

THE DOCTOR OF JURISPRUDENCE (J.D.) DEGREE

The JD degree program at South Texas College of Law Houston (STCL Houston) combines classroom instruction with practical skills development to train competent, confident lawyers who adhere to high ethical standards. Instructors use case studies, Socratic Method, role-playing, writing, research, and analysis to provide students with a comprehensive legal education. In addition, skills institutes, mock trial, moot court, and legal clinic programs allow students to apply skills learned in the classroom to actual cases.

Learning Outcomes for Graduates of South Texas College of Law Houston

South Texas College of Law Houston strives to offer a rigorous program of legal education designed to teach its graduates the knowledge, skills, and professionalism needed for the practice of law and to prepare them for admission to law practice. The law school's goal is to educate its graduates to become responsible members of the legal profession dedicated to providing highly competent, effective, and ethical legal representation for their clients. To achieve those objectives, the faculty of the law school has identified the Learning Outcomes described below. Taken together, these Learning Outcomes describe the faculty's expectations for the knowledge, skills, and professionalism South Texas College of Law Houston students should have when they graduate. Every course in the law school curriculum is designed to contribute to the attainment of some, but not all, of these Learning Outcomes, and each course will emphasize a particular subset of them.

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome 1: Substantive Law and Legal Process Knowledge

Graduates of the law school will demonstrate mastery of the foundational areas of legal knowledge and legal processes with the proficiency suitable for a competent entry-level practitioner.

Learning Outcome 2: Legal Analysis, Reasoning, and Problem Solving

Graduates of the law school will demonstrate the ability to perform legal analysis, legal reasoning, and legal problem solving with the proficiency suitable for a competent entry-level practitioner.

Learning Outcome 3: Legal Research

Graduates of the law school will be able independently to conduct effective legal research with the proficiency suitable for a competent entry-level practitioner.

Learning Outcome 4: Other Professional Skills, Including Effective Communication

Graduates of the law school will be able to perform such other professional skills as are appropriate for a new lawyer in their chosen areas of specialization with proficiency appropriate for a competent entry-level practitioner.

Learning Outcome 5: Professional and Ethical Responsibility

Graduates of the law school will be able to demonstrate an ability to exercise the professional judgment and ethical standards expected of a competent entry-level practitioner.

Learning Outcome 6: Self-Management and Collaboration

Graduates of the law school will be able to use the skills and concepts required for the effective and efficient management of law practice with the proficiency suitable for a competent entry-level practitioner.

Degree Requirements

A candidate for a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree must meet all entrance requirements, complete with a passing grade all required courses, earn at least 90 semester hours of credit with a passing grade, and a cumulative grade average of 2.300 or better (2.200 or better for students whose enrollment commenced prior to Fall 2017). The Doctor of Jurisprudence degree must be completed no earlier than 24 months and no later than 84 months after initial enrollment (ABA Standard 304c).

All required courses must be completed at STCL Houston unless they are accepted when transferring to the college. No more than 30 semester hours can be earned at other ABA- accredited law schools. If any of these requirements are not met, the anticipated graduation date will move to the next semester. All requirements must be met no later than one year after the original anticipated graduation term. The degree will be conferred in the semester when all requirements are finally met.

Required Courses

- Civil Procedure
- Constitutional Law
- Contracts I and II
- Criminal Law
- Evidence
- Federal Income Taxation
- Legal Research and Writing I and II
- Professional Responsibility
- Professional Skills Courses
- Property I and II
- Substantial Writing Requirement
- Torts I and II

Course Sequence – First 39 Hours

Students will be administratively assigned to sections of their first 39 hours of required courses. Students cannot deviate from their assigned pattern or change enrollment status for the first academic year. A student cannot enroll in an elective course, upper-level required course, or study abroad program unless he or she has completed or is concurrently enrolled in the first 39 hours of required courses.

