

Law and Courts Field Requirements

Doctoral students may declare a minor field in Law & Courts. Learning the field requires successful completion of a number of substantive courses as well as significant additional reading outside of these courses. Under ordinary circumstances, students minoring in Law & Courts should complete at least three courses in the field during their first four semesters. Students will then sit for their Qualifying Exams in the August following their second year in the program. Deviations from this schedule require the approval of the Graduate Director.

Course Work

Students minoring in Law & Courts are required to take at least three of the following courses:

- PSC 600/LAW 602: Constitutional Law I
- PSC 600/LAW 699: Constitutional Law II
- PSC 700/LAW 839/NEW 500: Law, Politics, and the Media
- PSC 700: Comparative Law & Courts
- PSC 711: American Constitutional Development
- PSC 715: Judicial Politics
- PSC 716: Foundations of American Political Thought
- PSC 752: International Law and Organizations
- PSC 800/LAW 854: Law and the Social Sciences
- PSC 800/LAW 882: Judicial Decision-Making

No course may be double counted for the Law and Courts minor and for an additional field.

Qualifying Examinations

Two faculty members in each field coordinate the written examination by contributing questions themselves and soliciting questions from other faculty. Faculty in other departments may be asked for questions if a student has listed their course(s) as relevant to either of their major or minor field concentrations. All relevant faculty will receive a copy of students' answers and are encouraged to submit written comments. Students take the written exams over two days in one week. The exams are taken in a department-specified computer lab and is closed note/book (no books, computer files, internet, etc.) except for one note sheet.

For Law & Courts, each student must answer two of the available questions. Each essay will be weighted equally, and the faculty recommend that students devote roughly equal amounts of time to drafting each of them. There is no formal reading list, but all members of the faculty stand ready to offer guidance to students in identifying such works.

Following the written exam, is the oral exam – which includes field coordinators from students' major and minor fields as well as a student-selected chair. Oral exams are generally scheduled within 30 days of students' completion of both written exams and typically last 2 hours. Upon completion of the oral exam, the advisor will notify the Graduate Director in writing that the student has passed with distinction, passed, or failed. In the latter case, the student may retake the exam during the following semester. This option may only be exercised once. Students attain ABD (All But Dissertation) status after passing their qualifying exams, completing all coursework, and defending their dissertation proposal.