



YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF PRE-LAW ADVISEMENT AND PROGRAMMING

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PRE-LAW INFORMATION

PRE-LAW EDUCATION

Law schools do not prefer or require any specific major. Yeshiva University endorses the view of the American Bar Association that no particular major or set of courses should be considered the ‘best’ preparation for law school. The best preparation for law school is the pursuit of challenging, well-balanced courses which emphasize the acquisition of certain skills and bodies of knowledge, such as critical reading, writing and analysis. The undergraduate experience should be a time to explore the University’s varied academic offerings, to perfect skills and learning ability, and to demonstrate expertise in an academic discipline. While some students choose to major in the traditional pre-law majors such as English, political science, history and economics, other successful law school applicants have majored in subjects as diverse as music, biology and mathematics.

Admissions committees will consider the difficulty of the major and look for applicants who challenge themselves academically while enrolling in a broad-based course of study. Students who choose a heavily technical or quantitative major would be well-advised to balance out their studies with a number of writing intensive humanities classes to demonstrate their ability to read critically and communicate effectively.

KNOWLEDGE AREAS

The American Bar Association has identified seven areas of knowledge that serve as the best foundation for legal studies:

- History, particularly American, and an understanding of the political, cultural and economic factors that led to the development of our society in the United States
- Political thought and theory, and the American political system
- Ethical theory and theories of justice
- Economics, especially microeconomic theory
- Basic mathematical and financial skills, including pre-calculus mathematics and the ability to analyze financial data

PRE-LAW INFORMATION

- An understanding of human behavior and social interaction
- An appreciation of the diversity of cultures within and beyond the United States, international institutions, and increasing global interdependence

SPECIFIC SKILLS

The core skills necessary to succeed in law school are: analytic/problem-solving skills; critical reading; writing; oral communication; listening abilities; research skills, time-management and organization. These skills will provide a solid foundation for a legal education. Law school will further refine these skills, but students should enter with reasonably well-developed abilities in these areas.

Students should take a number of courses that require extensive reading, research, writing, and oral presentations, especially advanced level and honors seminars, English composition, literature and public speaking courses. The importance of oral and written communication skills cannot be overstated. Additionally, mathematics, computer science (COM 1300), economics (ECO 1031, ECO 1041), logic (PHI 1100), and the natural sciences will aid in the development of analytical and quantitative skills. Finally, students considering international law or law in a bilingual community should take advantage of opportunities to learn languages and to study abroad through one of Yeshiva University's programs.

Some students will find it difficult to determine whether law will be a suitable career choice. They may want to explore the law school option by enrolling in one or two law-oriented courses to gauge their interest in this area. Some suggestions below:

ECONOMICS: 1101 Intermediate Microeconomics, ECO 2201 Labor Economics. ECO 1301 History of Economic Thought

POLITICS: 2140 Law and Politics, 2145 American Constitutional Law, 2150 Civil Liberties, 2155 Politics of Criminal Justice

HISTORY: HIS 2607 International Crimes

Students should be aware that most law schools actively discourage pre-law students from taking too many law-related courses, as they prefer that students concentrate on acquiring a broad field of general knowledge and skills as a sound foundation for legal studies.

PRE-LAW INFORMATION

PREPARING FOR THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS TEST

The Law School Admissions Test (the “LSAT”) is a challenging examination of fundamental intellectual skills, not of any specific areas of knowledge. Some students find LSAT preparation courses helpful. Other applicants prepare alone by purchasing LSAT prep books from LSAC.org. Regardless of whether you choose to take a course, the key to the exam is **practice, practice, practice** under simulated test conditions. Students should plan to take the exam only once they are optimally prepared. Taking an LSAT as a “practice run” is not advisable and may hurt a student’s chances for admission.

