

CLASS ACTIVITIES

Class 1, Jan 1: Introduction

- When are you graduating?
- What are your plans for after graduation?
- Have you started implementing those plans? If so, what has been your experience so far? If not, why not?
- What is your perception of Law School education?
- Discuss the following cartoon:



Class 2, Jan. 13: Declining by Degrees

Discussion questions:

- Do you read for all your classes? Do you do every single reading assignment for every single class? If not, how do you select what texts to read?
- How long do you study per week?

- Do you miss class sometimes? If so, how do you decide which classes to skip?
- Do you care too much about grades? Why? Why not? Is there pressure to get good grades? Where does that pressure come from? Have you ever acted as a grade grubber?
- Has something magical happened to you in terms of learning in your university studies?
- Do you feel that your education at Algoma has prepared you well for the “real world”?
- Do you feel like you sometimes sleepwalk through classes? Why? Why not?
- Can you get good grades without studying deeply? Why? Why not?
- Is there an unspoken social contract?

Class 3, Jan 18: Nature of legal education

Discussion questions

- What would you change about legal education in Canada?
- Do you think you can study law from a legal perspective during your first degree program? What is the use?
- Why do Law Schools have a virtual monopoly over law teaching?
- What does “going back to basics” mean?
- What is the relevance, if any, of studying black letter law?
- What is the significance, if any, of studying law at the undergraduate level? If most students majoring in Law at the university level plan to go to Law School, why should they study law also at the university?

- What is your opinion of the Law and Social Science and theoretical movements in Law Schools?

Class 5, Jan. 25:



A film producer wants to hire you to write the script of a new movie. So, you need to write a treatment (outline) for a script about legal education in Canada. The film can take place in Law School or in a university undergraduate Legal Studies program. Be creative, it is a commercial film. You must also show your knowledge of legal education arising from our discussions, the articles, and your own personal experience.

Take the following into consideration for the treatment:

- **Title:** Decide the title of the movie with the following limitations. The producer wants you to use the words law or legal, and education or their synonyms in the title.
- **Setting:** The film takes place in Canada.
- **Plot:** There story must have a conflict, i.e., the struggle between opposing forces that emerges as the action develops. The stages of a plot include: (i) exposition, i.e., it presents the basic information which the audience needs to understand the events that follow (ii) a series of complications, (iii) climax, the point of greatest interest in the story, and (iv) the resolution, it draws the action to a close.

- **Point of view.** Think of the point of view of the story, i.e., think of which particular character will tell the story, or part of the story, or if there will be an omniscient narrator.
- **Characters.** Design the main characters. In major stories the characters are usually well developed, closely involved and responsive to the action. You can even suggest the actors who will play those characters. The producer wants you to cast Brooke Shields in one of the leading roles.

Class 6, Jan. 27: Law School Admissions

- Have you applied to Law School? Discuss your experience so far.
- Are you planning to apply to Law School? Discuss your fears, if any, and main challenges.
- Why are there so few Canadian Law Schools? (16 Common Law schools)
- What would you change about admission to Law Schools in Canada?
- Do you think it is important to have a B.A. or B.Sc. before starting Law School?
- Would you implement mandatory affirmative action programs for admission into Law School and/or other graduate programs?
- What do you need to do in order to get a good letter of recommendation for Law School?

Class 7, Feb. 1: Law School Admissions

Admissions scenarios

Suppose you are the head of the Admissions Committee of the following Law Schools. Follow the admissions policy outlined below. What is your decision regarding admissions for each candidate?

1) Alejandro Elaughe is a successful Chilean lawyer who holds a law degree from the University of Santiago. His cumulative law degree academic record was 74%, a quite high record at a Chilean university.

While practicing law in his own private firm, he published two articles in a local law journal. He obtained a 550 on the TOEFL test (English as a foreign language test). He has taken the LSAT and scored in the 84th percentile. He attributes his relatively low TOEFL and LSAT scores to the fact that he has never taken a multiple choice test before as these tests are frowned upon by Chilean professors, who prefer other forms of evaluations, such as writing papers, or participating in oral debates, and presentations.

TOEFL and LSAT exams are offered only once a year in Chile so he cannot retake them.

His personal essay is rather weak. He is not used to writing personal statements as a way of gaining admission to school. He'd thought the essay would be used for social purposes so he wrote about his music and film preferences.

