Master of Comparative Law Program

Providing insights to the U.S. legal system for internationally educated judges and lawyers since 1994.
Samford University’s Cumberland School of Law offers a unique opportunity for international judges, justices, law professors, prosecutors and legal practitioners to obtain a Master of Comparative Law degree (M.C.L.) from an American Bar Association-accredited law school without having to spend a continuous academic year in residence.

Cumberland School of Law began the M.C.L. program in 1994 and has since conferred more than 50 M.C.L. degrees. Most graduates of the program have been Brazilian judges. Students have also come from the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sudan and Thailand.

The M.C.L. program focuses on comparing the civil and common law legal systems. This fits nicely within the Brazilian emphasis, because Brazil follows the civil law system and the U.S. follows the common law system (with the exception of Louisiana). Students from other countries have the opportunity to address comparative issues from their home countries.
During their time in the program M.C.L. students earn at least 16 credit hours toward their degrees by participating in the June/July summer terms. In June, classes are conducted on Samford University’s campus. In July, students have the opportunity to attend Cumberland School of Law’s study-abroad program at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, England.

M.C.L. students are exposed to the assortment of tools used in American legal research, they learn the importance precedent plays in the U.S. legal system. Students then become proficient at using precedent to arrive at well-reasoned and supported written opinions or arguments.

Each M.C.L. student is required to complete a thesis approved by the M.C.L. Degree Program Faculty Committee. Each student chooses courses and a thesis topic in consultation with the M.C.L. program director. All coursework and the thesis must be satisfactorily completed within five years from the time that the student enters the program.
“The M.C.L. Program gave me the opportunity to feel the wonders of personal accomplishment and pursuit of knowledge. It gave me a different perspective of the law and helped me to improve the quality of my opinions and judgments in my Court of Law.”

-Roberto Viana Diniz de Freitas; M.C.L. graduate
Juiz (Judge), Brazilian state of Ceará

For more information:
Michael D. Floyd
Director of International Studies
Samford University’s Cumberland School of Law
800 Lakeshore Drive
Birmingham, AL 35229
205-726-2304 • 800-888-7213
mdfloyd@samford.edu
http://www.samford.edu/cumberlandlaw/international-studies