

Pre-Law Interest Session Fall 2024



Molly Timko, J.D.
Pre-Law Academic Advisor

Agenda

- Introductions and Open Discussion
- Exploring and Preparing for Law School and a Career in the Legal Profession
- The Path to Law School
- Selection of Majors, Minors, and Relevant Courses
- Law School Application Process, Admissions Criteria, and Timeline
- Careers in the Legal Field
- Pre-Law Resources and Opportunities at UMBC
- Q&A

About the Pre-Law Academic Advisor

- Joined UMBC in Summer 2022
- **Educational Background:**
 - B.A., Anthropology and Art History, State University of New York at Buffalo
 - M.S., Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration, Canisius University, Buffalo, NY
 - J.D., City University of New York School of Law
- First-Gen law student and law school graduate
- Licensed to practice law in Maryland, New York, and the District of Columbia



Introductions/Open Discussion

- What do you hope to learn today?
- What other resources do you need?



Lawyers in Pop Culture



Photo Credits (left to right):

Row 1: *My Cousin Vinny*, 20th Century Fox; *Scandal*, ABC via Getty Images; *Breaking Bad*, AMC; *Legally Blonde*, MGM Distribution Co.; *Gone Girl*, 20th Century Fox

Row 2: *How to Get Away With Murder*, Mitch Haaseth/ABC; *Law & Order*; NBC Universal; *Sex and the City*, HBO; *Suits*, Ian Watson/USA Network

What do lawyers typically do?

- Act as both advocates and advisors.
- Advise and represent clients in courts, before government agencies, and in private legal matters.
- Research and analyze legal problems.
- Interpret laws, rulings, and regulations for individuals and businesses.
- Present facts in writing and verbally to their clients or others, and advocate on behalf of their clients.
- Prepare and file legal documents such as lawsuits, appeals, wills, contracts, and deeds.
- Research the intent of laws and judicial decisions and apply the laws to the specific circumstances or facts of the case.

Deciding whether law school is a good fit

- Why do you want to go to law school?
- What do you envision doing with your law degree?
- Do you want to take some time off in between undergraduate and law school, or gain some work experience?
- Consider the financial and time commitment involved as well as the job market. Evaluate the costs and benefits.
- **Reflect** on your career goals, ambitions, and what type of work is stimulating to you.
- Consider alternative careers.

Additional Reflection – Ongoing

- What issues or topics are important to you?
- What are you curious about?
- Are there problems you want to solve?
- What kind of work/activities do you find satisfying?
- What kind of impact do you want to have?
- Which professional paths would let you do this?
- Which paths suit you best?

The Path to Law School

- There is no single path that will prepare you for a legal education.
- Law students and legal professionals come from many walks of life and educational backgrounds.
- In fact, students are admitted to law school from nearly every academic discipline.
- As such, UMBC does not offer an undergraduate degree in “pre-law.”

Embrace the flexibility of “Pre-Law”

- Students are encouraged to pursue areas of study that interest and challenge them.
- Learn about the legal field through classes, pre-law events, networking, and internships.
- Explore your interests, values, and passions and then decide on the means to pursue them professionally.



What skills are needed?

The [American Bar Association](#) recommends that prospective law students develop the following **key skills**:

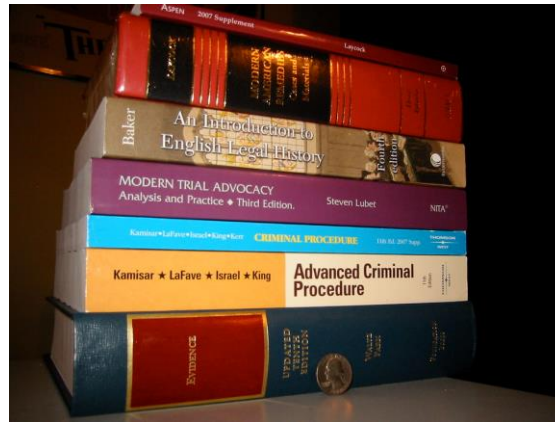
- Problem Solving
- Critical Reading
- Writing and Editing
- Oral Communication and Listening
- Research
- Organization and Management
- Relationship-building and Collaboration
- Public Service and Promotion of Justice
- Background knowledge
- Exposure to the Law

Course Selection

- Select courses that will develop your reading, writing, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning skills.
- Take a broad range of difficult courses from demanding instructors.
- Select challenging courses that provide experience with close reading of texts, detailed analyses, logical reasoning, and extensive writing.

