



Pre-Law

Laws are rules enforced by governing authorities to enable people to protect their rights and know their responsibilities. Thus, the rule of law is the foundation of modern society. Much of modern daily life as we know it—from education, to marriage, careers, and retirement—would be impossible without the rule of law. Constitutional democracy means “we the people” ultimately make the laws. The academic study of law teaches not only what the laws are, but how to understand the relations between citizens and their laws. This involves the historical roots from which the Constitution and many laws sprouted—their evolution, their interpretation, and their impact on individuals and society. Such study explores lofty ethical ideals and their pragmatic applications.

THE PROGRAM

To become a lawyer, one must first graduate from college and then go to law school. Law schools agree there is no single undergraduate major that best prepares students for law school. So Gonzaga Pre-Law students major in whatever academic areas interest them. Students preparing for law school should take courses that emphasize critical analysis of difficult reading material, logical thinking, and writing clear, effective prose. These skills are the tools needed to score well on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) and meet the academic challenges of law school.

Courses in a wide range of majors help students develop such skills. The Pre-Law advisor suggests students choose courses they are interested in and that challenge them. No particular courses are required, but the following may be recommended based on students' career goals and legal interests.

Business

- BUSN 283-Business Law
- ECON 310-Antitrust Policy and Regulation
- MGMT 415-Employment Law

Classical Civilizations

- LATN 101-102-Elementary Latin I & II (the traditional language of the law)

Criminal Justice

- CRIM 101-Introduction to Criminal Justice
- CRIM 390-American Court System
- CRIM 465-Comparative Criminal Justice

Philosophy

- PHIL 408-Just War Theory
- PHIL 451-Political Philosophy
- PHIL 453-International Ethics
- PHIL 470-Philosophy of Law

Political Science

- POLS 303-Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties & Rights
- POLS 304-Criminal Justice Amendments & Courts
- POLS 318-Administrative Law
- POLS 323-Constitutional Law: Institutional Powers
- POLS 342-Law as Vocation
- POLS 371-International Law

Sociology

- SOCI 351-Criminology
- SOCI 385-Law and Society

SERVICE & EXTRACURRICULARS

Beyond standard academic ability, law schools also seek students whose personal experiences and extra-curricular activities indicate dedication, ambition, and high ethical standards. Therefore, Gonzaga's Pre-Law program offers a variety of special services that are described below.

Internships

Available through the Political Science Department's Public Affairs Internship Program, these unpaid, 15 hours/week openings provide contact and experience with legal operations in local law firms, the Washington State Attorney General's Spokane Office, and various state legislators.

Introduction to Gonzaga Law School Faculty

Regardless of a student's desire to attend Gonzaga's Law School, it is helpful to speak with law school professors about the realities of the legal profession. The Pre-Law program can introduce students to the Gonzaga Law School's faculty, providing access to their wealth of experience as educators and practicing lawyers. Students also have frequent opportunities to sit in on law school classes.

Workshops, Panels, and Presentations

Each year the Pre-Law advisor coordinates a variety of events such as personal statement (a requirement for law school admissions) writing workshops, presentations covering the law school admissions process, and panel discussions on what it is like to be an attorney.

Debate & Mock Trial Teams

In addition to the above services and courses, Gonzaga's nationally recognized Debate Program is designed and promoted as pre-law training in analytical and critical thinking, argumentation, and legal research. Participating on the award-winning Mock Trial Team offers students experience in trial advocacy, character study, and oratorical skill. Local attorneys often assist students in preparing for regional and national competitions.

LAW SCHOOLS ATTENDED

Gonzaga graduates have attended the following law schools in recent years:

American University

University of Arizona

University of Arkansas

Baylor University

Boston College

Brooklyn Law School

University of California, Berkeley

California Western School of Law

Chapman University

University of Chicago

University of Colorado

Creighton University

University of Dayton

University of Denver

DePaul University

University of Florida

Florida State University

Georgetown University

George Mason University

George Washington University

Golden Gate University

Gonzaga University

Harvard University

University of Houston

University of Idaho

Lewis & Clark College

Loyola Marymount University

Loyola University New Orleans

Loyola University Chicago

John Marshall Law School

Marquette University

McGeorge School of Law

University of Memphis

University of Michigan

Michigan State University

University of Minnesota

University of Montana

University of North Carolina

New York University

University of North Dakota

University of Oklahoma

Oklahoma City University

University of Oregon

University of Pennsylvania

Pepperdine University

University of Richmond

Roger Williams University

Rutgers University

St. Mary's University (Texas)

University of San Francisco

Santa Clara University

Seattle University

Seton Hall University

University of Southern California

Suffolk University

Syracuse University

University of Texas

University of Utah

Vanderbilt University

Wake Forest University

University of Washington

Western New England University

Whittier College

The College of William & Mary

University of Wisconsin

Yale University

As this list shows, the quality of Gonzaga's curriculum and students has the respect of law schools across the country. Of course, admission to law school depends on each student's individual ability and effort.

THE PEOPLE

Dr. Joe Gardner, a faculty member in the Political Science department, serves as Gonzaga's Pre-Law advisor. Dr. Gardner earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and specializes in constitutional law and the courts, American foreign policy, and American politics. He helps students assess their interest in the legal profession and provides advice on curriculum and activities to prepare them for the challenges awaiting them in the legal profession. He may be contacted at gardnerj@gonzaga.edu.

