

What can I do with a major in...

Pre-Law

Career Advisors:

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

There is no prescribed curriculum for students interested in preparing for law school, nor is there a required major. Many students major in Economics, English, History and Political Science, but law schools accept students from all fields. The Philosophy major at the University of Mary Washington offers a Pre-Law Concentration. A strong liberal arts foundation with emphasis on use and understanding of language, critical and creative thinking processes, abstract reasoning abilities and insight into human institutions and values is fundamental. Consequently, the best advice for students interested in the legal profession would be to take courses which will help develop these basic skills and to choose a major on the basis of interest and ability. Generally, students should seek courses that require writing, particularly those identified as writing intensive. Other courses that may be of significant value to the pre-law student are listed below. Courses identified by an asterisk are highly recommended.

BUSINESS

- 131, 132 Principles of Accounting
- 283 Legal Environment of Organizations
- 334 Federal Taxation of Individuals

COMPUTER SCIENCE

- 110 Introduction

ECONOMICS

- 201 Principles of Economics
- 202 Principles of Economics

ENGLISH

- 101* Writing Workshop
- 202* Writing Seminar

ENVIRONMENTAL EARTH SCIENCE

- 101 Introduction

LINGUISTICS

- 101* Introduction to General Linguistics
- 302 Issues in Sociolinguistics and Anthropological Linguistics

PHILOSOPHY

- 111 Morals and Society
- 151* Intro to Logic
- 210 Social-Political Philosophy
- 255 Practical Ethics
- 320 Philosophy of Law I
- 325 Philosophy of Law II
- 330 Environmental Ethics
- 355 Ethical Theory

POLITICAL SCIENCE

- 201,202* American Government
- 301 Comparative Government of Western Europe
- 304 Contemporary American Politics

SOCIOLOGY

- 304* Social Stratification
- 341 American Society
- 351 Juvenile Delinquency
- 352 Criminology
- 415 Sociology of Law
- 442 Social Change

SPEECH

- 205* Public Speaking

WHERE DO UMW PRE-LAW MAJORS GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

- Albany Law School of Union University, Juris Doctor
- American University, Washington College of Law, Juris Doctor
- College of William and Mary Law School, Juris Doctor
- George Mason University School of Law, Juris Doctor
- New England School of Law, Juris Doctor
- Regent University School of Law, Juris Doctor
- Saint John's University- School of Law, Juris Doctor
- Suffolk University Law School, Juris Doctor
- University of Kansas School of Law, Juris Doctor
- University of Richmond School of Law, Juris Doctor
- University of Texas, Juris Doctor
- University of Virginia, Juris Doctor
- Villanova University School of Law, Juris Doctor

HELPFUL PRE-LAW INFORMATION

PRE-LAW SOCIETY

The University of Mary Washington has a Pre-Law Society, which sponsors speakers, field trips, LSAT study sessions and other programs to assist students interested in a legal education.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA/THE GPA

Law School Admissions committees look at several factors when reviewing your application: the quality of your academic preparation, recommendation letters, your score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and your personal statement. You must give them enough information to explain why they should admit you. Some schools also take into account work experiences, internships, and extra curricular activities such as debate and journalism. Students should remember that a "PASS" grade is more difficult to evaluate than a letter grade and should therefore probably resist taking courses PASS/FAIL.

THE LSAT

The LSAT, an admission requirement at all accredited law schools, is a half-day examination given four times a year. The test is designed to measure certain mental capabilities important in the study of law, with measurements of one's capacity to read, to understand and to reason logically. There is also a separate writing component where the candidate is asked to recognize faults within given sentences and to choose the most effective way of phrasing a particular idea.

Students should plan to take the LSAT in June (registration by mid-May of their junior year) or by October (registration by early September of their senior year). Other test dates are available in December and February. Registration and general information materials are available from UMW's Career Services office.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some schools do not require recommendations; some specify from whom they should come. In general, the most helpful recommendations come from someone who knows you and can evaluate your intellectual ability, diligence and related characteristics. Ask professors while they still remember the quality of your work, and can compare you positively with other students. Begin a credential file now with the Office of Career Services (Lee Hall, room 308).

CHOOSING A LAW SCHOOL

Interested students are encouraged to consult the **Pre-Law Handbook**, an official guide to ABA-approved Law schools. This informative handbook is available in the library and the bookstore.

THE LAW PACKAGE

Law School Admission Council (LSAC, website: www.lsac.org) has designed a set of materials to assist students considering Law School. This can be helpful at any point in the undergraduate program. One of the components of the package is a home try-out LSAT test that is scored but not recorded. With this, students are able to identify strong and weak points in their skills and can seek assistance accordingly. Additionally, informational materials about admissions and specific law schools are part of the package.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

1. American Bar Association: www.abanet.org
2. Legal Association: www.hg.org/other-assoc.html