Program Overview

The International Rule of Law and Security 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—in the U.S. and overseas—that promote justice and good governance, human rights, and national and international security.

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 a range of legal, policy, and international development jobs. The program also focuses on evolving national and international security issues, including the threats posed by terrorism, and provides students comprehensive preparation for work in this field.

International Rule of Law and Security

Rule of law and good governance are critical to countries’ political stability and economic development. Strengthening responsible, representative, and responsive legal and governmental systems where they are most vulnerable is essential to protecting the fundamental rights of citizens, and is critical to resolving many of the great security, economic, and environmental challenges facing the world today.

Students who participate in this program will gain practical experience and knowledge in a field critical to global security and development; increased insight into rule of law work around the world; and a network of contacts both in the U.S. and abroad. They will gain a deeper understanding of the roles that governments, multilateral institutions, and non-governmental organizations play in advancing rule of law and good governance to protect fundamental rights and promote security, and sustainable economic growth.

Faculty Expertise

Distinguished Professor of Practice Clint Williamson, former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, leads the program. He has served as a state and federal prosecutor, a White House policymaker, and a United Nations war crimes investigator and prosecutor. Professor Julia Fromholz, also based in Washington, 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.

Distinguished Professor of Practice Nicholas Rasmussen currently serves as the Senior Director for Counter-Terrorism at the McCain Institute, which he joined after serving as Director of the National Counter-Terrorism Center and at the White House as Senior Director for Counter-Terrorism.

Courses in Washington are taught by Ambassador Williamson, Professor Fromholz, and Professor Rasmussen as well as faculty associates who have years of practical experience, including Jerry Fowler, Senior Policy Advisor at Open Society Foundations; George Huber, Senior Attorney for Strategic Planning, U.S. Department of Justice; Adam Klein, Robert M. Gates Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security; and Ambassador Robert Bradtke, former U.S. Ambassador to Croatia.

Degrees Offered

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, taking classes and externing in U.S. Government agencies, Congressional offices, international organizations, policy institutions, or non-governmental organizations. Students will immerse themselves in international rule of law by learning from practitioners with years of experience in the field, and will gain exposure to the domestic and international legal worlds through these externship opportunities.

Master of Laws (LLM): Lawyers — having earned a law degree from a U.S. or foreign university — may specialize in this area of law, gaining knowledge, contacts, and experience that will help them further their careers.

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.

Jacob Kostrzewski, Program Coordinator · asulawdc@asu.edu
law.asu.edu/ruleoflaw  •  202-684-2411
Sample course offerings

In Washington, D.C.:
• International Human Rights Law
• International Criminal Justice
• Combating Corruption
• Counterterrorism Under Law
• Building Justice Institutions
• Foreign Policy Design
• International Law of Armed Conflict

In Phoenix (for JD students):
• International Institutions
• Public International Law
• International Law of Armed Conflict
• International Environmental Law
• International Human Rights Law
• International Trade Law
• Administrative Law
• Water Law

Externships
Washington 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; and USAID
• Congressional offices
• International institutions, including the World Bank
• International Monetary Fund, Organization of American States, and Inter-American Development Bank
• NGOs, from monitoring and advocacy groups to international development specialists

Operational programs
The International Rule of Law and Security 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. Currently, ASU Law/McCain Institute is implementing rule of law and governance projects in a number of countries around the world, including Pakistan, Mexico, Albania, and Georgia.

Benefits to practicing lawyers:
An independent and impartial justice system is a powerful tool for promoting justice and protecting basic human and civil rights. By earning a JD or LLM in International Rule of Law and Security, lawyers gain practical knowledge of a field critical to global security and development; international exposure and expertise; and a strong network of contacts.

Benefits to non-practicing lawyers:
Careers in international development focusing on areas including the rule of law and governance do not always require a law degree. However, they will find a deeper knowledge of the law, legal structures, and the foundations of justice systems beneficial as they advance in their careers. An MLS in International Rule of Law and Security expands career opportunities by making the candidate more competitive, and grants candidates access to a large network of professional contacts dedicated to the same goals.

Testimonials

"The ASU IRLS program provided an incredible opportunity to learn, live and work in DC. The relationships with professors and professionals through the program helped to refine my career goals, and ultimately opened doors to international fellowship opportunities that I would not have had otherwise. I could not have imagined a better experience in law school."
- Amanda Petersen, JD ’18

"DC was a blast! I got to see how law intersects with national and international policy in a way I never could have with the traditional law school experience. Anyone even remotely interested in government work after law school should definitely try this program!"
- Jordan Brunner, JD ’18

"As a student from Brazil, I have learned so much from the different viewpoints of my professors, classmates, and international leaders in DC."
- Rodrigo Martini, LLM ’16