

Law - Undergraduate Courses (LAWU)

Course information contained within the Bulletin is accurate at the time of publication in June 2025 but is subject to change. For the most up-to-date course information, please refer to the Course Catalog.

LAWU 0801. Border Crossings: Gendered Dimensions of Globalization. 3 Credit Hours.

Explore the ways in which gender "works" in different cultural and national contexts, and the impact globalization has on gender relations. "Gender" indicates the ways in which our social lives are organized around categories of male and female - in relation to work, family, sexuality, culture, and nation. "Globalization" describes the transfer of economic and cultural goods between nations and peoples. Questions we will ask include: What is globalization and how do women and men experience it differently? Do women and men work the same jobs in the global labor market, and do they get paid the same wages? How does immigration affect families? Does a growing connectedness between cultures and nations change traditional gender roles? How different are experiences of women in the "Third World" from those of women in the "First World," and why? NOTE: This course fulfills the World Society (GG) requirement for students under GenEd and International Studies (IS) for students under Core. Students cannot receive credit for this course if they have successfully completed GSWS 0801 or WMST 0801.

Course Attributes: GG, SI

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

LAWU 0825. The United States Constitution and Popular Culture. 3 Credit Hours.

What does popular culture have to do with the U.S. Constitution? The relationship between them is a two-way street: constitutional law regulates and inspires popular culture, while popular culture parodies, dilutes, and reinforces constitutional law. We will discover how websites, internet mash-ups, comics, films, music, and comedy television intersect with constitutional principles. In class, students will watch and hear popular culture works, including full-length films, video parodies, cartoons, and music. We will identify parts of popular culture restricted by the Constitution as well as those parts the Constitution celebrates. Using the lens of popular culture, we will explore how the U.S. Supreme Court operates and how the Constitution protects rights such as free speech, criminal procedure protections, and other freedoms. The course will trace popular culture references to court decisions about medical marijuana, love triangles, violent video games, cross burning, abortion, homosexual conduct, interracial marriage, obscenity, gun rights, women's rights, and school desegregation.

Course Attributes: GU

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

LAWU 0833. Law and Literature, Law in Fact. 3 Credit Hours.

Of what does fairness consist? One important component is, of course, decision according to rule, rendered by a neutral, impartial decision maker. But the rule of law ideal does not exhaust our conceptions of what is fair. Where strict application of rules seems unduly harsh, it may seem more fair to show mercy. Or sometimes we may prefer a decision maker who is not strictly impartial, but who can empathize with the person being judged. And sometimes it is important to focus on results rather than on procedure. This interdisciplinary course will use short stories (including Susan Glaspell's famous tale, A Jury of Her Peers), novels (including Herman Melville's Billy Budd), and a Shakespeare play (Measure for Measure) to examine different visions of fairness in the law. These materials present questions of enormous social and ethical relevance, such as whether and when we might "excuse" murder or whether and when it is permissible to lie in the service of truth. Through in-class discussions, a mock trial, and writing exercises, students will be asked to bring differing images of fairness to bear on an actual legal problem that arose right here in Philadelphia, in order to see how alternative ideas of fairness might affect the way in which we understand how to behave in morally complicated situations. Students will learn to think critically about ideas such as blame, responsibility and authority, to communicate those ideas both orally and in writing, and to consider how works of fiction can show us what is true about the world in which we live.

Course Attributes: GB

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

LAWU 0834. Understanding Justice. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will explore the idea of justice, with particular emphasis on how justice might be achieved through law. That exploration will incorporate conceptualizations of justice in political philosophy (Aristotle, Hobbes, Hume, Mill, and Rawls), as well as presentations of themes of justice in literature (Bible stories, Greek tragedy, and modern fiction). In the core portion of the course we will use these philosophical and literary materials, together with distinctively legal materials (cases, statutes, constitutional provisions), to probe the relationship between justice and law by examining the idea of legal rights (What are they? Who has them? Where do they come from? How are they related to notions of liberty and equality?), by considering how justice can be achieved through the way law is administered (What are "due process" and "equal protection"?), and by identifying the responsibilities of judges and lawyers with respect to the realization of justice through the legal system (What does it mean for a judge to be impartial? What is the responsibility of lawyers for the impact of their advocacy and counseling on third parties and on the larger society?). We will do all this by focusing on specific contemporary legal issues that raise vital questions of justice, including affirmative action, same-sex marriage, vaccination of children, workers protection laws, access to contraception, and abortion, among others.

Course Attributes: GB

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

LAWU 0854. Education in the Global City. 3 Credit Hours.

We are in the midst of vast global change. How does it impact cities like Philadelphia and the people who live here? In this course we focus mainly on education in the city, but this doesn't mean we look only at schools. Globalization is creating new possibilities for learning: we have instant access to vast networks of information, migration is bringing rich cultural diversity to our doorsteps, and we learn in many different types of schools and communities. But globalization is also creating new problems that education must address: new kinds of poverty, increasingly separate lives, mounting intolerance, a digital divide. This course explores what education in all its forms can do to support the American dream for people in the city, nation, and the world. Our exploration goes beyond the classroom, linking academic and community-based learning. NOTE: This course fulfills the U.S. Society (GU) requirement for students under GenEd and American Culture (AC) for students under Core. Students cannot receive credit for this course if they have successfully completed URBE 0854.

Course Attributes: GU, SI

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

LAWU 0875. Law Beyond Borders. 3 Credit Hours.

Law Beyond Borders examines how law impacts world affairs and, in turn, how world affairs impact our understanding of law. We will examine high-profile and controversial current events ranging from U.S. cyber-operations in Iran to the Syrian civil war, asking what international law is, how it works, and how well it does so. We ask what makes a nation State and what powers it has. We'll explore why and how states collaborate on issues of mutual concern and resolve their differences. We will survey the human rights revolution and the international responses to globalization, including efforts to regulate international environmental issues and international trade. The course will be taught using law school teaching methods plus three experiential exercises where students will debate Palestinian Statehood, argue a case before the International Court of Justice that arises out of war-time atrocities, and discuss potential responses to ISIS. The class will give students the tools to know what international law "is" and to assess its ability to promote justice in an increasingly globalized world. Just as importantly, this course will enhance students' critical reasoning and writing skills, and their ability to create - and critique - different styles of argument.

Course Attributes: GG

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

LAWU 1001. Law in Public Health and Health Care. 3 Credit Hours.

This course is aimed at undergraduate students interested in the intersection of law and health, including those pursuing degrees in public health, health professions, social work, political science, criminal justice and psychology. It is intended to provide students with the tools and competencies to deal with the legal issues they will encounter in their future health-related careers. The course will cover the fundamental of law as a form of regulation and health intervention, as medium of health advocacy and social change, and as a shaper of health in itself.

Course Attributes: SI

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.