

J. Navigating Interdisciplinary Course Offerings

By Professors Hoffman & Huang

As lawyers continue to increase nationwide, law school graduates face tighter labor markets. A source of competitive advantage that can differentiate you from many other law school alums is possession of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. Temple Law School offers a number of interdisciplinary courses, including: Law & Feminism; Law & Higher Education; Law, Science & Technology; Selected Problems in the Philosophy of Law; Sexual Orientation and the Law; Women and the Law; and Women in the Law: Domestic Violence, Rape & Harassment. These courses provide valuable perspectives about law from multiple disciplines other than law.

This brief section offers a description of the interdisciplinary courses that Professors David Hoffman and Peter H. Huang teach because they are somewhat interrelated and/or new offerings. In doing so, it also explains how and why these particular courses add value to your legal education. Please note that not all of these courses are offered each year. Hopefully, this material will help you decide about whether to choose these courses as part of an engaging, fulfilling, and meaningful curriculum. Professors Hoffman and Huang are of course available to provide more details and information concerning these courses: Law & Economics (Hoffman); Law & Human Behavior (Hoffman & Huang); Law & Popular Culture (Huang); Law, Emotions, & Neuroscience (Huang); and Law, Happiness, & Meaning (Huang).

Law & Economics: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the basic analytical tools used in the economic analysis of law. Students will learn to apply incentives-based arguments to diverse subjects, including (but not limited to) securities law, corporate law, contracts, torts, and regulatory policy. This course offers a more theoretical lens than most basic business law courses, but the approach is one that undergirds much of modern doctrine across the curriculum.

Law & Human Behavior: This is a colloquium that brings in leading scholars to present cutting-edge interdisciplinary research papers about legal, policy, and regulatory implications of different conceptions of human behavior. There has been a recent explosion of research about how people behave in various contexts, environments, settings, and situations. This research about human judgment and decision making draws upon empirical, experimental, and theoretical advances in among other fields: affective sciences, anthropology, artificial intelligence, behavioral and neoclassical economics, cognitive psychology, marketing, medicine, neuroeconomics, neuroscience, political psychology, social psychology, and sociology. Every other week, outside speakers will deliver talks about their current research and its legal applications. Students read these papers before their authors present them. Students write a brief two to three page reflection/response paper for each speaker before that speaker's presentation. These assignments provide students with opportunities to critically evaluate, reflect upon, and think carefully about what they have read. In the "off weeks" students will be provided material that provides background on the coming week's topic, and instructors will lead interactive discussions to help enrich students' learning and responses.

Law & Popular Culture: This course analyzes depictions of law in such popular culture works as movies, television shows, music, media coverage, novels, advertising, jokes, and plays. After an introduction about law & popular culture, this course discusses popular culture portrayals of law students, lawyers, clients, witnesses, judges, and juries. It analyzes particular areas of law, such as business law, Constitutional law, criminal law, family law, international law, military law, and torts.

Law, Emotions, & Neuroscience: This course addresses roles that emotions and neuroscience can, do, and should play in theories and practice of law. Recent neuroscience research demonstrates that emotions play essential roles in decision-making and moral judgment. This course does not presume any prior formal study of emotions or knowledge about neuroscience, yet it should also prove challenging to students with substantial backgrounds in the study of emotions or neuroscience.

Law, Happiness, & Meaning: This course analyzes whether and if so, how laws can and should help raise individual or national happiness and reduce personal unhappiness or societal misery. It integrates research findings from affective sciences, behavioral economics, cognitive psychology, experimental economics, marketing, neurosciences, philosophy, psychiatry, positive psychology, and social psychology towards a science of happiness and subjective well-being.