



Curriculum & Instruction

SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Content Area: Social Studies

Course: Law

Grade(s): 11-12

Semester

Course Overview

Law is a one-semester course designed to introduce the student to the American Legal System as it relates to both adults and juveniles. The Law Course is a survey of legal rights and responsibilities of American citizens with an emphasis on the criminal justice system, torts, and constitutional law. Elements will include those areas that are of practical importance to young adults and potential areas of concern to students in their immediate future. The course reflects the changes in law and legal procedures that take place at the national level as well as in the state and local courts. The curriculum includes case studies, debates, written arguments, small group activities and visual analysis activities. The course is divided into six sections. It begins with an introduction to law and the legal system and includes sections on criminal law, tort law, and constitutional law.

New Jersey State Learning Standards

Summit Public Schools curriculum aligns with the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#).

Social Studies State Standards:

6.1.12.CivicsPI.1.a Explain how British North American colonies adapted the British governance structure to fit their ideas of individual rights, economic growth, and participatory government.

6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.a Prepare and articulate a point of view about the importance of individual rights, separation of powers, and governmental structure in New Jersey's 1776 constitution and the United States Constitution.

6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.b Examine the emergence of early political parties and their views on centralized government and foreign affairs and compare these positions with those of today's political parties.

6.1.12.CivicsPI.3.a Analyze primary and secondary sources to determine the extent to which local and state issues, publications, and the rise of interest group and party politics impacted the development of democratic institutions and practices

6.1.12.CivicsPI.3.b Describe how the Supreme Court increased the power of the national government and promoted national economic growth during this era.

6.1.12.CivicsPR.2.a Use primary sources to explain how judicial review made the Supreme Court an influential branch of government and construct an argument regarding the continuing impact of the Supreme Court today

6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.b Use case studies and evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the checks and balances system in preventing one branch of national government from usurping too much power during contemporary times

6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.c Analyze how the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to define and expand individual rights and use evidence to document the long-term impact of these decisions on the protection of civil and human rights.

6.1.12.CivicsDP.13.a Analyze the effectiveness of national legislation, policies, and Supreme Court decisions in promoting civil liberties and equal opportunities (i.e., the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Equal Rights Amendment, Title VII, Title IX, Affirmative Action, Brown v. Board of Education, and Roe v. Wade).

6.1.12.CivicsPI.13.a Craft an argument as to the effectiveness of the New Jersey Constitution of 1947, New Jersey Supreme Court decisions (i.e., Hedgepeth and Williams v. Trenton Board of Education), and New Jersey's laws in eliminating segregation and discrimination.

6.1.12.CivicsPR.16.a Analyze government efforts to address intellectual property rights, personal privacy, and other ethical issues in science, medicine, and business that arise from the global use of new technologies.

6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a Construct a claim to describe how media and technology has impacted civic participation and deliberation.

6.1.12.CivicsPD.1 Draw from multiple perspectives and cite evidence to explain the conflicting ideologies and actions of political parties regarding spending priorities, the role of government in the economy, and social reforms.

6.1.12.CivicsPR.10.a Analyze how the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to define and expand individual rights and use evidence to document the long-term impact of these decisions on the protection of civil and human rights.

6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a Draw from multiple perspectives and cite evidence to determine the extent to which nongovernmental organizations, special interest groups, third party political groups, and the media affect public policy.

6.1.12.CivicsPD.14.a Draw from multiple perspectives and cite evidence to explain the conflicting ideologies and actions of political parties regarding spending priorities, the role of government in the economy, and social reforms.

6.1.12.CivicsCM.14.a Use a variety of evidence, including quantitative data, to evaluate the impact community groups and state policies have had on increasing the youth vote.

6.1.12.CivicsPI.3a: Analyze primary and secondary sources to determine the extent to which local and state issues, publications, and the rise of interest group and party politics impacted the development of democratic institutions and practices

Interdisciplinary Standards:

RL.CR.11–12.1. Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to strongly support a comprehensive analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text; this may include determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.CR.11–12.1. Accurately cite a range of thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to strongly support a comprehensive analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text.

W.AW.11–12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

SL.PE.11–12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.II.11–12.2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

SL.ES.11–12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

SL.PI.11–12.4 Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

SL.UM.11–12.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Career Ready Practices

- CRP 1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
- CRP 2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
- CRP 3. Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
- CRP 4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP 5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
- CRP 6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP 7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
- CRP 8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- CRP 9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
- CRP 10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
- CRP 11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
- CRP 12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

New Jersey Curriculum Mandates:

This curriculum integrates lessons that address the following interdisciplinary New Jersey Curriculum Mandates:

- [Diversity and Inclusion](#) (Grades K - 12)
- [Amistad Act](#) (Grades K - 12)
- [History and Contributions of Individuals with Disabilities and LGBTQ persons](#)

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are clear, specific statements that define what students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of a lesson or course.

