The coursework in legal studies is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the legal environment in which individuals, businesses, and the judiciary operate. This major should be attractive to those individuals (for example, managers, teachers, government employees, and legal assistants) who need additional legal knowledge to function more effectively. 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.

M.A. degree-seeking students with a declared major in legal studies may seek, concurrently with the degree, a certificate in paralegal studies. Some 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 Goals for the Legal Studies Program

Upon completion of the program, students should:

- Understand the fundamentals of legal reasoning and analysis.
- Gain insight into some of the ethical dilemmas faced by lawyers and legal assistants.
- Master the skills and knowledge necessary for understanding legal issues working from both theoretical and practical applications.
- Learn the essential goals of legal researching, legal and logical reasoning and begin to develop legal writing skills.
- Be able to apply the theory of legal research and writing to practical problems encountered in a legal environment.
- Gain insight into the significant role that legal assistants have in the legal world and the practical skills necessary to function in it.

## Program Curriculum

The 39 credit hours required for the M.A. degree must include the following courses for a major in legal studies:

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

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. For the purposes of the guidelines, the terms “legal assistant” and “paralegal” are used interchangeably. Therefore,

paralegals are prohibited from practicing law. Webster University’s legal studies M.A. and certificate programs at the Webster Groves and downtown St. Louis campuses have been approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). The Kansas City program has not applied for and, therefore, is not currently approved by the American Bar Association.

## Graduate Certificate in Paralegal Studies

The certificate program in paralegal studies is designed to provide the theoretical and practical education needed by those who work or desire to work as paralegals (legal assistants). It is important to note that, at present, there is no state or federal licensure of paralegals, and that successful completion of Webster’s certificate program should not be construed to imply state, federal, or board certification.

All certificate courses must be taken at Webster University. Students may pursue the certificate by itself or integrate their certificate studies with their M.A. degree program.

The 24 credit hours required for the graduate certificate in paralegal studies must include the following courses:

LEGL 5000 Introduction to Legal Studies  
LEGL 5300 Ethics for the Legal Professional  
LEGL 5260 Methods of Legal Research and Writing I  
LEGL 5270 Methods of Legal Research and Writing II  
LEGL 5470 Civil Actions  
Two LEGL 5490 Advanced Topics in Law courses (6 credit hours)  
LEGL 5800 Computerized Legal Research

Areas of law offered in Topics courses include:

Torts	Contracts
Probate	Business Organizations
Juvenile	Products Liability
Consumer	Environmental
Insurance	Bankruptcy
Property	Computers and Law
Family	Real Estate

Students seeking the paralegal certificate should consult the Admission, Enrollment, Academic Policies, and Graduate Certificates sections of this catalog for information regarding application, admission, registration, and the academic policies of Webster University.

**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. For the purposes of the guidelines, the terms “legal assistant” and “paralegal” are used interchangeably. Therefore, paralegals are prohibited from practicing law.

A graduate certificate in paralegal studies is offered at the St. Louis campuses and at the Kansas City metropolitan campus. Webster University’s legal studies and certificate programs at the Webster Groves and downtown St. Louis campuses have been approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). The Kansas City program has not applied for and, therefore, is not currently approved by the American Bar Association.

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## Graduate Certificate in Intellectual Property Paralegal Studies

This certificate is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills to work in the field of intellectual property law as a paralegal. The global legal community is experiencing an increasing demand for intellectual property law services, thereby resulting in an increasing demand for paralegals knowledgeable in the field of intellectual property law. A paralegal is a vital member of a legal team, usually combining an understanding of the law with useful practical knowledge of forms and procedures. The curriculum for a certificate in intellectual property paralegal studies provides specialized education in the law in general, while allowing the student to focus on the field of intellectual property. Webster's intellectual property paralegal certificate program in Webster Groves has been approved by the American Bar Association (ABA).

