



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Continuing Studies
Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies

Spring 2017

BLHV 278-01

Pre-Law: An Introduction to Investing in a Legal Education

Fridays, 5:20 to 7:50 p.m.

640 Mass Ave., Room TBD

Instructor

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Course Description

Individuals attend law school for a wide variety of reasons. Perhaps your desire to go to law school is a life-long dream *or* you've recently discovered a passion for the law *or* maybe it's simply a back-up plan due to the competitive job market that awaits most college graduates. Regardless of why you're contemplating a legal education, this pre-law course will lay the foundation for you to begin "thinking like a lawyer." In the beginning of the semester, students will learn about several legal career paths (e.g., litigation, transactional, regulatory, judicial, policy/lobbying, academia, alternative) as well as discuss the pros and cons of becoming a generalist or a specialist while in law school. Students will also acquire a familiarity with and learn to distinguish different types of laws: the U.S. Constitution, federal & state law, case law, statutes, regulations, and treaties. In addition, students will develop the skills needed for a successful 1L year: perform basic legal research, write a legal memorandum, and brief a case using the IRAC method. Finally, students will conduct a self-assessment of their desire to go to law school and research their preferred law schools' admissions statistics, employment opportunities, tuition costs, areas of specialty, etc. – culminating in an eight to ten page cost/benefit analysis and reflective essay – to determine whether applying to law school is the most advantageous next step in their education and career path.

Textbooks

Ramy, H. N. (2010). *Succeeding in Law School* (2nd Edition). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. (ISBN: 1594607400)

Roche, Brien. (2009). *Law 101: An Essential Reference For Your Everyday Legal Questions* (2nd Edition). Naperville, IL: Sphinx Publishing. (ISBN: 1402226683)

Turow, Scott. (1988). *One L: The Turbulent True Story of a First Year at Harvard Law School* (5th Edition). New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. (ISBN: 0446673781)

A book on a specific legal career path or practice area of **your choice**.

You can find a diverse listing of legal career books available online, including those on the following websites:

- <http://www.nalp.org/categories/?catID=14&page=all>
- http://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/publications/all_books.html
- <http://www.wcl.american.edu/career/library.pdf>

Online legal research resources: <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/library/research/guides/cases.cfm>

Learning Objectives

This course offers undergraduate students an introduction to the law and preparation for study at an ABA-accredited law school, with the following learning objectives (goals):

- To acquire an understanding of the various broad types of legal career paths – litigation, transactional, regulatory, judicial, policy/lobbying, academia, or alternative careers
 - Students will read excerpts of a legal career book of their own choosing and then present their findings to the entire class.
- To gain proficiency in the difference between case law, statutes, regulations, and treaties
 - Students will read each type of law to dissect the differences in authority, structure, and content.
- To develop the requisite skills needed to read and brief a case accurately and efficiently
 - Students will read federal cases and brief each using the IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application, Conclusion) method of analysis.
- To adopt the requisite skills needed to perform legal research and write a legal memorandum
 - Students will be assigned a legal research project. After performing the research, students will write a legal memorandum for a fictional managing partner.
- To gain an understanding of the importance of international law and administrative law and how each can be prevalent in modern-day practice
 - Students will define both areas of the law and become familiar with how attorneys might interact with international or administrative law within their practice.
- To perform a detailed cost/benefit analysis to conclude whether or not to apply to law school, based on research and the subsequent insight that is gained
 - Students will conduct a self-assessment and research about their preferred law schools' admissions statistics, employment opportunities, tuition costs, areas of specialty, etc. – this research will be used to develop a cost/benefit analysis and to write a reflective essay about their decision to (or not to) apply to law school.

The course's principal topics include the following subject areas:

- Exploring different legal career paths
- Understanding different types of law and legal authority
- How to conduct legal research
- How to write a legal memorandum

- Law school application process
- First-year law school curriculum
- Difference between a generalist vs. specialist law student
- How to brief cases using IRAC
- International Law
- Administrative Law
- How to write a cost/benefit analysis and reflective essay

Written Assignments

Students will submit three formal writing assignments for this course. For the first writing assignment (**due on February 10, 2017**; 15% of the grade), students will need to conduct an informational interview with a practicing attorney (preferably someone who is also an alumnus of their top choice law school) and write a five page essay reflecting on the experience and the knowledge they've gathered from it. The second writing assignment (**due on April 7, 2017**; 40% of the grade) will require students to research a legal issue and write a five to eight page legal memorandum for a fictional managing partner. Lastly, for the third writing assignment (**due on May 5, 2017**; 25% of the grade), students will write an eight to ten page reflective essay regarding their desire to attend law school. In addition to conducting an in-depth self-assessment, students will need to research their preferred law schools' admissions statistics, employment opportunities, tuition costs, areas of specialty, etc. Students will utilize the results of their self-assessment and research to perform a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether or not applying to law school is the best next step in their education and career path.

On the aforementioned due date, each paper will need to be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class or via e-mail (as a PDF attachment) prior to the beginning of class. Late papers will **NOT** be accepted unless the student has a written medical excuse. I encourage you to visit the [Georgetown University Writing Center](#) to seek assistance with your writing.