- Students will be able to understand why society has created laws based on ideologies of right vs wrong and morals.
- Students will be able to comprehend the difference between constitutional, criminal and civil law.
- Students will be able to understand the necessity for a balanced system in which laws are created and defined by separate entities.
- Students will be able to distinguish the various different levels of courts within the justice system.
- Students will be able to value the key players in the impartial court system.
- Students will be able to understand the purpose of Constitutional Law and how it protects individual rights.
- Students will be able to comprehend the different ways in which the constitution can be analyzed and interpreted.
- Students will be able to define and understand the concept of “Due Process” and how courts determine what rights a person is entitled to.
- Students will be able to weigh the limits and parameters of freedom of speech.
- Students will be able to value the relationship between the First Amendment and the freedom of religion.
- Students will be able to compare the rights they have while in school and define “loco parentis.”
- Students will be able to evaluate the right to privacy.
- Students will be able to examine the relationship between Amendments, Cases, and Precedent
- Students will be able to define criminal law.
- Students will be able to distinguish what constitutes a crime as defined by the U.S. Criminal Code.
- Students will be able to identify the different parties and/or members of a crime.
- Students will be able to value the different types of homicide, and the differences between them.
- Students will be able to evaluate the different degrees and types of crimes against a person.
- Students will be able to compare the various different crimes against property, while highlighting the elements of grading the crime.
- Students will be able to understand the defenses to an accusation.
- Students will be able to examine a case read from the U.S. Supreme Court and analyze it from the different levels and perspectives that were covered and highlighted in the unit.
- Students will be able to understand all elements contained in the idea of a criminal investigation from reporting to sentencing.
- Students will be able to identify and explain the constitutional rights and protections afforded to individuals who are suspected or accused of committing a crime.
- Students will be able to explain how specific constitutional amendments limit law enforcement authority during investigations.
- Students will be able to describe how due process and the concept of presumption of innocence play a key role in the fairness of the Criminal Justice system.

- Students will be able to analyze court cases involving the rights of the accused and explain the impact of the relevant amendments.
- Students will be able to evaluate the balance between individual rights, public safety, and law enforcement responsibilities.
- Students will be able to define the Criminal Justice process and its goals or aims according to the U.S. Department of Justice
- Students will be able to identify and infer into the process of steps leading up to and into a trial, through appraising the significance of pretrials, preliminary hearings, etc..
- Students will be able to determine and judge the bail system through an exploration of its current criticisms and shifts.
- Students will be able to create a concept of the process of plea bargaining and either defend or criticize its application in the system.
- Students will be able to understand the process of the jury selection system and simulate the process a potential jury candidate must go through, before assessing its validity and or fairness.
- Students will be able to review the relationship between jurors and how lawyers appeal to them during opening and closing statements as well as throughout a trial.
- Students will be able to understand the importance of clear and concise witness examining and cross examining for both parties during a given trial.
- Students will be able to highlight the various different racial disparities that occur within the Justice system.
- Students will be able to debate whether or not the “Seven Goals,” of the legal system are achieved within the American System and factor in the themes of reform and rehabilitation.
- Students will be able to define Civil and or Torts) law and explain the purpose of a civil lawsuit in the legal system.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast the difference between Civil (Tort) law and Criminal Law.
- Students will be able to identify and distinguish the difference between the major types of torts: intentional torts, negligence and strict liability.
- Students will be able to analyze what makes up the idea of negligence and apply them to specific facts, situations, and cases.
- Students will be able to highlight what the law classifies and protects property that is protected such as real vs. intellectual.
- Students will be able to understand what medical malpractice is from both the perspective of a patient and health care professional.
- Students will be able to identify and measure the legal requirements individuals (from New Jersey) face when bringing forth a civil lawsuit against another individual, corporation, or government entity.
- Students will be able to compare common legal defences used in civil cases and recall prior knowledge to compare them to criminal defences.
- Students will be able to highlight notable civil cases of recent times to show and explain how court decisions have influenced society.

Units of Study

Units of study are organized collections of lessons and learning experiences focused on a specific topic and set of skills within a course. Each unit is guided by a set of essential questions.

Unit 1: Introduction: Law and the legal system (2 weeks)

- What is law and why do societies create laws?
- Where do laws come from?
- What is the difference between constitutional, criminal, and civil law?
- Why is a balanced system in which laws are created and defined by separate entities crucial to fairness.
- What are the different levels of the court system? What is the difference between trial, appellate, federal courts?
- Who are the different participants in the legal system in the courts? What are their respective roles?

