

Thematic Cluster Proposal Form: Law Cluster

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Cluster Name: Law Cluster

Cluster Description:

This cluster asks students to examine law from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students will learn diverse approaches to reading texts related to the law. The courses are united by the desire to better understand the meaning of law. What the law intends to do and what it actually does may be very different.

Cluster Narrative:

Courses in the law cluster are united by the desire to better understand the meaning of law. Students will learn diverse approaches to reading texts related to the law. They will gain skills in interpreting information related to the law. Students will get a sense of the diversity of procedures that generate law. They will gain a greater appreciation of how different disciplines approach the subject of law.

The faculty members who have agreed to join this cluster are all interested in trying to enrich student understanding of what the law means. This was a recurrent theme when prospective cluster faculty met on February 28, 2012, to discuss a vision for the cluster. There is a broader commitment to preparing students to better understand the law. Faculty members want students to wrestle with the clarity and ambiguity of the law.

Pursuing the broader mission, the classes vary in what aspect of law is emphasized. Some courses emphasize substantive knowledge in a particular area of law, such as the CMS 498 and POS 315 courses on media law and POS 463 course on constitutional law. Other courses are more interested in the intersection of law and policy, such as CRM 327 Animal Abuse and SOC 393 Women, Welfare and the State. More theoretical approaches to the meaning of law are found in CRM 344 Law and the State, PHI 260 Philosophy of Law, and CRM 380 Restorative Justice. International perspectives on the law are emphasized in HTY 400 about law in Latin America, PHI 245 about African law, and POS 280 about international law through the United Nations. Two additional courses, ENG 305 Rhetoric, Syntax, and Style and CMS 498 Discourse, Communication, and Critical Thinking, focus on how meaning is conveyed with special attention to law related communication.

The cluster's co-curricular efforts are likely to be focused on helping students think about opportunities for graduate education in law. Indeed, cluster faculty share an interest in making sure that students are well prepared for applying to law school. Perhaps more importantly, faculty believe that the cluster's diverse interdisciplinary approaches to the law will provide a beneficial foundation for pre-law students who are likely to encounter less diversity and a more rigid approach in law school. While the cluster may be of particular interest to pre-law students, it also is designed to benefit students who do not wish to go further in the law but want to better understand a subject that has a profound influence on daily life.

Cluster Courses:

Course prefix, number, title	Instructor Name	Dept note/ approve?	Prerequisites	Previous 2 year schedule
CMS 498a: Freedom of Expression	Panici	CMS, yes	Major + CMS 102 + CMS 103 + CMS 200	TR 10:15 in both S11 and S12
CMS 498b: Discourse, Communication & Critical Thinking	Shedletsky	CMS, yes	CMS 375 + junior	New course
CRM 327 (SOC 380): Animal Abuse	Beirne	CRM, yes	CRM 100	F 8:45 in S12
CRM 334: Law and State	Wachholz	CRM, yes	CRM 100	MW 8:45 in F10 and F11
CRM 380 Restorative Justice	Powell	CRM, yes	CRM 100	MW 10:15 in F11
ENG 305: Rhetoric, Syntax, and Style	Gish	ENG, yes	None	S11, MW 11:45 in F11, TR 2:45 in S12
HTY 400: Crime and Punishment in Latin America	Carey	HTY, yes	HTY 200 + senior	T 4:10 in F10
PHI 245: Africa, Social Justice, and Exile	Wininger	PHI, yes	PHI 100 level or EYE	New course
PHI 260: Philosophy of Law	Louden	PHI, yes	PHI 100 level or EYE	NA
POS 280: Issues Before the United Nations	Edwards	POS, yes	None	M 4:10 in F11
POS 315 Media Law	Klotz	POS, yes	POS 101 or CMS 103	MW 10:15 in S12
POS 463: Supreme Court and Con Law	Klotz	POS, yes	POS 101	MW 1:15 in F11
SOC 393: Women, Welfare and the State	Deprez	SOC, yes	SOC 210 + junior	W 1:15 in F11