The 24 credit hours required for the graduate certificate in intellectual property paralegal studies must include the following courses:

LEGL 5000 Introduction to Legal Studies  
LEGL 5260 Methods of Legal Research and Writing I  
LEGL 5270 Methods of Legal Research and Writing II  
LEGL 5905 Intellectual Property Law for Paralegals  
LEGL 5300 Ethics for the Legal Professional  
LEGL 5925 Patent and Trademark Law for Paralegals  
LEGL 5800 Computerized Legal Research  
One elective course (3 credit hours) from the following:  
LEGL 5945 Copyright and Trade Secret Law for Paralegals  
LEGL 5740 Ownership, Licensing, and Transfer of Intellectual Property  
LEGL 5965 Computerized Intellectual Property Research for Paralegals

Students seeking the intellectual property paralegal certificate should consult the Admissions, Enrollment, Academic Policies, and Graduate Certificates sections of this catalog for information regarding applications, admission, registration, and the academic policies of Webster University.

The certificate program in intellectual property paralegal studies is designed to provide the theoretical and practical education needed by those who work or desire to work as paralegals (legal assistants). It is important to note that, at present, there is no state or federal licensure of paralegals, and that successful completion of Webster's certificate program should not be construed to imply state, federal, or board certification.

All certificate courses must be taken at Webster University. Students may pursue the certificate by itself or in conjunction with a compatible graduate program.

**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. For the purposes of the guidelines, the terms "legal assistant" and "paralegal" are used interchangeably. Therefore, paralegals are prohibited from practicing law. Webster University's legal studies and certificate programs at the Webster Groves and downtown St. Louis campuses have been approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). The Kansas City program has not applied for and, therefore, is not currently approved by the American Bar Association.

Students who wish to pursue both an M.A. in Legal Studies and a graduate certificate in intellectual property paralegal studies within 42 credit hours must substitute the certificate elective course for LEGL 5490.

## Course Descriptions for Legal Studies

### LEGL 5000 Introduction to Legal Studies (Requisite Course) (3)

This course provides a background in the American legal system with emphasis on ethics, terminology, and legal analysis. Course content focuses on an overview of substantive areas such as torts, contracts, property, and criminal law.

### LEGL 5100 Jurisprudence (3)

Students analyze major philosophies of law, including methods of justifying legal systems through natural law, legal positivism, and sociological jurisprudence. Contemporary writings on modern philosophies of law are also examined. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### LEGL 5260 Methods of Legal Research and Writing I (3)

This course is the first in a two-part writing program which is designed to develop the legal assistant's research and writing skills, including legal citations. Methods of Legal Research and Writing I introduces the student to the skills necessary for identifying, locating, and using legal resources, including: primary sources of statutory and case law; secondary authority; and research reference tools commonly located in a law library which are used to navigate the primary and secondary sources. In addition, the students will be introduced to the process of computer-aided legal research. This class also explores the process of legal analysis through the incorporation of the results of legal research into legal argument and legal memoranda. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### LEGL 5270 Methods of Legal Research and Writing II (3)

This course is a continuation of LEGL 5260. Methods of Legal Research and Writing II is designed to build upon the research skills learned in Methods of Legal Research and Writing I and to enhance the paralegal student's legal analytical and writing skills. The course includes several legal issue writing projects, at least two of which will combine both research and writing skills. Prerequisite: LEGL 5260.

### LEGL 5300 Ethics for the Legal Professional (3)

This course will focus on the ethical and professional responsibilities facing legal professionals. We will examine ethical considerations such as confidentiality, unauthorized practice of law, and conflict of interest, as well as the consequences of unethical behavior. In addition, students will be provided with frameworks for dealing with the moral dilemmas that legal professionals face. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### LEGL 5400 Anglo-American Legal History (3)

The student examines the history and development of the Anglo-American common law. Special topics include sources; procedural and substantive developments; and the roles of courts, lawyers, legislatures, and jurists. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

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### **LEGL 5450 American Constitutional Law (3)**

Students study legal constitutional principles. Emphasis is on access to the courts, growth of federal power under the commerce clause, due process and equal protection, and case law methodology. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### **LEGL 5470 Civil Actions (3)**

Course content focuses on a variety of civil law areas such as contracts, torts, evidence, property, corporations, tax, wills, and trusts. Students examine actions based on these areas of law. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### **LEGL 5480 Criminal Actions (3)**

Students investigate the area of crime against persons and property and the judicial process, including investigation, adjudication, sentencing, and correction. Actions based on these areas of law are examined. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### **LEGL 5490 Advanced Topics in Law (3)**

Current and significant issues in legal studies are examined. Course content focuses on selected topics, with emphasis given to new and emerging developments in the field. Course may be repeated for credit if content differs. Prerequisites: LEGL 5000 and LEGL 5260.

