

# LEGAL THEORY (LLM)

**NYSED:** 32162 **HEGIS:** 1499.00 **CIP:** 22.9999

## Program Description

In this LLM specialization (<https://www.law.nyu.edu/llmjsd/legaltheory/>), you'll develop a firm foundation for your academic career among many of the world's foremost legal theorists and philosophers, and produce an original scholarly work.

You will craft a program of study in close consultation with the faculty director to ensure your curriculum is relevant and valuable to your background, intellectual interests, and professional goals. Among the Law School's deep bench of full-time faculty, you will find influential leaders in interdisciplinary legal theory, especially in legal, political and moral philosophy; law and economics; law and sociology; and legal history. In addition, our professors teach classes that include reflections on domestic and international law and legal institutions that draw from psychology, anthropology, political theory, critical race theory, gender and sexuality studies, and feminist theory.

## Admissions

- Eligibility and Admission Standards (<https://www.law.nyu.edu/graduateadmissions/eligibilityandstandards/>)
- How to Apply (<https://www.law.nyu.edu/graduateadmissions/>)
- Scholarships and Financing (<https://www.law.nyu.edu/graduateadmissions/scholarshipprograms/>)

## Program Requirements

The program requires the completion of 24 credits, comprised of the following:

Course	Title	Credits
<b>Major Requirements</b>		
LAW-LW 11387	Legal Theory Thesis Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10089		1
Colloquium		2-5
Additional Legal Theory Course(s)		4-6
<b>Electives</b>		
Other Elective Credits <sup>1</sup>		10-15
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>24</b>

<sup>1</sup>

Through consultation with the program Director, students will be guided toward a course structure emphasizing theoretical understanding. The consultation will also ensure that the course of study is appropriately specialized or broad, depending on the student's background and interests. Students will be able to choose courses both from NYU's regular faculty and from Global Visiting Professors of Law who may be in residence.

## Legal Theory Courses

Course	Title	Credits
LAW-LW 10820	American Legal History: The First Developing Nation?	2
LAW-LW 12251	The American Penal State Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11551	Animal Law Seminar	2

LAW-LW 12831	Artificial Intelligence and Administrative Law Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10603	Asian American Jurisprudence Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12778	Beyond Criminal Justice Reform: Abolition Theory and Praxis	2
LAW-LW 10070	Chinese Attitudes Toward International Law Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12771	Cities Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12721		2
LAW-LW 11195	Classical Liberalism: History, Theory and Contemporary Jurisprudence Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12365		2
LAW-LW 10202	Constitutional Litigation Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10345		2
LAW-LW 12188	Critical Narratives of Civil Rights	3
LAW-LW 11836	Decisionmaking in the Federal Courts	4
LAW-LW 11867		2
LAW-LW 10853		2
LAW-LW 12695		2
LAW-LW 11448	Education Law Seminar	4
LAW-LW 12700		2
LAW-LW 10424		2
LAW-LW 10387		2
LAW-LW 10079		2
LAW-LW 11371	Federal Health Reform: Law, Policy and Politics Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11957	Federalist Papers Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12154	Food and Agricultural Law and Policy Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10235	Foreign Relations Law of the United States Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12402	Free Speech, Ethical Transformation, and Social Change: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation	2
LAW-LW 12879	Gender Violence Simulation	2
LAW-LW 12755		2
LAW-LW 12666		2
LAW-LW 12786	Human Rights at Home: Advancing U.S. Social Justice Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12551	Intellectual Property and Human Rights Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10065		2
LAW-LW 12788	International Human Rights and Digital Governance Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10386	Issues in SEC Enforcement Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12878	International Law and Technology Governance Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11521	Internet Contracts Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10386	Issues in SEC Enforcement Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12817	Jewish Questions: Antisemitism, Jewish Identity and the Law Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12250	Judicial Decision Making	3
LAW-LW 10295		2
LAW-LW 10151	Law and Global Governance Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10357		2
LAW-LW 10871	Law and Society in China Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10562		2

LAW-LW 11156		2
LAW-LW 11989	Law, Economics and Journalism Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11457		2
LAW-LW 11846	Law of the Welfare State Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11450	Legal Practice in Highly Political Environments Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11987	Maimonides Mishneh Torah: Jewish Law and Legal Theory Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11545	Mental Disability Law Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11033		2
LAW-LW 10794	Quantitative Methods Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12470	Questions of Transparency In Government and Politics Seminar	2
LAW-LW 11839		2
LAW-LW 10041		2
LAW-LW 10310	Resisting Injustice Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10447	Retribution in Criminal Justice: Violence and Its Relation to Manhood (Shakespeare)	2
LAW-LW 12668		2
LAW-LW 10016		2
LAW-LW 12271	Sex Discrimination Law	3
LAW-LW 10529	Sexuality, Gender and the Law Seminar	2
LAW-LW 12643		2
LAW-LW 10257		2
LAW-LW 12581		2
LAW-LW 12830	The President and the Administration	2
LAW-LW 10170		2
LAW-LW 12689		2

Any of the Law School Colloquia in addition to the one required for the Legal Theory program

Colloquia

The following is a listing of colloquia offered by the Law School:

Course	Title	Credits
LAW-LW 10031	Colloquium on Constitutional Theory	2
LAW-LW 10650		2
LAW-LW 10596	Colloquium in Legal, Political and Social Philosophy and Seminar	5
LAW-LW 11698		2
LAW-LW 10582	Colloquium on Law, Economics and Politics	2
LAW-LW 12882	Environmental & Energy Law Colloquium	2
LAW-LW 12657		2
LAW-LW 12880	Contract Theory	3
LAW-LW 10520		2
LAW-LW 10295		2
LAW-LW 11160	Legal History Colloquium	2
LAW-LW 10930	Innovation Policy Colloquium	3
LAW-LW 10540		2
LAW-LW 10787	Tax Policy and Public Finance Colloquium	4

Program Details  
Course Requirements

Students must successfully complete 24 credits in fall and spring to earn the LLM degree. Students will participate in the compulsory Legal Theory Thesis seminar. They will also choose, in their first semester in the program a seminar that offers an additional writing credit in which to write and submit a substantial paper. Students will enroll in the one-credit Legal Theory Thesis Workshop in which students will further develop and workshop their paper.

