

MSL ONLINE CONFLICT RESOLUTION CONCENTRATION COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course Descriptions: courses are listed in alphabetical order.

Arbitration (2 credits)

Examines statutes, rules and treaties related to international, federal, and state arbitration. Topics may include commercial, insurance, sports, medical, and labor arbitration with role plays and simulations throughout the course. Taught as a skills course with limited enrollment. Students may not enroll in this class if they have previously completed the Arbitration Certificate Program.

Capstone: Research Action Project (3 credits)

This capstone course includes an initial two-day residency, where each MSL student presents a proposal for completion of a project of direct relevance to their current work-place. Research action projects will utilize standardized approaches used in a student's chosen field such as development of an environmental assessment, creation of a legal compliance program, design of a workplace dispute system, or preparation of a conflict resolution curriculum. Research action projects are expected to be professional in their presentation, but need not adhere to the formal thesis guidelines typically utilized by seminar teachers.

The Common Law: Civil and Criminal (3 credits)

Introduces MSL students to basic principles of the common law, including torts, contracts and property, as well as an introduction to the functions of the criminal law as a means of social control, focusing on the process of crime creation and the elements of criminal liability.

Cross Cultural Dispute Resolution (2 credits)

This course examines how obvious and not-so-obvious cultural difference impacts resolution of inter-personal and inter-state (international) disputes. Specifically, the course will bring an international perspective to understanding the impact of culture in the most commonly used international and domestic dispute resolution processes (negotiation, mediation and arbitration). It will follow a three-step approach to know and understand the influence of culture on decisionmaking, including: awareness and knowledge of one's own culture; knowledge and understanding of another party's culture; and knowledge and impact of either on the desired goal/outcome of the dispute. This course will help students be more culturally aware and better equipped for effective participation in dispute resolution processes that increasingly involve different languages, customs, values, nationalities, and states of origin.

Designing Conflict Systems (2 credits)

This course examines theoretical and practical approaches to diagnosing and solving complex organizational conflict. Students will learn how to conduct a needs assessment, and how to design, evaluate, and improve internal conflict management systems for organizations in the private and public sector.

Employment Law (3 credits)

Surveys the common law and selected state and federal statutory schemes that regulate the employment relationship in the United States. This course does not focus on the anti-discrimination statutes such as Title VII or labor-management relations statutes such as the National Labor Relations Act. The course explores how state court decisions have eroded the employment at will doctrine; employee hiring and discharge; federal and state fair labor standards acts; employee privacy rights; occupational safety and health acts; worker's compensation; and a variety of fringe benefit regulations.

Introduction to Legal Method and Ethics (2 credits)

This course introduces MSL students to the study of law and prepares them for academic success in their upper level curriculum. After an initial intense focus on the fundamentals of legal reasoning and analysis, the course offers a general overview of the American legal system and examines the ethics rules that govern the work of lawyers and so profoundly influence lawyer-client interactions.

Legal Writing and Research (3 credits)

Introduces MSL students to the structure of writing legal analysis and the skills of legal drafting, with an emphasis on professional letter and email writing. Teaches basic legal citation and primary and secondary research skills, with an emphasis on cost-effective research.

Mediation (3 credits)

Through discussion, simulations, and role play, this course focuses on the structure and goals of the mediation process and the skills and techniques mediators use to aid parties in overcoming barriers to dispute resolution. The course also examines the underlying negotiation orientations and strategies that mediators may confront and employ, the roles of attorneys and clients, dealing with difficult people and power imbalances, cultural considerations, and ethical issues for lawyers and mediators. In addition, special attention is devoted to the art of successful representation of clients in mediation.

Negotiation (2 credits)

This course examines the skills, constraints, and dynamics of the negotiation process. A theoretical framework for understanding negotiation practice in a variety of contexts will be developed through readings and highly interactive exercises and role-plays. The course addresses the fundamental skills of systematic and thorough negotiation preparation, the ongoing management of a negotiation process, and the identification and achievement of optimal agreements. Legal and ethical constraints of negotiation also are considered. Course content is drawn from the fields of law, psychology, business, and communication.

Regulation in America (3 credits)

Focusing on American businesses and their workplaces, this course examines the complex web of regulatory and constitutional authority within which business must navigate. Included is an examination of the powers and procedures of administrative agencies; basic principles of constitutional interpretation, including doctrines and competing philosophies; and the framework of state and federal government under the Constitution.

Theories of Conflict (2 credits)

This interdisciplinary course introduces students to important theoretical perspectives on our understanding of conflict and conflict response. Specifically, students explore the biological/physiological, psychodynamic, social psychological, communication and sociological/political perspectives on conflict by reading and discussing major theoretical works within each perspective. Emphasis is on comparing and distinguishing key dimensions of these theories, such as the nature and sources of conflict, conflict escalation, conflict response, and the nature of the third party role. Classes follow an interactive format. Using case studies, exercises, and group discussion to draw upon personal experiences, including those involving race and social identity, the course explores the usefulness of each perspective to understanding the experience of conflict.