

The Law and Philosophy Minor at CSUSB



Thinking seriously about law, preparing well for law school, and reflecting conscientiously about legal issues requires rigorous training that goes beyond memorizing statutes, cases, or rules. It involves examining the foundations of law itself. The [Law and Philosophy Minor](#) offers students the opportunity to step back and explore these foundations before launching their careers (when they will have ample time for memorization, but likely less time for exploration). In the process, students will gain valuable skills -- in close analysis of texts, in tight reasoning, and in disciplined writing -- that will serve them in their careers and as citizens. We'll investigate:

- *What is law?* What, in other words, makes a statement of law true? Is it simply that it's been written somewhere, say, by a judge or legislator? Or are unwritten standards allowed to count as law? Might such standards include moral principles? If so, which ones? Do judges exceed their authority if they consult such standards or principles when they issue their decisions, or are they merely trying to honor principles implicit in the cases or statutes that are written and which they are required to interpret?
- *What is a legal system?* Is a legal system a collection of legal rules? If so, must they be public? Must they satisfy principles of morality? If so, must they satisfy those of the true morality, or just some kind of moral minimum? Nazi Germany, for example, had secret laws, as well as quite immoral ones. Did Nazi Germany have a legal system? Or was it just a system of organized violence?

- *Which moral principles should law meet?* Whether true statements of law or the existence of a legal system depends on satisfying moral principles, we can still step back and evaluate whether a particular law, or the legal system as a whole, serves justice and morality. But what does justice require? What does morality involve? We need to know if we want to evaluate law properly.
- *Do we have an obligation to obey the law?* If so, why? Is it because we've consented to obey the law? If so, how, and when? Or is it because it would be unfair if we were to limit our liberty through obedience while others don't? What if there were no obligation to obey the law? Would that imply that anything goes?

Minor in Law and Philosophy.

Explore.

Gain skills.

Train for citizenship.

Contribute to democracy.

For Program Details, see the CSUSB *Bulletin*, [Law and Philosophy Minor](#)