Full Time Students

First Semester

Civil Procedure
Contracts I
Criminal Law
Legal Research and Writing I
Torts I

Total hours 15

Second Semester

Constitutional Law
Contracts II
Legal Research and Writing II
Property I
Torts II

Total hours 15

Third Semester

Evidence
Federal Income Taxation
Property II

Total hours (plus 3-6 electives) 15

Part Time Students

First Year Fall

Contracts I
Legal Research and Writing I
Torts I

Total hours 08

First Year Spring

Civil Procedure
Criminal Law
Legal Research and Writing II

Total hours 09

First Year Summer*

Contracts II
Torts II

Total hours 06

Second Year Fall

Constitutional Law
Evidence
Property I

Total hours 10

Second Year Spring

Federal Income Taxation
Property II

Total hours (plus 3-6 electives) 09-11

*This is the only required summer session.

Degree Planning Resources

[Course Listings](#)

Course listings is a searchable resource available on the law school's website that provides course details, descriptions, prerequisites, and information regarding books for selected courses. Courses are searchable by term, course name, professor, and course type (e.g. Bar Courses, Skills Courses, Paper Seminars).

[Pathways to Practice](#)

Developed by STCL Houston professors, Pathways to Practice contains suggested curriculum plans and accompanying resources for 16 different subject areas, from Civil Litigation to International Economic Law.

Upper Level Required Courses

Professional Responsibility Course: Professional Responsibility is a required course and must be completed no later than the semester or session in which a student completes his or her 60th credit hour.

Professional Skills Courses: Each student is required to take at least six (6) credit hours of lawyering skills coursework. Any course listed as a skills course in the Course Listings and on the semester schedule will count toward this requirement.

Substantial Writing Requirement (after completion of 45 hours): This requirement can be satisfied by completion of one of the following: (1) earn a grade of C or better in a **seminar** for which a research paper of at least 5,000 words (exclusive of footnotes and tabular material) is the basis for a grade; or (2) earn a grade of C or better on a [supervised research paper](#) under the direction of a full-time faculty member; or (3) complete all requirements for academic credit for [Law Review](#), including completion of all writing assignments and a minimum of four semesters' enrollment; or (4) satisfy all requirements for academic credit for [Journal of International Economic Law](#), including completion of all writing requirements and a minimum of two semesters' service.

Skills Courses

Skills courses fall into three categories: (1) advocacy, (2) clinics, and (3) drafting and research.

Advocacy Program

Students who have completed 20 or more credit hours are eligible to participate in advocacy activities. Students with less than 20 credit hours are eligible to participate in only the written and oral presentations made in connection with the Legal Research and Writing II course. For more information and participation requirements, visit the [Advocacy Program](#) page.

Clinical Program

The Clinical Program at South Texas College of Law Houston offers three types of experiential learning: Academic Externships, Direct Representation Clinics, and Community-Based Clinics. Successful participation in any of these clinics counts toward completion of a student's professional skills course requirement. All clinics are graded as Honors Pass/Pass/Low Pass/Fail. To view a complete list of the law school's legal clinics, visit the [Clinics](#) page. Course availability and enrollment requirements can be found on the semester schedule or the Course Listings.

Academic Externships

The Academic Externship program includes field placement in an unpaid, semester-long internship with a government or other nonprofit organization and mandatory enrollment in the accompanying weekly seminar, Lawyering Skills and Professional Values. Interns must devote a minimum of 8 hours per week at their field placement, beginning no more than one week before the start of the semester, and must work 60 hours per credit hour earned. Contact the professor or designee to discuss possible placements and attain written approval to enroll. To enroll, students must obtain an approval signature from the Clinical Program offices and submit the [Student Information and Acknowledgements](#) form to the Registrar's Office.

Direct Representation and Community-Based Clinics

Most direct representation and community-based clinics require that students have completed 45 semester hours. A student must work 50 hours in the clinic for each hour of academic credit received. Students enrolled in direct representation or community-based clinics are required to attend a one-day boot camp during the first week of classes. The specific date for the applicable semester is posted on the the semester schedule.

Drafting and Research

Most drafting and research courses require that students have completed 45 semester hours. Descriptions and course prerequisites are available via the [Course Listings page](#).