Pre-Law Information Sheet

**Major/Minor:** There is no specific major in pre-law; however, a large percentage of students planning to attend law school select Political Science as a major. Students are encouraged to select a major/minor that will be advantageous to them if they decide not to pursue law school. Typical majors/minors of pre-law students include but are not limited to political science, English, history, business, and criminal justice. Regardless of your major/minor, there are some helpful courses which a student may enroll in that will be beneficial for law school. If you major in political science and emphasize pre-law, you are required to take PSC 203 Introduction to the Law and either PSC 443 or PSC 444, Constitutional Law I and II, respectively.

**Pre-Law Courses:** PSC 203 Introduction to Law—should be taken during a student’s freshman or sophomore year. The course is offered in fall and spring and is offered on-line and in traditional classroom as well. PSC 443 OR PSC 444 Constitutional Law—should be taken during a student’s junior or senior year. PSC 443 is offered each fall and PSC 444 is offered each spring. Both are traditional classroom only, not on-line.

**The following PSC electives are suggested:** PSC 493 The Judicial Process is offered every other May term. The course is scheduled for May 2012. This course is a travel course which allows students the opportunity to view actual court proceedings such as criminal and civil jury trials, traffic court, small claims, and other judicial proceedings. Prerequisite is PSC 100. Instructor permission is required. Contact Dr. Owens for additional information.

PSC 442 Introduction to Legal Reasoning and Writing was offered for the first-time this spring and will likely remain on a spring only schedule. Prerequisite is PSC 203 or permission of the instructor. This course is traditional classroom only.

**Suggested Electives outside of the political science department:** Please consult your catalogue for any required prerequisites for enrolling in these courses. EH 344 Advanced Composition and EH 345 Argumentation and Debate, Finance 300 Business Law, Finance 341 Principles of Real Estate. Moreover, JSU alumni who have obtained law degrees suggest Accounting 200 and 210 as being helpful upon entering the practice of law, but not necessarily helpful in preparing for law school.

**Grades and Courses:** Good grades, good grades, good grades!!! Grades are of tremendous importance in admission to law school as are your LSAT scores. You will not be competitive for admission to accredited law schools if you do not at least have a 3.00 GPA. Moreover, the types of courses that you enroll in are also important. Taking “easy” courses to improve your GPA will not enhance your chances of being admitted to law school. In other words, take courses which are challenging and will give you a solid foundation for law school. The ability to write well will be required in law school, so any courses which allow you to enhance your writing skills are recommended.

**LSAT**—the Law School Admissions Test is offered several times a year. Dates are posted at [www.LSAC.org](http://www.LSAC.org) and in the hallway of the second floor of Brewer Hall. Do not take the LSAT.

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cold. Study guides are available at bookstores and on-line to assist you in preparing for the LSAT. Some law schools take your highest LSAT score while others will take the average score if you take the LSAT more than once. If you intend to apply to law school in the spring term, then take the LSAT for the first time in the fall of the previous year so you will have time to retake the test if you are unhappy with your score.

**ABA-LSAC Official Guide** for ABA approved law schools is located in Dr. Owens’ office, 205 E Brewer. The book may not be removed from the second floor. Make an appointment with Dr. Owens to review the book. The guide includes information related to preparing for law school, the LSAT, admission requirements, tuition and expenses, financial aid, curriculum, faculty, career placement, bar passage rates, and websites for each school. This guide is also available at [www.LSAC.org](http://www.LSAC.org) at no charge.

**Internships:** During a student’s junior or senior year and after earning 15 hours in political science, students are eligible for internships. Interns are placed on a first come, first serve basis and include placement in the DA’s office, legal offices, and judicial offices. You should speak to Dr. Owens at least one semester prior to the term in which you wish to enroll in an internship. For example, if you wish to intern during the summer or fall terms, see Dr. Owens in January of that year. If you wish to intern during the spring semester, see Dr. Owens in September of the previous year. Internships are worth 3 credit hours, count toward the PSC major/minor, are 400-level, and are pass/fail only.

**Pre-Law Scholarship:** Buttram (Judge H. Dean, Jr.) Scholarship: Established by Judge H. Dean Buttram, Jr. for the benefit of juniors and seniors majoring in political science, history, psychology, sociology English, business, or criminal justice. Overall GPA must be 3.25. Major GPA must be 3.5. Please consult Dr. Owens in Political Science or Mr. Martin Weldon in Scholarships and Financial Aid for additional information.

**Pre-Law Society:** Please see the boards on the second floor of Brewer Hall for current information related to the activities of the pre-law society.

**Miscellaneous:** Admission to law school is competitive. Take advantage of honor society memberships, internships, leadership positions, or other special activities such as a debate team in order to distinguish yourself from other applicants.

**The Alabama State Bar** also has information for those who are considering law school. Go to [http://alabar.org/public/thinking-of-law-school.cfm](http://alabar.org/public/thinking-of-law-school.cfm)

**Career Services:** You will need a résumé to apply for internships, law school, and other employment. Career Services can provide you guidance on this. Contact them at (256) 782-5482 for an appointment. Their location is 207 Merrill Hall.

After reading this information sheet, if you have additional questions related to pre-law, please contact Dr. Lori Owens at (256) 782-5106 or at ljowens@jsu.edu to arrange an appointment to speak with her. Her office is located in room 205 E Brewer Hall.

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