SPILS Curriculum Guide and Degree Requirements for the 2026-2027 academic year

SPILS fellows are required to take a minimum of 35 credits per year, and a maximum of 45 credits a year. Each quarter, students can take a minimum of 9 credits and a maximum of 14 credits (taking additional credits per quarter requires a petition to the SLS Registrar. The overall number of credits a year will not exceed the 45 credits cap). The average student takes 13 credits per quarter.

The writing of a work of original scholarship, with at least 80 pages, in the area of research of the student's choosing is a necessary requirement of the JSM degree. In addition, SPILS fellows are required to complete the following courses toward the completion of the JSM degree:

After orientation:

- Law 8021 Introduction to American Law (3 credits)

Autumn quarter:

- Law 8011 SPILS Interdisciplinary Approaches to Law Seminar (3 credits)
- Law 7510 Research Design for Empirical Legal Studies (4 credits)

Winter quarter:

- Law 8013 SPILS Research Methods Workshop (2 credits)
- Law 8012 SPILS Master Thesis (4 credits for graduate level thesis writing). Fellows are required to submit thesis draft chapters in the course of the quarter.

Spring quarter:

- Law 8012 SPILS Master Thesis (4 credits for graduate level thesis writing). The thesis is due at the end of the quarter.

You are required to have the appropriate courses in your study list in Axess each Quarter.

The credits for “Introduction to American Law” and "Professional Responsibility" (3 credits) count toward the Autumn Quarter. "Professional Responsibility" is recommended but not required to SPILS Fellows.

SPILS Fellows may take for Law School credit no more than nine (9) credits worth of courses elsewhere in the University and may not take any foreign or English language courses for Law School credit.

In addition, all SPILS Fellows are required to make a public presentation on their thesis research at an approved forum during the academic year.

Note: Requirements and courses are subject to change.