



First-Year Survival Guide

On Being a Duke Law 1L

Welcome to Duke Law! The first year of law school can be intimidating, but there are some resources out there to help calm your nerves. The materials in this guide will be of interest to those students who want to have an edge in the competitive game of managing course loads and acing exams.

Unless otherwise noted, all of the books listed below can be found in the **Reserves** collection of the Goodson Law Library, and may be checked out for four hours at a time.

On Transitioning from College

Summa cum laude (Highly Recommended Reading)

Llewellyn, Karl N., *Bramble Bush: On Our Law and Its Study*, 1930. A legal classic which grew out of Llewellyn's lectures to first-year law students at Columbia in 1929 and 1930. It remains a valid introduction to the study of law and a thoughtful introduction to the life of a law student.

Iijima, Ann L. *The Law Student's Pocket Mentor: From Surviving to Thriving*, 2007. A concise guide to all aspects of law school, from deciding to attend to succeeding at your first legal job. The chapters on case briefing, class discussions, and learning styles are especially helpful.

McKinney, Ruth Ann, *Reading Like a Lawyer: Time-Saving Strategies for Reading Law Like an Expert*, 2005. Explains how to read law-related material as efficiently, effectively, and powerfully as possible. Just a few weeks in law school should illustrate why these skills are at the core of legal thinking and the law school experience. Practical exercises are given for law school casebooks as well as reading law as a practicing attorney.

Moliterno, James E. and Lederer, Frederic I., *An Introduction to Law, Law Study, and the Lawyer's Role*, 2d ed., 2004. Contains both an introduction to the skills that are critical to law students, such as reading a case and classroom participation, as well as a focus on the nature of law and the lawyer's role in practice; this book is especially helpful to new law students.

Shapo, Helene S. and Shapo, Marshall, *Law School Without Fear: Strategies for Success*, 2d ed., 2002. This book explains fundamental concepts that are often unclear or confusing at the beginning of law school. Includes briefing a case, where law comes from, defining and using precedent, legal reasoning and some basic jurisprudential concepts.

Magna cum laude (Recommended Reading)

Locate additional titles like these with a **subject keyword** search in the catalog for “Law students–United States–Handbooks, manuals, etc.”

Hegland, Kenney F., *Introduction to the Study and Practice of Law In a Nutshell*, 5th ed. 2008. Presents detailed sections on what lawyers do, what law students *should* do and what law school is all about. Pertinent sections for first-year students relate to studying, legal writing, moot court and writing law school exams (more on that later).

McFadden, Patrick M., *A Student's Guide to Legal Analysis: Thinking Like a Lawyer*, 2001. Simplifies legal analysis into a handful of questions that can be asked for any law school class or exam. The author emphasizes a big-picture approach to the fundamental issues of law and the legal argument. The final chapters address how legal answers fall into predictable patterns and why some answers are better than others.

Miller, Robert H., *Law School Confidential: A Complete Guide to the Law School Experience: By Students, For Students*, rev. ed. 2004. Written by a graduate of University of Pennsylvania Law School along with a dozen law students, this book takes an informal approach in discussing how to succeed in law school and how to obtain clerkships and other legal jobs after graduation.

Munneke, Gary A., *How to Succeed in Law School*, 3d ed. 2001. This guide covers a variety of topics from a description of the first year curriculum to how to study in law school and take exams. The book also describes how to avoid the pitfalls of law school. The appendix includes sample tort exam questions and answers.

Noyes, Shana Connell and Noyes, Henry S. *Acing Your First Year of Law School: The Ten Steps to Success You Won't Learn in Class*, 2d ed. 2008. Concise guide to mastering the Socratic method, case briefing, research and writing, and exam preparation.

Stropus, Ruta K. and Taylor, Charlotte D., *Bridging the Gap Between College and Law School: Strategies for Success*, 2d ed. 2009. Explains the “why” of law learning through casebooks and class procedures and also a process for how to adapt and learn the law. Covers reading cases, note taking, rule synthesis, exams and time management.

On Studying Like a Star

CALI: The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) hosts more than 600 online lessons in 32 legal topic areas, including tutorials relevant to every 1L course. Access the exercises at <http://www.cali.org>. Register an account with the **Duke Law School authorization code** (download at <http://www.law.duke.edu/computing/download/downloadlist#CALI> or ask at the library's Reference Services desk).

