Learning on the Cutting Edge
Michigan State University College of Law
Intellectual property law has emerged as the set of international rules that govern in the information economy—the “new economy.” Michigan State University College of Law’s Intellectual Property, Information & Communications Law (IPIC) program offers one of the most extensive programs of its type in the nation.

IPIC offers in-depth coursework in fields including patent, copyright, trademark, cyberlaw, entertainment, international IP, and emerging areas in informatics and the law.

Our location at a research university with world-renowned science and engineering programs puts MSU Law at the center of technological development. Our faculty work closely with other scholars at MSU to build on the university’s internationally recognized strengths in engineering, computer science, agriculture, and communications to provide our students with a unique interdisciplinary perspective to their legal studies. Our capstone seminar series allows our best IP students to interact with leading IP scholars and practitioners from throughout the country.

Through its adjunct professors and outreach efforts, IPIC boasts close connections to Michigan’s intellectual property bar—one of the most active in the country. The relationship has helped launch many of our graduates’ careers.
A COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM

The IPIC program at MSU College of Law is among the most comprehensive programs in the country focusing on intellectual property law, as well as the emerging areas of computational technology, informatics, and communications law.

All students are required to take a Research, Writing & Analysis (RWA) course in their first semester at MSU Law. Students may apply for an RWA section focused on IP law—a unique opportunity to explore this exciting field during the 1L year. Upper-level students can select from a growing menu of IP-focused electives. Those who choose to focus in IP law complete two of the basic-level courses in copyright, patent, or trademark law, along with at least eight credits from an ever-expanding menu of advanced IP-related courses.

"RWA-IP students are exposed to the statutory law that governs copyrights, trademarks, and patents, and learn how to analyze the legal tests of infringement and a fair use defense. The course gives students access to a valuable writing education within the context of a cutting-edge area of law."

— Nicole Sigurdson, '12
Dinsmore & Shohl (Cincinnati, Ohio)
MSU Law students have abundant opportunities beyond the classroom to channel their professional passions while working side-by-side with fellow students, distinguished faculty, practitioners, and notable experts in the field.

ON-CAMPUS ENRICHMENT

Michigan State Law boasts a vibrant student community interested in IP, information, and communications law. Among the more than 50 student groups at the Law College are the Intellectual Property Law Society; Media, Entertainment, Technology & the Arts Law Society; and the Sports & Entertainment Law Society. The active IP Law Society regularly attracts practitioners for informal lunches and other activities aimed at building networks and strengthening relationships with the practicing bar. Many students take advantage of externship opportunities at MSU Technologies and trademark law clinical opportunities before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Detroit. IPIC program faculty host annual symposia and lectures that bring recognized experts to MSU Law to discuss today’s most pressing IP issues. The program also sponsors teams at major IP moot court competitions each year; MSU Law boasts a record of excellent performance in past events. Finally, students may participate in courses, projects, and events sponsored by a diverse group of IPIC partner institutions.
STUDY ABROAD

MSU Law’s two newest study abroad programs focus on IP and law and informatics. Both programs offer a global perspective on the practice of law in the 21st century, and join the menu of existing programs in Canada, Japan, and Poland.

The Intellectual Property (IP) Summer Institute in Rijeka and Dubrovnik, Croatia, offers an in-depth study of the challenges of establishing new IP regimes in integrating economies, such as Croatia’s. American and Croatian students explore copyright, patent, and cyberlaw from an international perspective in Rijeka and the walled port of Dubrovnik—a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage site.

The 21st Century Law Practice Summer Program in London, England, is a first-of-its-kind, intensive study of technology, innovation, deregulation, entrepreneurship, and the global legal marketplace. Co-sponsored by the Westminster University School of Law, the program examines new delivery models in the wake of the recent deregulation of legal services in the United Kingdom and prepares students for the technology-infused law jobs of the 21st century.

THE IDEAL SETTING

There are few better places to study intellectual property than in the center of a world-renowned research university and just next door to the state’s capital city. The Law College’s location also puts it within easy reach of countless legal employers. Federal, state, and municipal courts and governmental agencies, law firms of all sizes, and a host of business and public interest organizations are all within a 10-minute drive from campus.

“Law school is an intense three years—find a place where you can be happy. MSU Law is a place where you can be happy. At the same time, it has a nationally ranked IP program, the resources of the larger university . . . everything you need to start a career.”

— Jennifer Carter-Johnson  
Assistant Professor of Law
The MSU Law Career Services Office (CSO) plays an integral role in our students’ professional development. Working one-on-one and in group settings, CSO staff members identify the assortment of career options that are available and help students develop and execute strategies to obtain their first professional positions.

MSU Law graduates who focused their studies on IP law have accepted employment at law firms and corporations across the U.S. and throughout the world. Those graduates who have focused on patent law and who have an engineering or science background have achieved particular success, with many earning an entry-level salary of between $75,000 and $150,000.

NATIONAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Law College students benefit from a vast network of alumni practicing in intellectual property and communications law. Following is a sample list of employers that have hired MSU Law IPIC program graduates:

- Ballard Spahr (Philadelphia, PA)
- Barnes & Thornburg (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Bliss McGlynn (Troy, MI)
- Bodman (Detroit, MI)
- Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione (Ann Arbor, MI)
- Brooks Kushman (Detroit, MI)
- Butzel Long (Lansing, MI)
- Carter & Schnedler (Asheville, NC)
- Clark Hill (Detroit, MI)
- Cummings McClory Davis & Acho (Livonia, MI)
- Dickinson Wright (Detroit, MI)
- Dow AgroSciences (Indianapolis, IN)
- Dykema Gossett (Chicago, IL)
- Faegre Baker Daniels (Minneapolis, MN)
- Finnegan Henderson (Washington, DC)
- Fish & Richardson (Atlanta, GA)
- Fraser Clemens Martin & Miller (Perrysburg, OH)
- Gifford, Krass, Sprinkle, Anderson & Citkowski (Troy, MI)
- Greenberg Traurig (Denver, CO)
- Harness Dickey (Troy, MI)
- Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn (Detroit, MI)
- Howard & Howard (Royal Oak, MI)
- Ingrassia Fisher & Lorenz (Shelby Township, MI)
- King & Wood (Beijing, China)
- Klarquist Sparkman (Portland, OR)
- Landen IP (Northville, MI)
- Maginnis, Moore & Beck (Indianapolis, IN)
- McDermott, Will & Emery (Chicago, IL)
- McDonnell Boehnen Hulbert & Berghoff (Chicago, IL)
- Miller Canfield (Detroit, MI)
- MSU Technologies (East Lansing, MI)
- Murabito, Hao & Barnes (San Jose, CA)
- NASA Langley Research Center (Hampton, VA)
- Price Heneveld (Livonia, MI)
- Quinn Law Group (Novi, MI)
- Staal & Halsey (Washington, DC)
- Sughrue Mion (Washington, DC)
- Sullivan, Ward, Asher & Patton (Southfield, MI)
- Traverse Legal (Traverse City, MI)
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Arlington, VA)
- Warn Partners (Auburn Hills, MI)
- Warner Norcross & Judd (Grand Rapids, MI)
**MEET OUR ALUMNI**

**ANDREA WARMBIER, ’05**  
NASA Langley Research Center (Hampton, Virginia)

After double majoring in biochemistry and chemistry, Andrea Warmbier decided patent law was the perfect field to combine her interests in science and the law. She credits her time at MSU Law for cultivating the skills she now uses every day at NASA Langley Research Center.

Warmbier's involvement with student organizations honed her communication skills—a critical attribute that she says sets successful lawyers apart—strengthened her resume, and enabled her to finesse her legal skills and business etiquette. “My extracurricular activities definitely helped me out,” she says. “They allowed me to interact with more students and helped me become more invested in the law school.”

**BRIAN A. HALL, ’07**  
Traverse Legal (Traverse City, Michigan)

Brian Hall’s IP-focused Research, Writing, and Analysis course helped him recognize early on that his future was in IP law. His upper-level IP courses, role as executive editor of the *Michigan State Law Review*, and participation in the Geoffrey Fieger Trial Practice Institute helped build a solid foundation for the real-world practice that would follow.

Hall now attributes his successful career as an IP and Internet attorney to the “skills, insight, and encouragement” he received as a student at MSU Law. “Every day I get to apply what I first learned at MSU Law as I litigate trademark, copyright, and trade secrets cases throughout the country and regularly handle transactions involving IP for clients throughout the world.”

**VITO CIARAVINO, ’08**  
Warner, Norcross & Judd (Grand Rapids, Michigan)

Vito Ciaravino specializes in patent preparation and prosecution at Warner, Norcross & Judd. As a member of the firm’s IP group, he performs patentability searches, drafts and prosecutes patent applications, and prepares patent licensing agreements.

“Law school provided an interesting exchange of ideas among colleagues and faculty with diverse backgrounds and interests,” Ciaravino says. “I found the experience rewarding, and I am glad I chose MSU Law.”

**KIRSTEN THOMSON, ’07**  
McDonnell, Boehnen, Hulbert & Berghoff (Chicago, Illinois)

Kirsten Thomson, who holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, loves that her job as an IP attorney allows her to “think like an engineer, but in a legal context.” Thomson says her education at MSU Law allowed her to immediately contribute during meetings with clients and understand complex technical terms batted around by her colleagues. “I feel very fortunate that I made the right decision in choosing MSU Law,” Thomson says. “Other attorneys I’ve come across don’t have the same exposure. The Law College’s broad course offerings were just so beneficial. I felt like I came out of there prepared.”

**MATTHEW R. ALLEN, ’10**  
Fish & Richardson (Atlanta, Georgia)

“MSU Law really gave me the opportunity to explore different areas of the law with some fantastic professors,” says Matthew Allen, whose practice at the Atlanta office of Fish & Richardson emphasizes patent prosecution in the area of computer and electrical technology.

“I found the classes to be challenging and engaging, and they truly gave me the tools I needed to succeed in my profession.”
“MSU College of Law’s Intellectual Property program—the faculty, the course work, and the practical experience—has helped make the Law College one of the most highly respected law schools in the nation. In addition to the conventional theoretical jurisprudence offered in most curriculums, the program offers invaluable hands-on experience that directly translates into real-world application.”

— Mark J. Levine, ’06
Patent Attorney
Nixon Peabody (Chicago, Illinois)