Legal Studies

Degree Offered

- Master of Legal Studies

Nature of the Program

West Virginia University’s Master of Legal Studies (MLS) program is part of the Department of Public Administration. The MLS is a degree program designed to build greater public understanding of the law and the United States legal system, to provide graduates with the ability to apply knowledge and skills gained to performing their jobs more effectively and to provide private and public organizations the benefit of enhanced experience. It is a graduate program of study designed for professionals practicing in areas such as human relations, criminal justice, juvenile justice, journalism, social work, court administration, national security, probation and hm law enforcement, or regulatory agencies. It is neither a law degree nor a paralegal program.

The MLS is offered entirely online (there are no on-campus courses). Courses are offered each term (including summers). Students following the prescribed course of study should be able to finish the degree in six terms (two calendar years, including summers).

Prospective and current students should frequently check the program’s website at http://legalstudies.wvu.edu for up-to-date program information, forms, and other guidelines.

Degree Completion

According to university regulations, master's students are permitted to continue in a program for a maximum of eight years under their original application. A student is generally not allowed to count any courses taken more than eight years prior to the conferring of a degree toward completion of that degree. Graduate students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment, excluding summer sessions unless permitted by the director. All graduate students must enroll for at least one credit hour during the semester (or summer) of graduation. No course in which the grades D, P (pass), F, or U (unsatisfactory) are earned can be counted toward a graduate degree, nor can courses taken under the audit option. Students in the Master of Legal Studies program must earn a 3.0 GPA to qualify for graduation.

FACULTY

CHAIR
- Maja Husar Holmes - Ph.D. (Syracuse University)

DIRECTOR
- Maja Husar Holmes

COORDINATOR
- Carla J. See - M.A., M.S. (West Virginia University)

PROFESSOR EMERITUS
- Nancy L. Adams

Admission

In order to be considered for admission to the MLS program, one must have completed a baccalaureate degree in any major with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. In addition, it is recommended that a prospective student have some work experience in an area broadly related to the field of legal studies. Applicants who do not possess a GPA of at least 3.0 may apply to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences for admission as a non-degree student in order to register for certain classes and to document academic ability. Acceptance as a non-degree student does not guarantee acceptance into the legal studies program.

Steps to apply for the MLS program:

- Application for admission and transcripts: (Apply here: http://admissions.wvu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply)
- Three Letters of Recommendation: References should be requested through the online Graduate Application portal. Reference writers should be persons who are able to write directly to the applicant's ability to think critically; analyze situations, information, or data; to write clearly; and to apply one's self in an academic program of study. At least one letter should be from an academic reference, if possible.
- Current resume or curriculum vitae
- One to two page personal statement on the subject of why and how the Master of Legal Studies Program will further your career or special interests.
• Results from a standardized graduate-level test (i.e. GRE, LSAT, GMAT or MCAT) or a petition of waiver for the standardized test requirements. A form for the waiver request can be located on the Legal Studies Admissions webpage: http://publicadmin.wvu.edu/mls. A prospective student may apply for a waiver of the graduate test score requirement if he or she possesses an undergraduate degree and has five or more years of work experience in a field related to legal studies.

All application materials should be submitted no later than November 15 of each year for admission in the Spring semester and by May 1 for admission in the Fall semester. Applicants are encouraged to submit materials early. Early applications that are complete will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee on a rolling basis. Otherwise, the Admissions Committee will render decisions by November 30 for Spring admission and by May 15 for Fall admission. **Applications for admission may be considered after these deadlines on a space-available basis. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Additional information and forms may be found on the program’s website at http://legalstudies.wvu.edu or by calling the program at (304) 293-7977.

Master of Legal Studies

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.

<table>
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<th>Required Courses</th>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 610</td>
<td>Law and the Legal System</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 620</td>
<td>Researching the Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 630</td>
<td>Law and Society</td>
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<td>LEGS 640</td>
<td>Administrative Legal Process</td>
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<td>LEGS 650</td>
<td>The Legislative Process</td>
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<td>LEGS 660</td>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
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<td>LEGS 700</td>
<td>Research Capstone</td>
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<tr>
<th>Elective Courses</th>
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<td>Select five from the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 691</td>
<td>Advanced Topics</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 710</td>
<td>Family Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 720</td>
<td>Media and the Law</td>
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<td>LEGS 730</td>
<td>Employment Law</td>
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<td>LEGS 740</td>
<td>Commerce Law</td>
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<td>LEGS 750</td>
<td>Criminal Law and Procedure</td>
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<td>LEGS 760</td>
<td>Administrative Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 770</td>
<td>Healthcare Law</td>
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<td>LEGS 780</td>
<td>Constitutional Law</td>
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Total Hours: 36

Major Learning Goals

MASTER OF LEGAL STUDIES

• Students will be prepared to articulate with and differentiate between the law, the courts, other legal institutions and legal actors and to define their impact on society;
• to identify sources of law;
• develop research plans and conduct legal research;
• prepare for and assist with civil and criminal litigation;
• understand policymaking and rulemaking, develop and implement strategies and plans to affect policy making and rulemaking.