2) Nicolai Edvardov, a Russian sociologist, has a candidate degree –similar to the North American Ph.D.- in sociology and is working toward his second doctoral degree in Russia. Seeing that it will be very difficult for him to make a living in Russia, he wants to practice Law in North America.

He did his undergraduate education in Sociology during Soviet times. As he was a dissident and frequently voiced his opposition to the Soviet regime in class, his cumulative undergraduate academic record was 44%. He did his doctoral studies after the fall of the Soviet Union, and he excelled in his education. In Russia, you do not take a prescribed set of courses at the doctoral level. You mainly work on your thesis and assist professors in their research, so there is no GPA for doctoral students. His thesis was excellent and is considered one of the best sociological works on oppression of minorities in Russia. It is being reviewed for publication. His colleagues

consider Nicolai to be a star and a very promising scholar. However, since Russian professors are not used to writing letters of recommendations, his letters do not reflect his potential. Nicolai explained all this in his personal admissions essay.

He scored 575 in the TOEFL and scored in the 85th percentile in the LSAT. He attributes his relatively low scores to the fact that his English is a bit weak, as he started to study English while a doctoral student.

3) George is a student from Algoma University's Law and Justice program. He took legal courses mostly from part-time faculty, i.e., judges, practicing attorneys, and prosecutors. Other teachers had master's degrees, but no one had a Ph.D. His letters of recommendations are from a practicing attorney and a judge. They both say that George is a very good student, that he knows a lot about Criminal Law, Contracts, Constitutional Law, and Torts. They even mentioned that George starred in a moot court.

John is a student from Algoma University's Anthropology program. He only took one course from the Law and Justice program. His letters of recommendations were written from full-time faculty with doctoral degrees. They both emphasize that George is a very good student, that he has very good research skills as evidenced by John's thesis and written assignments in the course. They mention that John has very good oral presentation skills as evidenced by several presentations John did in their classes. They also say that John has an ability to understand theory, and to communicate his ideas in writing. They also mention that John has developed a very good understanding of worldwide cultures as a result of his passion for Anthropology.

Both George and John have the same GPA and the same LSAT score. Which student will the Law School admissions committee admit?

4) Ashley MacDonald is a good –but not outstanding- student at Laurentian University. Her undergraduate academic record is 84% and her LSAT score is in the 94 percentile. She has not been involved in many extracurricular activities; and her goal has always been to be a teacher.

But her parents insisted that she study law. Her letters of recommendations are strong, but her personal essay is not very powerful.

5) Elle Wood has a 4.0 GPA in fashion merchandising from CULA, a California College of dubious academic reputation. She is a social queen and chief blonde of her sorority. She got a 179 on her LSAT. One of her most significant extracurricular activities is growing up across the street from Aaron Spelling (creator of Dynasty and 90210).

6) Shirley is an Algoma University student. She is doing a double major in Law and Justice and Sociology. Her LSAT score and GPA is the minimum required by the Law Schools she wants to apply to. You are a full-time teacher at Algoma. She comes to you for advice. What will you tell her?

7) Miriam O'Hara is an excellent Sociology student at Dalhousie University. Her undergraduate academic record is 87%, and her LSAT score is in the 98 percentile. Her list of extracurricular activities is impressive, and her letters of recommendation are very powerful. She wrote a very strong personal essay.

8) David is a first-year Algoma University student. He is majoring in Law and Justice. You are a full-time faculty in the program. He comes to you in early September and tells you that he wants to go to Law School when he finishes his studies at Algoma University. What do you recommend him?

Read the Law School admissions requirements from the following site:
<http://www.julianhermida.com/algoma/lawschoolstudyadmissionscharts.htm>

[About the LSAT](#)

(from <http://www.powerscore.com/lSAT>)

The normalization yields a rough bell curve. The number of test takers in the 120s and 170s is very low, and most test takers are bunched in the middle, comprising the "top" of the bell. In fact, approximately 40% of all test takers score between 145 and 155 inclusive, and about 70% of all test takers score between 140 and 160 inclusive.