The LSAT is offered four times during the year: June, October, December and February. Ideally, students should take the exam in June of the year before they plan to attend law school (the end of Junior year). This gives students a chance to take the October exam, if necessary, and still complete their applications by early to mid-November. As an added benefit, the June exam is not given on Shabbat, meaning that students will receive an **itemized** score report, allowing them to gain insight into the types of questions they have difficulty with. All other exams are given on Shabbat and an alternate test date is arranged for Sabbath observers. These exams are **non-disclosed**, meaning that students receive their scores for the exam without additional detail. However, some students find the October test desirable as it gives them a full summer off to concentrate on the exam.

The test covers four areas. Suggestions for developing strengths in each area are listed below.

- **Reading Comprehension**

This section tests one’s ability to understand, analyze, and interpret a brief but dense piece of writing and to answer questions about its content and perspective. To prepare, one should take courses that involve extensive reading and critical analysis of complete texts. Advanced courses in literature, history, politics or philosophy provide this type of training.

- **Analytical Reasoning**

Also called Logic Games, this section presents problems involving the grouping, ordering, and spatial relationships of objects. It tests the ability to think precisely and methodically and to solve problems with order and logic. Preparation can include courses in mathematics, natural sciences, and computer science and well as in philosophy (logic).

- **Logical Thinking**

This section asks students questions about a short written argument- its main points, assumptions, inferences, errors in argumentation, its applicability to a new

PRE-LAW INFORMATION

context, and whether a new piece of evidence would support or weaken the argument. Courses that provide practice in analytical arguments and theories are offered by political scientists, philosophers, historians, and economists.

- **Writing**

The LSAT requires test takers to write a short nonfiction essay in response to a given topic. This section measures students' ability to write clearly and coherently while under time pressure and without any grammatical or spelling aids. Students can prepare for this portion of the test by taking courses that require substantial writing. Especially helpful are classes that require research papers.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Pre-Law students are also urged to gain practical experience, so that they will be more competitive law schools applicants. For more information of any of the following opportunities, please contact the pre-law adviser on your campus.

- Internships

Practical legal experience is an excellent way of determining if a career in the law is for you. Internship possibilities are available through the Yeshiva University Pre-Law Judicial Internship Program, at the District Attorneys office, the Innocence Project, the American Civil Liberties Union, the New York City Court System and other governmental agencies. The Career Development Center should also be considered as a source for legal internships.

- Langfan Family Constitutional Oratory Competition

The Langfan Oratory Competition is held annually. Participating students are presented with a case for which they prepare oral arguments. Generous awards are presented to the top contestants.

- Yeshiva University's Jacob Hecht Pre-Law Society

This student club hosts events, lectures and field trips for pre-law students.

THE YESHIVA UNIVERSITY PRE-LAW JUDICIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The goal of this unpaid internship program is to provide our pre-law students with the opportunity to observe and actively participate in the judicial process on a weekly basis during the academic year. Students will have the opportunity to work alongside our participating judges in various courts throughout the New York State Unified Court System.

PRE-LAW INFORMATION

If you are interested in learning more information about this new initiative, please feel free to contact Ms. Ariella Hellman at ariella.hellman@yu.edu or by phone at 212.960.5400 ext. 5645.

YESHIVA PRE-LAW MENTORING PROGRAM

The YU Department of Pre-Law Advisement has established a network of practicing attorneys who are happy to mentor our pre-law students. Their practices encompass a wide variety of specialties. Students are encouraged to participate in this program and gain practical first-hand insight into what it means to be a practicing attorney. All interested students should contact Ms. Ariella Hellman at ariella.hellman@yu.edu.

BEREN-WILF PRE-LAW LISTSERV

Pre-Law students are urged to sign up for the Wilf-Beren Pre-Law listserv so that they will be aware of upcoming events and opportunities. The listserv can be found at <https://lists.yu.edu/mailman/listinfo/beren-wilf-prelaw>. Listname: Beren-Wilf-Prelaw

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Guidance is available for pre-law students on a year-round basis. Students interested in law school admissions, the application process, and other general information can reach Ms. Ariella Hellman at ariella.hellman@yu.edu.

DEPARTMENT OF PRE-LAW ADVISEMENT WEBSITE

The office maintains a website at <http://www.yu.edu/academic-advising/undergraduate/prelaw/>