COURSES

LEG 610. Law and the Legal System. 3 Hours.
Introduction to the law and its functions, the structure of the U.S. legal system, and the actors in the legal system.

LEG 620. Researching the Law. 3 Hours.
Provides experience in locating and interpreting primary and secondary legal authority; federal and state constitutions; agency rules and regulations.

LEG 630. Law and Society. 3 Hours.
Explores the relationship between legal rules and social norms; the law's role in defining deviance and establishing social control; issues of equality; where people go to resolve disputes.
LEGS 640. Administrative Legal Process. 3 Hours.
Explores the role of administrative agencies in making law.

LEGS 645. Judicial Legal Process. 3 Hours.
Introduction to the structure of the U.S. judicial system. Focuses on how beliefs and social conditions influenced the development of the United States Constitution, the institution of judicial review, and judicial participation in governing.

LEGS 650. The Legislative Process. 3 Hours.
Examines how legislation develops and implications of recent legislative reform enactments and proposals.

LEGS 660. Alternative Dispute Resolution. 3 Hours.
Theoretical and practical examination of alternative dispute processes and assessment of the appropriateness of alternative dispute resolution for particular legal disputes.

LEGS 691A-Z. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.

LEGS 692. Directed Study. 1-6 Hours.
Directed study, reading, and/or research.

LEGS 695. Independent Study. 1-6 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

LEGS 697. Research. 1-15 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading may be S/U.)

LEGS 699. Graduate Colloquium. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. For graduate students not seeking coursework credit but who wish to meet residency requirements, use of the University's facilities, and participate in its academic and cultural programs. Note: Graduate students who are not actively involved in coursework or research are entitled, through enrollment in their department's 699/799 Graduate Colloquium to consult with graduate faculty, participate in both formal and informal academic activities sponsored by their program, and retain all of the rights and privileges of duly enrolled students. Grading is P/F; colloquium credit may not be counted against credit requirements for masters programs. Registration for one credit of 699/799 graduate colloquium satisfies the University requirement of registration in the semester in which graduation occurs.

LEGS 700. Research Capstone. 3 Hours.
Research activities leading to a scholarly project applying and extending knowledge gained across the master of legal studies program coursework.

LEGS 710. Family Law. 3 Hours.
Examines the distribution of power and responsibility among parent, child, and the state related to a variety of family issues and social service workers' reporting obligations.

LEGS 720. Media and the Law. 3 Hours.
Survey of mass media and the law, implications of existing law, and proposed changes.

LEGS 730. Employment Law. 3 Hours.
Explores law related to workers compensation, disability insurance, affirmative action/equal opportunity policies, workplace, workplace discrimination and related federal and state statutes.

LEGS 740. Commerce Law. 3 Hours.
Survey of the legal principles relating to the organization, operation, and management of business organizations and principles relating to commercial transactions.

LEGS 750. Criminal Law and Procedure. 3 Hours.
Covers investigative stages of search and seizure, interrogation, and identification. Familiarizes students with prosecutorial stages and evidentiary issues.

LEGS 751. Punishment and Corrections. 3 Hours.
Introduction to certain bodies of law in the areas of punishment and corrections, including statutory codes, common law doctrines, and executive agency rules. Focuses on the application of rules that govern those who enforce our system of punishment.

LEGS 752. Homeland Security. 3 Hours.
Introduction to current public management policies and issues relevant to security of the United States. Provides both traditional students and current practitioners with a broad, up-to-date, multidisciplinary overview of homeland security as a contemporary subject of intense interest and inquiry, and as an emerging academic discipline.

LEGS 753. Immigration and Border Security. 3 Hours.
This course provides knowledge of the history of immigration to the United States, the current state of affairs and the legal implications of the legal system.

LEGS 760. Administrative Ethics. 3 Hours.
Analysis of ethical issues in the law and the administrative decision making process.
LEGS 770. Healthcare Law. 3 Hours.
Examines law and health care regulations related to provision of healthcare and issues related to liability.

LEGS 771. Long Term Care Regulation. 3 Hours.
This course focuses on skilled care services and long term care delivered in sub-acute facilities, otherwise traditionally called ‘nursing homes.’ The course introduces students to the administration, organization, management and operations as well as compliance with federal or state directives regarding provision of long term care services in a sub-acute facility.

LEGS 780. Constitutional Law. 3 Hours.
Examines the concept of constitutionalism, the relationships between the branches of government and between national and state governments, and the role of the Constitution in protecting individual liberties.