American Bar Association (ABA) Weekly Reaction Papers: Each Friday, students will receive the "ABA Journal Weekly Newsletter" via e-mail. Students should choose either one of the journal stories or a blog entry (found at <http://www.abajournal.com/blawgs>) as the topic of their reaction paper. Reaction papers should (1) include a hyperlink to the original ABA source (2) be at least two double-spaced typed pages and (3) will be due at the beginning of each class. **The first reaction paper will be due June 4, 2016 and on every Saturday, at the beginning of class, thereafter (see "Assignments" for exact due dates).**

***The Paper Chase* and Blackboard Discussion Forum:** Students will watch [The Paper Chase](#) (outside of class) and then contribute to a lively online discussion of the film by posting at least 2 to 3 comments on Blackboard. More details will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

Class Participation

The basis for the remaining 20% of your final grade will be class participation. This course will consist of a mixture of lecture, group work, brief presentations, and ample opportunities for classroom discussions. In order for you to participate effectively, it will be necessary for you to read the assigned materials and come to class prepared for meaningful discussion.

The standard for evaluating class participation will be your willingness to contribute, as a function of the frequency of actual contributions to class discussions. In accordance with the policies of the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Program, if you miss more than two class sessions for any reason, you may receive a failing grade for the course. If you must miss a class session, please obtain permission ahead of time, or contact me afterward regarding your absence as soon as possible.

Grading Scale

A	100-96 percent
A-	95-91
B+	90-86
B	85-83
B-	82-78
C+	77-73
C	72-70
C-	69-65
D+	64-60
D	59-55
F	54 and below

Assignments (subject to change)

<u>Week One: January 13</u>
Choose and read excerpts of a legal career/practice area book. Perform additional research, if necessary, to prepare for informational interview and class presentation.
<u>Week Two: January 27</u>
Continue reading legal career/practice area book. Arrange and conduct informational interview. ABA Reaction Paper #1 due today.
<u>Week Three: February 3</u>
<i>One L</i> : Preface and Registration. The Law School Curriculum, <i>SILS</i> pg. 3-28. Discuss generalist vs. specialist law student. ABA Reaction Paper #2 due today.
<u>Week Four: February 10</u>
<i>One L</i> : September and October. Constitutional Law & Statutory Law, <i>Law 101</i> pg. 3-15. Career presentations today. ABA Reaction Paper #3 due today. **Writing Assignment #1 Due**
<u>Week Five: February 17</u>
<i>One L</i> : October and November. Case Law & Administrative Law, <i>Law 101</i> pg. 15-32. ABA Reaction Paper #4 due today.
<u>Week Six: February 24</u>
<i>One L</i> : December and January. Reading & Briefing Cases Effectively, <i>SILS</i> pg. 41-63. Brief sample cases (to be assigned). ABA Reaction Paper #5 due today.
<u>Week Seven: March 3</u>
<i>One L</i> : February and March. Legal Synthesis & Analysis, <i>SILS</i> pg. 101-142. Brief sample cases (to be assigned). ABA Reaction Paper #6 due today.

Week Eight: March 17
<i>One L</i> : April and May. Legal Writing, <i>SILS</i> pg. 143-184. Choose research topic and tour Georgetown Law Library. ABA Reaction Paper #7 due today.
Week Nine: March 24
Research and outline memorandum (in-class workshop). ABA Reaction Paper #8 due today.
Week Ten: March 31
Continue writing legal memorandum. ABA Reaction Paper #9 due today.
Week Eleven: April 7
<i>One L</i> : Epilogue and Afterword. Harvard's "A Guide to Careers in Administrative Law" handout & international law current events discussion. ABA Reaction Paper #10 due today. **Writing Assignment #2 Due**
Week Twelve: April 21
Understanding a cost/benefit analysis. StrengthsQuest assessment tool. ABA Reaction Paper #11 due today.
Week Thirteen: April 28
Attorney Career Panel OR Practice LSAT with presentation by LSAT test prep company
Week Fourteen: May 5
Wrap-up course material. **Writing Assignment #3 Due**
Week Fifteen: May 12
Presentation Day

University Policies

Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at (202) 687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If an unforeseen disruption to in-person class meetings occurs, I will maintain instructional continuity via Group Video Chat on Skype or Google Hangouts (details will be explained by e-mail). These online sessions will occur during the regularly scheduled class meeting time. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up for alerts on [MyAccess](#).

Turnitin.com

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Georgetown Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at <http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code>, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism,

Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course may be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Plagiarism

The sources for all information and ideas in your assignments must be documented, following the style rules of the American Psychological Association (or the Bluebook as assigned). In addition, all quotations must be identified as quotations, using quotation marks and indicating the source of the quotation, as mandated by APA style. Anything less than these standards is plagiarism.

APA style is not taught in this course; a summary of APA style is available at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail.

If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student will receive a letter grade of F for the course.

Religious Observances

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. **Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.**