

CLASS ACTIVITIES

Class 1, Jan 6: Introduction

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 2, Jan 1.3: 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?
- Suppose the director of the film Legally Blonde hires you as a consultant. He is planning a new movie called Legally Red Hair, and wants you to write a treatment (outline) for a script about Canadian Law School education.

Class 3, Jan. 20: 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?

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., retired 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 retired judge. They both say that George is a very good student, that 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 his 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?

Harvard Law School

Admission decisions are based on the Admission Committee's experienced judgment applied to individual cases, and many factors are taken into account. Each application is given a full file review by at least two readers, taking account of all available information. Because GPA and LSAT alone do not fully or adequately

summarize information about individuals that is important to admission decisions, these "numbers" often prove poor predictors of admission decisions on individual applications. At no point on the GPA or LSAT scales are the chances of admission to Harvard Law School 0 or 100 percent. As reported to the ABA, the 75/25 percentile GPAs for the class entering in 2004 were 3.94/3.73 and the 75/25 percentile LSATs were 175/169. Minimum TOEFL accepted: 600.

Unwritten admissions policy: no one with an LSAT score below 163 or with a GPA below 3.5 may be admitted unless there are compelling exceptional circumstances, generally limited to cases of institutional interest. 50% of spots are for male applicants and 50% for female applicants. 20% of spots are reserved for applicants where there is a substantial institutional interest. 70% of spots are from US candidates and 30% may be filled with international students, provided they meet admission standards. 80% of US applicants must come from top colleges, and it is expected that at least 50% must have graduate degrees, such as masters and/or Ph.D.s.

University of Toronto Faculty of Law

Successful regular applicants had a median LSAT score in the 94th percentile, and a median cumulative undergraduate academic record of about 84% (in the case of applicants with four years undergraduate experience, this statistic is based on the best three of the four years). Very few candidates are admitted with LSAT scores below the 85th percentile and cumulative undergraduate academic records below 78%, unless their backgrounds, other qualifications, or personal accomplishments would, in the opinion of the Admissions Committee, contribute specially and significantly to the class. The minimum TOEFL score requirement is 600 or 250 on the new computer-based scale and the minimum TWE score is 5.

New York Law School

New York Law School requires that all students who enroll in the J.D. program must have earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. or Canadian college or university, or the foreign equivalent whose program has been deemed by World Education Services to be comparable to that of a four-year baccalaureate degree in the United States. Median LSAT 157, median GPA 3.55. The minimum score requirement is 600 on the old scale and 250 on the present scale.

Unwritten admissions policy: no one with an LSAT score below 161 or with a GPA below 3.3 may be admitted unless there are compelling exceptional circumstances. 50% of spots are for male applicants and 50% for female applicants. 20% of spots are reserved for applicants where there is a substantial institutional interest. 70% of spots are from US candidates and 30% must be filled with international students and/or with US minority groups.


[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

180	99.98 %
179	99.96 %
178	99.91 %
177	99.86 %
176	99.78 %
175	99.67 %
174	99.53 %
173	99.32 %
172	99.07 %
171	98.69 %
170	98.21 %
169	97.55 %
168	97.03 %
167	95.92 %
166	94.84 %
165	93.49 %
164	91.91 %
163	90.00 %
162	88.18 %
161	85.74 %
160	83.07 %
159	80.60 %
158	77.43 %
157	74.18 %
156	70.74 %
155	67.14 %



154	63.25 %
153	59.29 %
152	55.22 %
151	51.49 %
150	47.26 %
149	43.20 %
148	39.33 %
147	35.60 %
146	32.17 %
145	28.40 %
144	25.46 %
143	22.19 %
142	19.59 %
141	16.92 %
140	14.56 %
139	12.44 %
138	10.63 %
137	9.01 %
136	7.54 %
135	6.29 %
134	5.39 %
133	4.25 %
132	3.49 %
131	2.93 %
130	2.38 %
129	1.82 %
128	1.48 %
127	1.19 %
126	0.93 %
125	0.77 %
124	0.60 %

123	0.47 %
122	0.37 %
121	0.34 %
120	0.00 %

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

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 4 Jan 27 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?

Microteaching:

- Teach a Legal Studies class on any legal topic of your choice.
- Teach a Law School class on any legal topic of your choice. Include the Socratic method.

Class 5 Feb. 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 6, Feb 10: 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?
- Research the bar admission process in jurisdictions other than the US and Canada. Discuss those processes.
- 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?
- Identify the position of the following players: Law School professors, Law School Deans, and Law Societies.
- 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?
- Research the recognition of paralegals in Ontario. Discuss this system.

Class 7: Feb. 24: Legal education and practice

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

Class 9, March 10: Law Professors

Explore the following websites

- <http://www3.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?
- 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?

Class 10, March 17: Student presentations

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