Background Knowledge

- Although there are generally no prerequisites, consider taking courses and participating in activities that will give you some background knowledge of and exposure to the legal system, including its institutions, concepts, and vocabulary.



**Examples of relevant courses in Political Science include,
but are not limited to:**

POLI 230 - Introduction to Constitutional Law

POLI 435 - Legal Reasoning

POLI 233 - Law and Legal System

POLI 436 - Health Law

POLI 338 - Women and Law

POLI 437 - International Human Rights
Law

POLI 431 – Spies, Assassins, and Cyber-
Warriors – Modern National Security Law

POLI 445 - Law, Politics and American
Educational Policy

Relevant courses in other departments include, but are not limited to:

Africana Studies

AFST 392 - Race, Crime and Public Policy

Aging Studies

AGNG 430 - Legal and Ethical Issues in Aging Services

Economics

ECON 416 - The Economics of Law

English

ENGL 393 – Technical Communication (Writing Intensive)

Gender, Women's, + Sexuality Studies

GWST 338 - Women, Gender, and Law

Global Studies

GLBL 483 – International Negotiation

History

HIST 318 - United States Constitutional History

Philosophy

PHIL 146 - Critical Thinking

PHIL 346 – Deductive Logic

Psychology

PSYC 350 - Psychology and the Law

Sociology

SOCY 372 - Juvenile Delinquency

Law and Justice Minor

- The Political Science Department offers a minor in [Law and Justice](#) to undergraduates of all majors.
- This minor offers students hands-on practical opportunities through legal internships, mock trial, and legal advocacy.

Social Welfare Minor

- The Social Work Program offers a minor in [Social Welfare](#), which provides a comprehensive background in the social welfare system in the United States
- It also offers the opportunity to **explore in depth some of the challenging issues confronting society** in the alleviation of poverty and the delivery of health and welfare services to families and children, older adults, and people with physical and mental challenges.

Certificates

- **[Security Studies Certificate](#)**

The Political Science Department offers a 15-credit certificate in Security Studies (SEST) with a curricular focus in international security affairs.

- **[Certificate in Public Administration and Policy](#)**

The Political Science Department offers a 32-credit Certificate in Public Administration and Policy for students who are interested in leadership positions in government agencies or in becoming policy analysts.

- **[Certificate in Philosophy, Law, and Politics](#)**

The Philosophy Department offers a 15-credit Certificate in Philosophy, Law, and Politics for students looking to gain a strong background in the philosophical foundations of law, legal studies, political theory and public policy.

Law School Applicants

- Law school and the practice of law require discipline, time management, and perseverance to pursue long-term goals.
- Law schools are looking for applicants with academic excellence and the ability to perform at a high scholarly level.
- Undergraduate grade-point average and LSAT score* are generally considered the two most important factors.
- You can search for schools by location, keyword, and undergraduate GPA/LSAT combination using the [Law School Admission Council's Official Guide to ABA-Approved JD Programs](#).

*Note: Some law schools also accept GRE scores.

Other Important Factors

- Law schools are typically looking for diverse, interesting candidates that represent a variety of backgrounds.
- Law schools carefully consider the background, perspective, and interests of each applicant as expressed through their personal statement, resume, recommendation letters, and other application materials.

Law School Admissions Timeline



- If you intend to enroll in law school directly upon the completion of your undergraduate studies, the optimal time to take the LSAT is either:
 - the spring or summer of junior year; or
 - fall of senior year.
- This will allow sufficient time to apply to law school in the fall semester of your senior year.

Law School Admissions Timeline

- Some law students enter law school directly from their undergraduate studies. Others begin their legal education later in life.
- Students should begin to research law schools **at least 18 months** before they intend to enter law school.
- Students should take the LSAT **at least one year** before they intend to enter law school.

