Strongly Recommended Courses for a Balanced Program - The ABC's

Although much of a student's curriculum is elective, MSU College of Law strongly recommends at least one course in each of the areas described below in order to ensure that a student completes a balanced program of legal study. Rarely will a client enter a lawyer's office and recite a claim or statutory basis for recovery. Instead a lawyer is presented with a series of facts and allegations and the lawyer is left to figure out whether a claim or recovery is possible. To discern broad areas of claims a student must be familiar with a broad array of legal topics. A balanced program of legal study gives students a competitive edge in the job market and is their best preparation for the interrelated and often overlapping areas of practice. In becoming a member of a learned profession that specializes in advising and counseling the panoply of social, political, and economic institutions—executive bodies, corporations, city councils, legislatures, political parties, and the like—every lawyer should aspire to a broad education that will support service to the community at large and to the general project of protecting the rule of law.

Administrative and Statutory Law


Frequently before seeking remedies in court clients through their lawyers must exhaust administrative remedies available. All students must have a basic understanding of administrative remedies and the practice of law in statutory areas.

Advanced Procedural Courses


Business or Economic Interests

Including Antitrust Law, Basic Bankruptcy, Business, Securities and Tax Planning, Payment Systems, Sales & Leases, Copyright Law, Corporate Finance, Corporate Counsel Seminar, Health Law Organization and Finance, Land Use Planning, Law of Financial Institution, Managed Care Seminar, Mergers and Acquisitions, Mortgage Banking Law, Negotiation and Drafting for Close Corporations, Patent Law, Secured Transactions, Securities Regulation, Trademark and Unfair Competition Law. A balanced program will introduce a student to business problems and the underlying logic attached to the law's treatment of business arrangements. While the Law College requires each student to take Business Enterprises as a foundation for practice, a prudent program for any law student will include other business-related courses, some of which will also foster the intensive study of an intricate statute.
Experiential Learning: Methods, Clinical or Practical Experience and Cognate Courses

Including Advanced Criminal Procedure, Advanced Legal Research, Appellate Practice, Applied Evidence, Basic Wills Drafting, Client Counseling and Interviewing, Complex Civil Litigation, Contract Drafting, Civil Trial Advocacy, Criminal Trial Advocacy, Estate Planning and Drafting, Law Practice Management, Legislative Drafting, Matrimonial Practice, Michigan Civil Procedure, Michigan Practice, Negotiation and Drafting for the Close Corporation, Patent Litigation, Practice and Procedure Before the IRS, Real Estate Transactions, Rental Housing Clinic I or II, Tax Clinic I or II, Trial Practice Institute, Workers’ Compensation. In the area of conflict resolution, including ADR in the workplace, ADR survey, Alternate Dispute Resolution, Arbitration, Arbitration (Labor), Mediation, and Negotiation.

Clinical or practical experience allows students to explore the roles and responsibilities of lawyers, which can involve litigation, techniques to avoid litigation, transactional work in a business setting, and provision of counseling to clients with potential legal concerns. Clinical or practical courses, including simulation courses, provide students with opportunities to enhance professional training by integrating the realities of legal practice with the theoretical classroom material. One feature of practice today is learning the art of avoiding litigation, while advancing the interests of the lawyer’s client. The vast majority of claims are settled through alternative conflict resolution means whether imposed by a contract, the court or the parties themselves. Lawyers should be adequately versed in methods of conflict resolution that are consistent with the client’s goals.

International or Global Studies


Given the current climate of globalization, it is imperative that students understand the U.S. legal system in a broader context. These courses offer insight into political, economic and social implications and constraints in policy and law making.

Taxation and Accounting

Including at least one course in Basic Income Taxation A, Basic Income Taxation B, Business Income Taxation, Estate and Gift Tax, Partnership Taxation, State and Local Taxation, and Accounting.

Students sometimes assume that tax and accounting are not needed by anyone but business lawyers. In fact, both courses offer basic literacy in critical areas that all lawyers may handle in their practices.

Taxation questions arise in all aspects of client counseling including business transactions, property transactions, civil recoveries, and all areas of family law. Without adequate background and preparation in taxation issues lawyers may inadvertently counsel clients into financially deleterious consequences.
The Accounting for Lawyers course provides an introduction to the basic accounting topics that are relevant to lawyers in business and corporate practice. This course is also relevant in many aspects of other legal practice areas such as family law, labor law and estate planning. The course is designed to familiarize lawyers with accounting terminology and practice in order to enable lawyers to identify and understand accounting issues as well as reach sound financial conclusions in areas where their practice comes in contact with accounting.

**Perspective Courses**


**A Note on Professional Focus Areas**

The Law College offers a number of professional focus areas that permit students to focus on an area of special interest to the student – a field in which the student anticipates developing a career interest. These areas in some cases permit study of specialized subjects, such as environmental law or family law. In evaluating whether to choose a professional focus, the student should bear in mind that it is difficult to predict one’s ultimate career path.

While it is certainly possible to build a balanced program and pursue a professional focus as well, students should bear in mind that career plans often change. The benefits of a balanced program of study will be lifelong, whether a lawyer finds his or her niche in law school and sticks with it, or changes emphases several times during the process of maturation and career development. A strong set of law school subjects is helpful in launching a career and in sustaining it over years of transition and growth. Although it is possible to attain a balanced curriculum while pursuing a professional focus careful planning is essential.

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1 Courses in bold are especially recommended for careful consideration by the student.