

The Legal Studies Academy at First Colonial High School



M. Melissa Disher, Coordinator

The Legal Studies Academy provides students who have an interest in and curiosity about the law, law-related fields, and legal and ethical issues the opportunity to extend their knowledge beyond the typical high school program. The academy offers students the opportunity to embrace not only an academic curriculum that will prepare them for post-secondary education, but also will allow them career exploration within the area of legal studies. Courses of study are extended through law-related seminars and field trips. Students will experience many hands-on activities through criminal investigations, internships, and mock trials in the Academy's courtroom/classroom.

The academy curriculum promotes academic excellence through an emphasis on advanced analytical thinking, research, writing and oratory presentation to understand complex issues within the law and society. Curriculum alignment is achieved through a continued focus on understandings related to legal concepts, as well as the continuous application of advanced reading, writing and analytical skills.

The four-year program builds upon core legal courses, enhancement of academy English, social studies and science classes. In order to promote active learning and the importance of community involvement, all Legal Studies Academy students participate in master classes, job shadowing, legal internships and community service.

During the senior year, students complete a capstone project designed to provide them with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of all skills and knowledge acquired throughout their academy coursework. Components of the senior project include an in-depth academic legal research paper, a civic-based project, an electronic portfolio; and an oral presentation to a panel of community professionals.

Course of Study

All students are encouraged to pursue an Advanced Studies Diploma.

Typical Course of Study

Grade 10

Academy Honors English Academy US
Government* Academy Science

Math Health/

Physical Education 10 Foreign Language
Introduction to Criminal Justice

Job Shadowing (Summer)

Grade 11

Academy Honors English* Academy VA/US
History* Academy Science*

Math

World Language Legal Internship (s)

Legal Oratory & Debate (s) Finance/Economics
(s)

Grade 12

Academy Honors English* Academy World
History II* Academy Science*

Math

World Language

Legal Research and Writing (s) Senior Project (s)
Fine Art/CTE

Sample Course of Study

Required Credit Courses and Experience

Introduction to Law	Grade 9 (one credit)
Introduction to Criminal Justice	Grade 10 (one credit)
Legal Oratory and Debate	Grade 11 (one semester; 0.5 credit)
Legal Internship	Grade 11 (one semester; 0.5 credit)
Legal Research and Writing	Grade 12 (one semester; 0.5 credit)
Senior Project	Grade 12 (one semester; 0.5 credit)

ELECTIVES (y=year, s=semester):

Forensic Science (y)	Criminal Psychology (s)
Environmental Law (y)	Business Law (s)
Intro to Criminology (s)	Mock Trials/Moot Court (y)
Intro to Law Enforcement (s) Dual Enrollment - TCC	
Criminal Law, Evidence and Procedures I (s) Dual Enrollment - TCC	
Criminal Law, Evidence and Procedures II (s) Dual Enrollment - TCC	
Juvenile Justice Systems (s) Dual Enrollment - TCC	