LSAT Percentile Table

		Percentile
Raw Score	Scaled Score	Rank
98-101	180	99.9%
97	179	99.9%
96	178	99.9%
94-95	177	99.8%
93	176	99.6%
92	175	99.5%
91	174	99.2%
90	173	99.0%
88-89	172	98.6%
87	171	98.1%
86	170	97.5%
84-85	169	96.8%
83	168	96.1%
81-82	167	94.9%
80	166	93.4%
78-79	165	92.1%
77	164	90.4%
75-76	163	88.5%
73-74	162	86.3%
72	161	83.9%

70-71	160	81.0%
68-69	159	78.0%
67	158	75.1%
65-66	157	71.6%
63-64	156	67.9%
61-62	155	64.2%
60	154	60.0%
58-59	153	55.8%
56-57	152	52.6%
55	151	48.3%
53-54	150	44.1%
51-52	149	40.2%
50	148	36.3%
48-49	147	32.5%
46-47	146	29.6%
45	145	25.8%
43-44	144	22.8%
42	143	20.3%
40-41	142	17.4%
38-39	141	15.0%
37	140	13.0%
35-36	139	11.2%
34	138	9.3%
33	137	7.9%
31-32	136	6.6%
30	135	5.5%
29	134	4.6%
28	133	3.6%
27	132	3.1%
26	131	2.4%
25	130	1.9%

24	129	1.6%
23	128	1.2%
22	127	1.0%
21	126	0.8%
20	125	0.6%
19	124	0.5%
18	123	0.4%
17	122	0.3%
16	121	0.3%
0-15	120	0.0%

Scores represent the analysis of 429,816 LSAT scores from June, 2006 to February, 2009. The mean scaled score for this period was 150.72 and the standard deviation was 9.89.

GPA Conversion Chart:
(from Princeton review)

4.0	95-100	A
3.9	94	A
3.8	93	A
3.7	92	A
3.6	91	A
3.5	90	A
3.4	89	B
3.3	88	B
3.2	87	B
3.1	86	B
3.0	85	B

2.9	84	B
2.8	83	B
2.7	82	B
2.6	81	B
2.5	80	B
2.4	79	C
2.3	78	C
2.2	77	C
2.1	76	C
2.0	75	C
1.9	74	C
1.8	73	C
1.7	72	C
1.6	71	C
1.5	70	C

Class 8, Feb. 3

Write a personal statement for admissions to Law School. Follow the instructions taken from U of T's Law School.

The Admissions Committee conducts no interviews, the personal statement is an applicant's opportunity to outline those features of the application which distinguish the applicant. The content of the personal statement is not prescribed. However applicants are encouraged to use the personal statement to share their "story" with the Admissions Committee. Applicants may wish to outline in the personal statement such things as their choice of undergraduate program and institution; the extent to which it has prepared them for the study of law; and if appropriate, any anomalies in the academic record including false starts, fewer than five courses over two terms, and introductory courses taken in the third or fourth years of a program.

The personal statement is also an opportunity for applicants to highlight their non-academic accomplishments as well as any circumstances which may have contributed to or detracted from their academic and non-academic success, such as the response to disadvantage due to adverse personal or socio-economic circumstances or to barriers faced by cultural (including racial or ethnic) or linguistic minorities; and the impact of temporary or permanent physical disabilities. Applicants may want to write to the Committee about the different ways they see themselves contributing to the law school and legal community.

Mature applicants are required to submit both a personal statement and a detailed résumé of their work and other experience including current position or status.

Aboriginal applicants are requested to outline in their personal statements their interest in, identification with, and connection to their communities.

Class 9, Feb. 8: Legal Pedagogies

Deep Learning

- Does this happen here at Algoma?
- Do you agree that most students forget almost everything they learn in college? If so, why does this happen?
- If Father Guido Sarducci hired you to teach Legal Studies at the Five Minute University, what big question/s would you like your students to answer? What skills will your students need to answer that question?
- How will you encourage your students' interest in those questions and skills?

Class 10, Feb 10:

Microteaching:

[Teach a class according to the following instructions](#)

Class 14, March 3: International legal education and curriculum reform

Discussion questions

- What do you think about the evaluation system in Europe?
- What are the differences between legal education in Europe and North America? What do you think about these differences? Which system do you prefer? Which aspects of the European system do you find better than the North American system?
- Discuss how the Bologna process has been affecting legal education in Europe.
- From the scenes we have just watched, please describe the pedagogy used in European law faculties. How is it different from the Socratic method? Which do you think fosters deep learning?
- Are there any instances of deep learning? Discuss them.

Based on your experience in this course so far, design the curriculum for undergraduate legal studies at Algoma University. Take into account both the learning outcomes, i.e., the skills you want students to take out of the program, and the content.