Students must also register for at least one colloquium during the academic year and choose (subject to the approval of the faculty director) 4-6 additional credits from the list of Legal Theory classes below. All students will design their course of study in close consultation with the faculty director. This is intended to ensure that students craft a program of study that is both relevant and valuable to the student’s background, interests, and professional goals.

Substantial Paper

In conjunction with a seminar (with a writing credit) in their first semester in the program, and under the supervision of the faculty teaching the seminar, students will write an original scholarly work on a particular topic in legal theory of at least 40 pages in length exclusive of footnotes. The paper should demonstrate mastery of a particular area of legal theory by mounting an original argument.

Courses Outside the Law School

Students are permitted to take up to six credits in law-related classes that count toward the LLM degree of courses in other graduate divisions of the University. Such courses require the approval of the program director and the Vice Dean.

Sample Plan of Study

Course	Title	Credits
1st Semester/Term		
LAW-LW 11387	Legal Theory Thesis Seminar	2
LAW-LW 10089		1
Elective		2
Elective		3
Credits		8
2nd Semester/Term		
Legal Theory Course		2
Legal Theory Course		2
Elective		2
Elective		2
Credits		8
3rd Semester/Term		
LAW-LW 10031	Colloquium on Constitutional Theory	2
Elective		3
Elective		3
Credits		8
Total Credits		24

Learning Outcomes

In accordance with Revised ABA Standard 302; N.Y. Court of Appeals Rule 520.18(a)(1) please find an inventory of student learning outcomes that covers the areas of “substantive knowledge and procedural law”; lawyering skills; and “proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system.”

## Civil Rights

Civil rights lawyers are social justice advocates who advance and protect the rights of minorities, women, and other groups and the individual liberties of all Americans. Their work often involves affirmative or “impact” litigation (whether class action, test case, or individual) but also may involve legislation, public education and organizing. Working for the government or in private practice, civil rights specialists advise clients on how best to comply with the law and defend them in litigation. The sources of civil rights are many and include constitutional, statutory, and regulatory and international law.

The first-year curriculum lays the foundation for civil rights practice. Fundamental, of course, are Civil Procedure and Constitutional Law (a first-year elective). Torts is a foundational course because much civil rights litigation takes the form of, and relies on the basic elements of, a tort action for damages. Contracts doctrines are central to the negotiation and enforcement of civil rights settlements. Much civil rights law is statutory, and Legislation and the Regulatory State teaches core principles of statutory interpretation. First-year Criminal Law is the gateway to the study of the criminal justice system. The Lawyering program introduces students to the dynamics of the lawyer-client relationship and teaches essential writing, research, interviewing, and negotiation skills.

For upper-level students, doctrinal courses that focus on civil rights can be found across the curriculum. Some courses focus on the rights of members of specific groups (such as those based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or immigration status). Others focus on institutional settings in which civil rights issues arise (such as the education system, the workplace, the national security system, or the criminal justice system). Still others focus on specific rights (such as free speech or the right to vote), or sources of rights (such as international human rights law and state constitutional law). Students who plan to litigate will need to take Evidence and will benefit from Complex Litigation; those who hope to be involved in constitutional litigation will need Federal Courts.

NYU has a number of clinical programs that give students the experience in civil rights practice with the opportunity to advance the civil rights of actual clients and groups. In many of our clinics, students represent plaintiffs in civil rights litigation or affirmatively advocate for groups or causes. On the civil side, these include the following clinics, among others: Civil Rights, Civil Litigation – Employment Law, Immigrants’ Rights, LGBTQ Rights, New York Civil Liberties, Racial Justice, and Reproductive Justice. These programs help students not only to develop the lawyering skills necessary to civil rights work (and, indeed, to all professional work), but also bring civil rights law, process and theory together with clients in real-world contexts in which each perspective enriches the other. On the criminal side, many clinics represent defendants whose civil rights are implicated in their cases. Students interested in approaching civil rights issues through policymaking may join the Brennan Center’s clinic, which emphasizes the development of policymaking skills in fields such as elections and voting, access to justice, and national security. In addition, the Arthur Garfield Hays Civil Liberties Program Hays Program offers a capstone program for a small group of third-year students, who work in special internships for civil liberties and other human rights organizations and pursue research or special projects with the program’s faculty directors.

NYU’s interdisciplinary and theoretical curriculum has many courses of interest to future civil rights lawyers. These include offerings in critical race theory, feminist theory, civil rights narratives, political theory, and

political philosophy. Many of these offerings present the opportunity for individual research and scholarly writing.

Find out more about Civil Rights (<https://www.law.nyu.edu/areasofstudy/constitutional/>) at NYU Law.

## Policies NYU Policies

University-wide policies can be found on the New York University Policy pages (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/nyu/policies/>).

## School of Law Policies

Additional academic policies can be found on the School of Law academic policies page (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/law/academic-policies/>).