Examples of Career Opportunities and Practice Settings

- Private Practice
- Government
- Judicial Clerks and Court Administration
- Public Interest
- In-House
- Legislative Affairs and Politics
- Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement
- Higher Education Administration/Academia
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Law Firm Administration
- Legal Publishing and Journalism
- Regulatory Compliance
- Labor Relations and Human Resources

Examples of Fields of Law and Practice Areas

- **Administrative Law**
- **Admiralty (Maritime) Law**
- **Animal Law**
- **Bankruptcy Law**
- **Business and Corporate Law**
- **Civil Rights**
- **Communications and Media Law**
- **Consumer Protection Law**
- **Criminal Law**
- **Cybersecurity and Privacy Law**
- **Education Law**
- **Elder Law**
- **Employment and Labor Law**
- **Energy Law**
- **Environmental and Natural Resources Law**
- **Family and Juvenile Law**
- **Health Law**
- **Housing Law/Community Economic Development**
- **Immigration**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **International Law**
- **International Human Rights Law**
- **Military Law**
- **National Security Law**
- **Personal Injury Law**
- **Municipal Law**
- **Real Estate Law**
- **Space Law**
- **Sports and Entertainment**
- **Tax Law**
- **Trusts and Estates**
- **Zoning and Land Use**



Pre-Law Academic Advising Services

- Help **students of all majors** and alumni decide whether law school is a good choice for them
- Advise current students and alumni about:
 - the law school admission process
 - Law School Admission Test (LSAT) examination and preparation
 - factors to consider in applying for and choosing a law school
 - financing their legal education
 - scholarship opportunities
 - law school rankings
 - internship and employment possibilities
 - networking opportunities
- Review personal statements and other law school application materials

When should you meet with the pre-law academic advisor?

You may meet with the pre-law academic advisor **at any time** during your academic career, including as early as your first or second year, to explore whether attending law school is a good fit.

Pre-Law Opportunities at UMBC

- [Pre-Law Society](#) – a student organization geared toward assisting students in preparing for the law school application process and providing information on the legal profession. **Follow the Pre-Law Society on [Instagram](#).**
- [Mock Trial Team](#) – a student organization that educated members and the student body about our legal system, jurisprudence, and the work of attorneys. **Follow the Mock Trial Team on [Instagram](#).**
- **UMBC's Mock Trial Team ranked #1 in the country for the 2021-22 season!**



Other Pre-Law Opportunities at UMBC

- [Ethics Bowl](#) –holds weekly meetings and training sessions and also competes in regional and national tournaments.
- [Model UN](#) – an intellectual sport that simulates the real United Nations.
- [Model African Union](#) – an intellectual sport that provides an academic simulation of the African Union; aims to educate participants about current African events, diplomacy, and the African Union agenda.
- [Maryland Student Legislature](#) – a statewide organization and student model of the Maryland General Assembly.

Internships & Co-Curricular Activities

- Engage beyond the classroom (but always prioritize academics).
- Students interested in law school and legal careers should take advantage of internships, [community service/service learning](#), [education abroad](#), [civic engagement](#), and leadership opportunities.
- Quality over Quantity

Internship Opportunities

- UMBC's Political Science Department's [Legal Internship Program](#) offers internship opportunities with courts, law enforcement agencies, private law firms, and other legal institutions.
- UMBC's [Career Center](#) assists students with finding internships, including discernment of interests, training on use of internship search databases, and resume and interview preparation.

UMBC Alumni

- UMBC graduates are well-prepared to succeed in law school and the legal profession.
- Our alumni are happy to connect and share their experience with you!



Representative law schools of UMBC alumni include, among others:

- American University
- University of Baltimore
- Boston College
- University of California,
Berkeley
- Catholic University of America
- Fordham University
- George Washington
University
- Georgetown University
- Howard University
- University of Maryland
- University of Michigan
- Northwestern University
- The Ohio State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Rutgers University
- Tulane University
- Vermont Law School

References & Additional Resources

American Bar Association (ABA) Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar

- Pre-Law Resource
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/pre_law/
- Statistics
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/statistics/

Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)

<https://www.lsac.org/>

- Create a [J.D. Applicant](#) account

Upcoming Events

In-Person

Maryland Carey Law Mock Law School Application Review

- Friday, 10/25 from 12-1 (PUP 354)

University of Baltimore School of Law Info Session

- Friday, 11/8 from 12-1 (PUP 354)

Virtual

Unlocking Opportunities: The Role of Expungement in Criminal Justice Reform

(Hosted by Maryland Legal Aid)

- Friday, 10/4 from 12 - 1 PM

Law Schools in the DMV

(Hosted by Georgetown University)

- Tuesday, 10/8 from 5-7 pm

Q&A



Visit the Pre-Law Advising Website

<https://umbc.edu/pre-law>

Follow Pre-Law Advising on myUMBC

<https://my3.my.umbc.edu/groups/prelawadvising>

Schedule a one-on-one pre-law advising appointment: mtimko@umbc.edu