### **LEGL 5500 Professional Seminars (1-3)**

Students participate in seminars designed to examine contemporary issues in legal studies. The professional seminar supplements the core and elective courses in the area of legal studies by focusing on issues of current and special interest. Course may be repeated for credit if content differs. Graduate students may apply a maximum of 3 credit hours of these seminars as electives to meet the credit-hour requirements for graduation. This course may not be completed by directed study. Prerequisites: LEGL 5000 and LEGL 5260.

### **LEGL 5550 Paralegal Clinical Studies (3-6)**

The internship augments the legal studies curriculum by placing the student in a private or public organization under the supervision of an appointed internship supervisor. Application for placement should be made a term in advance of enrollment. Prerequisite: completion of all other required courses in this major.

### **LEGL 5800 Computerized Legal Research (3)**

This course will acquaint students with the fundamental concepts of locating and accessing legal information using computer technology. Prerequisites: LEGL 5000 and LEGL 5260.

### **LEGL 5850 Advanced Legal Writing (3)**

This course is aimed at helping students attain a higher level of legal writing skills by focusing on the intellectual and physical discipline involved in creating a good written legal product. The course teaches students vital reasoning skills along with detailed instruction on the strategies students may use to write clearly and convincingly. Prerequisites: LEGL 5000, LEGL 5260, and LEGL 5270.

### **LEGL 6000 Research and Writing Project (3)**

The student is expected to synthesize and integrate the learning experiences acquired in legal studies and to evaluate the research and current topics relative to this area of concentration. Techniques used to accomplish these goals may vary. Prerequisite: completion of all other required courses in this major.

## Course Descriptions for the Certificate in Intellectual Property Paralegal Studies

(These courses do not apply toward the M.A. in Legal Studies)

### **LEGL 5740 Ownership, Licensing, and Transfer of Intellectual Property (3)**

This is a practical skills course covering the basics of contract formation and drafting. This course will cover the preparation and interpretation of agreements affecting the ownership, licensing, and transfer of intellectual property, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000 and LEGL 5900.

### **LEGL 5905 Intellectual Property Law for Paralegals (3)**

This course is a survey of the four primary areas of intellectual property — patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets. This course will focus on the paralegal's role in securing and enforcing these rights. The content of this course is appropriate as a general overview for non-specialists, and a foundation course for those who intend to specialize in intellectual property. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### **LEGL 5925 Patent and Trademark Law for Paralegals (3)**

This is a substantive law course covering the federal patent statute (35 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), the federal trademark statute (15 U.S.C. 1051 et seq.), and representative state trademark statutes. This course will follow the process of patenting inventions from prior art searching, preparing and filing patent applications, prosecuting patent applications, and post issuance topics. Additionally, the course will address the process of selecting and protecting trademarks including pre-adoption searching, preparation and filing of applications, prosecution of applications, and issuance and maintenance of trademark registrations in the U.S. and abroad. The course will focus on the paralegal's role in obtaining and maintaining patents and trademarks, including electronic filings. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### **LEGL 5945 Copyright and Trade Secret Law for Paralegals (3)**

This is a substantive law course covering the federal copyright statute (17 U.S.C. 101 et seq.) and the federal and state statutes governing trade secrets and confidential information. This course will cover copyrightable subject matter, the exclusive rights afforded by copyright, ownership of copyright, and fair use. This course will cover the preparation and prosecution of applications for copyright registration and federal and state schemes for protecting and enforcing rights in trade secrets and other confidential information. Additionally, this course will examine the role of the paralegal in securing and enforcing copyright rights in works of authorship in the U.S. and abroad, and the paralegal's role in securing and enforcing trade secret rights. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

### **LEGL 5965 Computerized Intellectual Property Research for Paralegals (3)**

This is a legal researching and writing skills course that will focus on searching strategies and databases in intellectual property contexts. This course will address both publicly available and private databases for searching for prior art for patentability and validity purposes; trademarks and services marks for availability and clearance searches; and legal precedent to support application and enforcement efforts. Prerequisite: LEGL 5000.

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