Program Overview

The Rule of Law & Governance Program at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, developed in partnership with the McCain Institute for International Leadership, is an academic and experiential learning program designed to prepare students for jobs that promote justice, human rights, sustainable economic development, and equality under the law across the globe.

Based in Washington, D.C., and Phoenix, AZ, the program teaches students about the development of the rule of law and good governance in fragile and post-conflict states, and prepares them for international development and policy jobs in the public and private sectors.

Why Rule of Law and Governance?

Rule of law and good governance form the foundation of stable political systems and thriving economies. Strengthening the rule of law and governance wherever they are vulnerable is essential to protecting the fundamental rights of all people, as well as to resolving today's greatest security, environmental, and economic challenges.

Students who choose this program will gain deep and practical knowledge of a growing field, international exposure and expertise, and a strong network of contacts. They will understand the roles of governments, multilateral institutions, international financial institutions, and international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in advancing the rule of law and good governance to protect fundamental rights and promote security, stability, and sustainable economic growth.

Faculty Expertise

Distinguished Professor of Practice Clint Williamson, former U.S. Ambassador for War Crimes Issues, leads the program. He has served as a state and federal prosecutor, a White House policy maker, a United Nations war crimes investigator and prosecutor, and a senior official in peacekeeping missions. Professor Julia Fromholz, also based in Washington, D.C., directs the program and brings experience in rule of law and international human rights work in both the U.S. Department of State and NGOs.

Juris Doctor (JD): Students take relevant classes in Arizona during their second and third years, and spend the spring semester during one of those years in Washington, D.C., taking classes and working in internships.

Master of Laws (LLM): Lawyers—having earned a law degree from a U.S. or foreign university—have the opportunity to specialize in this area of law, gaining knowledge, contacts, and experience that will help them further their careers. The degree requires 24 credit hours of study and can qualify graduates for bar examination in some U.S. jurisdictions. The LLM program is flexible and is offered in the fall and spring, full-time and part-time. LLM students earn the degree attending courses in Washington, D.C.

Master of Legal Studies (MLS): This one-year program provides those not interested in practicing law with valuable legal skills, expertise, and tools to implement the legal structures critical to an impartial and functional judicial system. The MLS is a 30-credit graduate program for those interested in learning about the law, or whose work intersects with the law. The MLS program is flexible and is offered in the fall and spring, full-time and part-time. MLS students earn the degree attending courses in Washington, D.C.

Courses in the Washington, D.C. program are taught by Ambassador Williamson and Professor Fromholz, as well as faculty associates who have years of practical experience in the fields in which they teach. Faculty associates include Jerry Fowler, Senior Policy Advisor at Open Society Foundations; George Huber, Senior Attorney for Strategic Planning, U.S. Department of Justice; Adam Klein, Visiting Fellow at the Center for a New American Security; Ambassador Robert Bradtke, former U.S. Ambassador to Croatia; and Ambassador Michael Polt, former U.S. Ambassador to Serbia/Montenegro, and Estonia.

The program is led in Arizona by Andrew Jaynes, the Executive Director of the Center for Law & Global Affairs at ASU Law.
Sample course offerings

In Washington, D.C.:
- International Human Rights Law
- Transitional Justice Mechanisms
- Combating Corruption
- Counterterrorism Under Law
- Building Justice Institutions
- Policy Design Studio
- Land Reform
- Legal Reform in Post-Conflict States

In Phoenix, AZ (for JD students):
- International Institutions
- Public International Law
- International Law of Armed Conflict
- International Environmental Law
- International Trade Law
- Administrative Law
- Water Law

Externships
Washington, D.C., is home to many organizations offering a wide range of externship opportunities, including:
- U.S. government agencies, such as the Departments of State, Treasury, Justice, and Defense; USAID; and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
- Congressional offices
- Federal courts
- International institutions, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization of American States, and Inter-American Development Bank
- Foreign embassies
- NGOs, from monitoring and advocacy groups to international development specialists
- Trade associations

Operational programs
The Rule of Law & Governance Program's operational component complements its academic program, offering students opportunities to do overseas internships during the summer, as well as research projects during the semester. Program alumni may also be able to join ASU Law/McCain Institute for International Leadership rule of law and governance projects as volunteers or paid staff after completing their degree.

Practicing lawyers benefits:
An independent and impartial justice system can be a powerful tool for promoting justice and protecting basic human rights. Through earning a JD or LLM in Rule of Law & Governance, lawyers gain deep and practical knowledge of a growing field, international exposure and expertise, and a strong network of contacts. Lawyers will graduate with a greater understanding of policy formulation, crisis management, and decision-making. Whether entering the field on graduation or after years of practice in other areas of law, lawyers in these fields are passionate about their careers and the effect they can have around the world.

Non-practicing lawyers benefits:
International development jobs in the areas of rule of law, governance, sustainability, and related fields do not always require a law degree. However, knowledge of the law, legal structures, and the foundation for fair justice systems is critical, in both the job and the job search. An MLS in Rule of Law & Governance expands job opportunities, helps in entering this competitive field, and allows graduates to start or improve a career with a broad network of contacts.

Testimonials

"To me, D.C. always feels like it's humming with energy. Getting to study in an environment of like-minded individuals fueled by passion for justice and policy is a great motivator."
-Haley Lowrance
JD Candidate, Class of 2017

"As a student from Brazil, I have learned so much from the different viewpoints of my professors, classmates, and international leaders in D.C."
-Rodrigo Martini
Master of Laws, Class of 2016

"I received hands-on experience through training, research, and drafting proposals related to current international development in a variety of countries."
-Brian Musa
JD, Class of 2016