Examples and Explanations Series: This series of books, published by Aspen, are written by law professors and are great exam preparation aids. The books give a narrative overview of key concepts and rules followed by "examples" (hypothetical questions) and "explanations" (answers to the questions). In the online catalog, search the **title keyword** "*examples and explanations*" to retrieve a list of all books in the series, and their locations in the library.

Hornbooks: These books are written especially for law students and review specific areas of law in a summary, narrative form. They are thorough, but not exhaustive. The primary producer of hornbooks, West, has now divided its hornbooks into two editions: Practitioner's and Student's. The practitioner's edition usually contains additional chapters which discuss practice-oriented issues not normally of interest to students. The library usually has both versions in the Reserves collection.

Law Dictionaries (Black's, Ballentine's): These sources are a great help in the first year of law school— especially during those first few weeks! Law dictionaries and other dictionaries can be found in the Reference Collection on Level 3 of the library.

Mastering... Series: These slim volumes provide a quick overview of a specific area of law, with minimal footnotes. They are available on virtually every law school course topic and can be located in the catalog with a **title keyword** search for "mastering [subject]"; e.g. *mastering contracts*.

Nutshell Series: These books contain a comprehensive outline of a specific area of the law, *usually* written by a noted authority on the subject. They provide a big-picture look at the law and avoid in-depth analysis. They contain fewer footnotes and references than hornbooks, but generally give greater coverage of a subject than commercial study guides. The most current Nutshells are in the Reserves collection, organized by author's last name.

Understanding... Series: Published by LexisNexis on a variety of legal topics, this series can be found with a **title keyword** search of the catalog for "understanding [subject]"; e.g. *understanding criminal law*. The *Understanding* series contain an overview of an area of law, with footnotes to primary sources for further reading.

On Mastering the *Bluebook*

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation, 18th ed 2005. For Legal Analysis, Research & Writing assignments, use the "Court Documents and Legal Memoranda" cheat sheet on the inside back cover and the "Bluepages" in the front of the book.

Barris, L. *Understanding and Mastering the Bluebook: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*, 2007. Demystifies the basic *Bluebook* forms, with cites to specific rules for further information.

Bouchoux, D. *Cite-Checker: A Hands-On Guide to Learning Citation Form*, 2d ed. 2008. A brief, practical approach to learning the "Bluepages" style of the *Bluebook*. Each chapter is organized by type of cited material (e.g., cases, statutes) and includes practice exercises.

Dworsky, A. *User's Guide to the Bluebook*, 2006. A distillation of the most common *Bluebook* tasks and questions, written for students and practitioners using the "Bluepages" style.

Teply, L. *Legal Writing Citation in a Nutshell*, 2008. A more general overview of legal citation, including examples from the *Bluebook* competitor *ALWD Citation Manual* and public-domain citation formats.

On Acing Exams

Burkhart, Ann M., *Law School Success in a Nutshell: A Guide to Studying Law and Taking Law School Exams*, 2008. The first half of this book covers the law school experience, and includes a section on reading and briefing cases. The second half consists of sample exam questions and answers for first-year subjects.

Calleros, Charles R. *Law School Exams: Preparing and Writing to Win*, 2007. This book begins with the foundation of adopting good study techniques, including tips on outlining course material. Strategies for addressing different kinds of exam questions, as well as sample answers, are provided.

Darrow-Kleinhaus, Suzanne, *Mastering the Law School Exam: A Practical Blueprint for Preparing and Taking Law School Exams*, 2007. Whether you are just beginning your law studies or have received a few exam grades and wish to brush up on your study skills, you can jump directly into the chapters you need with the helpful roadmap at the beginning of this book. Sample questions and answers on a variety of topics are provided.

Dernbach, John C., *Writing Essay Exams to Succeed (Not Just to Survive)*, 2007. This short 95-page book, written by a legal writing professor, gives a concise overview of writing essay exams, highlighting the purpose of exams and the application of rule analysis.

The Goodson Law Library owns a number of older books on the subject of writing law school exam answers. Although the content of the sample answers may be out of date, the structure of the exam response and the analytical process needed to form a good answer has not changed much in the last few decades. Locate older materials in the online catalog with a **subject search** for “Law examinations–United States.”

On Impressing Your Professors

To learn what topics are of particular interest to your professors, updated bibliographies of faculty writings are linked from the **Faculty Profiles** on the Law School’s website (<http://www.law.duke.edu/fac/index>). They offer an interesting insight into the types of scholarship in which the faculty members are engaged.

You can also read recent faculty publications, as well as works in progress, on the **Recent Faculty Scholarship** page (<http://www.law.duke.edu/scholarship/facpub>).