Class 15, March 8: Admission to the legal profession

- What do you think of the admission process in Canada? Are there any discriminatory consequences of the process?
- What do you think of the bar admission process in the United States? How is it different from the Canadian process?
- What do you think of the Law Societies movement to have a Canadian common law degree curriculum? What should the role of the Law Societies be?
- What do you think of the recognition of foreign legal credentials in Canada? Should there be a different treatment for Canadian and foreign graduates of international Law Schools?

Class 16, March 10: Admissions to Legal Practice

Research and writing activity

Class 17, March 15: Recognition of foreign legal credentials

Analyze the following scenarios.

- 1) Britney has graduated from California University at Davies College of Law. She graduated among the top 50% of her class. She did not take any course on Canadian Law or with any Canadian content. What does she need to do in order to be admitted to practice law in Ontario?
- 2) Peter is a lawyer admitted to practice law in England. Can he work as a lawyer in Italy?
- 3) Courtney graduated from Cambridge University's Faculty of Law with a B.A. in Law. She did very well on her Tripos, but the B.A. is not classed at Cambridge. Since Courtney graduated from Algoma University with a 4-year B.A. in Law and Justice, she did a two-year program at Cambridge. She finished last year, before the Bologna Process new measures became effective. What does she need to do in order to be admitted to practice law in Ontario?
- 4) Hans is a lawyer admitted to practice in Germany. Can he sit for the bar exam in California?
- 5) Ludmila is a lawyer admitted to practice in Chile. She graduated top of her class at the National University. She did not take any course on Common Law. She practiced family

law in Chile for 4 years. What does she need to do in order to be admitted to practice law in Ontario?

- 6) Nicolai is a lawyer in Russia. He wants to take the bar exam in New York. He knows you are an expert in legal education. What will you recommend him to do?
- 7) Sam graduated from Universidad Autonoma de Madrid. She never took a common law course. She came to Canada and did an LL.M. at McGill University (Comparative Law). She took most of the elective courses on International Law. What does she need to do in order to be admitted to practice law in Ontario?
- 8) Tom has just finished his 4-year B.A in Law and Justice at Algoma University. He has heard something about the possibility of doing an LL.M in an ABA-approved Law School to qualify to sit for the bar exam in New York. He comes to you as an expert in legal education. He wants to know if it is possible for him to do an LL.M and then sit for the bar exam in New York.
- 9) Jack studied law at the University of Toronto Law School. He wants to practice law in New York. Jill studied law at New York University. She wants to practice law in Ontario. They come to you as experts in legal education. What will you tell them?
- 10) George is a graduate of Algoma University's Law and Justice program. He applied to several Law Schools in Canada, but was not admitted. He wants to study law at the University of Sydney Law School. He checked the website (<http://sydney.edu.au/law/>) but is confused about the different programs: undergraduate, JD, postgraduate. He wants to study in Sydney and then come back and practice law in Ontario. He needs your advice. Which is the best program for his goal?

Class 17: March 18: Legal education and practice

- What do you think of the hiring process for large law firms?
- Do you think there is an overemphasis on grades? Do grades reflect deep learning? What do you think of the cascade effect of Law School grades?

- What are alternative career paths for Law School graduates?
- What do you think of the large law firm environment? Is this something that may appeal to you?

Design a professional development plan for your junior associates taking into account Donald Schon's article.

Class 19, March 22: Law Professors

Explore the following websites

- <http://ww3.lawschool.cornell.edu/faculty-pages/wendel/teaching.htm>
- <http://www.law.nyu.edu/acp/index.htm>,
- <http://www.law.berkeley.edu/88.htm>
- http://www.law.columbia.edu/careers/law_teaching
- <http://www.law.uchicago.edu/careerservices/pathstolawteaching>

- How do candidates prepare to become a law professor? What are the disadvantages of this process?
- Suppose you want to be a Law School professor in Canada? What realistic path would you take to get a job?
- What do you think about the recruitment process for Law School professors in the US?
- What are the consequences of this recruitment process?
- What changes, if any, would you make to the hiring process of Law School professors?
- What do you think about the credentials and skills required for teaching at Law School and University? What changes would you make? Why?

- Choose any Law School in Canada or the United States. Analyze the education of recently hired Assistant Professors. Where do most come from? Where don't they come from? What are their credentials? What are the flaws of their education?

Suggested topics for presentations

- The Law School Student
- The undergraduate Legal Studies student
- Law outside Schools and Courtrooms