Unit 2: Constitutional Law (3 weeks)

- What is the purpose of constitutional law and how does it protect individual rights?
- How do we as a society interpret and apply the Constitution?
- What is “Due Process” and how do the courts determine what process rights a person is entitled to?
- What limits should there be on freedom of speech?
- How does the First Amendment protect the freedom of religion?
- Should students have the same right in school as they do outside of school?
- Does the Constitution contain a right to privacy?
- How do the highest courts in the country set precedent based on case law?

Unit 3: Criminal Law (3 weeks)

- What is criminal law?
- What constitutes a crime?
- Who are the parties to a crime?
- What are the different types of homicide? What makes them different?
- What is a crime against a person? What are the different degrees and types of crimes against a person and how are they different?
- What are the various crimes against property? What elements typically determine the grading of the crime?
- What are the defenses to an accusation?

Unit 4: Criminal Investigations (3 weeks)

- What are criminal investigations? How do they start? How do they end?
- What rights and protections does an individual have when they are suspected or accused of committing a crime?
- Why does the Constitution place limits on the government's ability to investigate and prosecute crimes without going through the proper channels?
- How do the constitutional amendments protect individuals during criminal investigations, and when may law enforcement legally limit those rights?
- How does due process and the presumption of innocence contribute to a fair criminal justice system?
- How much authority should law enforcement have when investigating a crime?
- When should evidence obtained by law enforcement through the investigation or during the discovery period in trial be admissible in a court?
- How have court decisions shaped the constitutional rights of individuals accused of crimes?

Unit 5: Criminal Justice Process and Reform (3 weeks)

- What is the purpose of the Criminal Justice Process, and what goals should it be aiming to

- achieve? What are the Seven Goals of the legal system?
- What happens between the time a person is arrested and the beginning of a trial? What is the pretrial process and preliminary hearings in a trial?
- How does bail work? Does the current system provide a fair balance between safety and the presumption of innocence?
- What is plea bargaining? Does it promote justice and efficiency or does it weaken the concept of going to a fair trial?
- How does an individual become selected for jury service and does the process create a fair jury represented by true peers?
- How do lawyers use their knowledge of a jury to create strong and effective opening and closing statements during a trial?
- Why are effective witness examination and cross examinations important to achieving a fair trial?
- How and why do racial disparities occur within the Criminal Justice Process and what impact do they have on people's trust in the system?
- Does the American Criminal Justice process/system achieve its goal of justice, punishment, reform or rehabilitation?

Unit 6: Civil (Tort Law) (3 weeks)

- What is Civil and or Tort law? What is the purpose of a Civil lawsuit in the legal system?
- What is the difference between Civil and or Tort law and Criminal law?
- What are the major types of torts? What makes intentional torts, negligence and strict liability different from one another?
- What is negligence? What must be proven to establish that a party was legally negligent?
- What types of property does the law protect and how does it value and measure real vs. intellectual property?
- What is medical malpractice and how does the law balance the rights of patients and protections for healthcare professionals?
- Who can bring forth a civil lawsuit, who can be sued, what requirements need to be met before a case moves up in New Jersey?
- How does Civil and or Torts law also include contracts, agreements, deeds, and wills?
- What are the common defence tactics used in civil cases and how are they similar yet different from criminal cases?
- How have notable Civil and or Tort cases gone on to change or reshape the American legal system?

Instructional Resources and Materials

Instructional resources are the information sources teachers utilize to guide their teaching and assessing. Instructional materials are the texts students read or review. The instructional resources and materials may vary in order to meet the learning needs of students.

Required:

- The U.S. Constitution
- The Bill of Rights
- The Declaration of Independence
- The New Jersey Constitution

Recommended:

- National Constitution Center
- New Jersey Legislature

Teacher Resources:

- United States Courts
- Street Law Inc
- Constitution Annotated
- Supreme Court of the US
- iCivics
- Oyez.org
- Congress.gov

Assessment Strategies

Assessment measures a student's mastery of a course standard and learning objective. Assessment can be used for both instructional purposes and for evaluative purposes. Teachers may choose one or more of the following ideas to assess learners. They may also modify these ideas to make the assessment more responsive to students' interests and needs.

Formative Assessments:

- Webquests
- Vocabulary Charts

Summative Assessments:

- Unit Test/Quiz
- Comparative Essay

Benchmark Assessments:

- Short Answer Questions
- Case Read Scavenger Hunt & Debate

Alternative Assessments:

- Current Event Research and Write
- Research and Debate

Suggested Strategies for Modification & Differentiation

[Modifications Chart](#)