How to Be a Law Student

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1. Be goal-oriented
What are our goals for you?

**KNOWLEDGE**
Civil Procedure; Torts; Criminal Law; Contracts; Constitutional Law; Property; Other Bar Courses; Administrative Law Requirement

**VALUES**
Professional Responsibility; Professional Development Credits

**SKILLS**
Legal Skills I and II; Upper Level Writing Requirement; Upper Level Skills Requirement; Clinics & Externships
2. Set realistic expectations
“Day One and you’re unprepared”

- First Criminal Law class
What are our expectations of you?

- Prepare for and attend classes, whether in-person or on Zoom
- Respect your classmates
- Respect law school faculty and staff
- Academic honesty
- Good faith effort

Each academic credit = 55 minutes of classroom instruction + 2 hours of out-of-class work per week.

- 15 credit semester ≈ 45 hours per week
Prepare, prepare, prepare...

By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.

~ Benjamin Franklin
3. Read critically
What is critical reading?

[It does NOT mean criticizing what you read]

• Reading for interpretation and understanding

• SQ3R: Survey, Question, Read, Recall, Review

• Engaging in what you read by asking yourself questions such as, ‘what is the author trying to say?’ or ‘what is the legal rule this court is applying?’

Critical reading leads to excelling on law school exams because it sparks analytical thinking, legal reasoning and deeper understanding.
4. Shed lazy habits
5. Use the resources in front of you
Haub Law School Resources

• Dean for Students/Office of Student Services (Angie D’Agostino)
• Registrar’s Office (Josie Wolf)
• Academic Success Office (Danielle Kocal; Stephanie Desiato)
• Office of Career and Professional Development (Kapila Juthani)
• Director of First Year Legal Skills Program (Michelle Simon)
• Writing Specialist (Tamar Gribetz)
• Faculty Advisor (to be assigned)
• FLEX JD Advisor (Anthony Desiato)
• Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (aka Academic Dean) (Jill Gross)
First Year Legal Skills

• Prof. Michelle S. Simon, Faculty Director of First Year Legal Skills Program, msimon@law.pace.edu, Preston 324

• Fall semester: 3 credits
• Spring semester: 3 credits
• Small sections
• Numerous components
Components of First Year Legal Skills

• Meets twice a week with legal skills professor to learn predictive writing, persuasive writing, citation, research (legal skills syllabus, make sure find your section of the course on “Classes” or TWEN )

• Additional required classes on research, including Lexis and Westlaw training (legal skills syllabus and announcements by your legal skills professor)

• Legal Methods
Legal Methods

• Designed to help with the skills you need to be successful in your doctrinal courses and on exams
• Mandatory: 4 workshops in fall; 1 workshop and 3 classes in spring.
• Taught by academic success professionals, not your legal skills professors
• Synchronous on zoom (asynchronous for Flex students)
• Has its own syllabus and “Classes” page.
• Counts towards the credits and grade in Legal Skills I and II.
  • No need to separately register. Legal Methods section is identified in your “Classes” courses.
  • Contact Prof. Desiato at sdesiato@law.pace.edu if questions about section.
  • Print a copy of your legal methods syllabus and note when it meets.
Other Support

• Writing Specialist - Tamar Gribetz (tgribetz@law.pace.edu)
  • Conducts workshops over the year on writing mechanics such as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure.
  • Also available to meet individually with students
  • Can add course on TWEN entitled “Writing Specialist”

• Research Librarians
  • Available to provide assistance with research

• Office of Academic Success
  • Available to provide assistance with analysis
6. Develop a professional identity
7. Pay attention to detail
Lawyers must be detail-oriented

- Read Academic Rules closely
- Keep up with and read emails from Pace administrators and faculty
- Read syllabus for each course closely
- Follow instructions
- Follow-up
- Proofread all written communications
8. Learn to be a lifelong learner
9. See the world through others’ eyes.
10. Be good to yourself
Questions?