**Meghan’s Tip**

Be patient with yourself. Learning the law is like learning a foreign language. (And with all that Latin, sometimes it *is* learning a foreign language.) Much like learning a language, it takes time to hone your legal vocabulary and your reading and writing skills. You can’t expect yourself to become fluent overnight. So work hard, but give yourself grace when you get frustrated.

Remember, the Academic Success Fellows are here to help you work through any troublesome legal lingo. Stop by during office hours (attached) or make an appointment to ask us questions while you work to build a strong legal-education foundation.

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**Rachel’s Tip**

Now is the time to start figuring out your weekly study schedule. You don’t have to have every minute planned out, and your schedule doesn’t have to be perfect by week 2—you just need to find a schedule that works best for you!

If you’re looking for somewhere to start in building a schedule, think about scheduling time to:

- attend and read for your classes
- go to office hours
- meet with the Fellows
- review notes after class

Just don't forget to include some time for activities that give you a break from being a law student. This could be time to hit the gym, practice meditation, cook dinner with your friends, or even take your pup to the park. Law school is a marathon, not a sprint, and you will function much better as a student and human if you don’t neglect the things that make you happy.

If you want to see some ideas of what a law student study schedule might look like, or if you want to talk through your own, come chat with the Fellows! Stop by during our office hours (attached) or schedule an appointment if you want to talk scheduling or anything else 1L!
**Swapanthi’s Tip: Post-Class Review**

Make sure to schedule time **after class** to review material discussed in class. It can be tempting to spend all of your hours preparing for class, given the pressures of cold calling and fear of forgetting a miniscule fact when all eyes are on you. But post-class review is just as important as pre-class prep, and it’s certainly far more important than acing your cold call. As you may have already noticed, what initially seems to be the main takeaway from a court opinion is often slightly (or completely) different from your professor’s takeaway. Take time to digest what was discussed in class and internalize your professor’s perspective. It will help you build a strong foundation and understand tough concepts as the semester picks up.

If you have questions about how to approach post-class review or budget time for it, come see the Fellows! You can drop in during office hours (attached) or schedule a tutoring session [here](#). You’re welcome to visit us individually or in small groups when you have questions.

**Brad’s Tip of the Week**

**Focus on short-term (i.e., daily/weekly) goals, rather than the long-term outcome.** As the semester progresses you will find your classmates discussing exams, the terror-inducing curve, and even summer/post-grad jobs. Stressing over these topics can be overwhelming and does NOTHING for your preparation.

While long-term goals are great to keep in mind, ignore the chatter and focus on what you need to do that day or that week. Short-term goals should include completing the daily tasks of class prep and post-class review. They might also include completing an hour of review of that Civ Pro topic from four classes ago that you didn’t quite understand or finishing up one more section of your Torts outline by the end of the week. Consistent achievement of short-term goals adds up over time and will help you reach your desired long-term outcome.

Remember that if you need help with setting short-term goals, time management, or that tricky topic in Civ Pro, the Fellows are here for you! Stop by during office hours or [schedule an appointment](#).
Alyssa’s Tip of the Week

Do not procrastinate. We all do it for different reasons, but law school is a perfect time to work on ending that habit. When you need to read, READ. When you need to outline, OUTLINE. Stay on top of the things that are on your to-do list, and do not let lots of work build up by procrastinating. It always pays off in the end when all of your outlines are finished come exam season, and you are able to focus more on problems and creating different test tools to use. Law school is such an overwhelming period, so by staying on top of your to-do list and doing things when you know you need to do them, you can help lower your stress (even if just a small bit!).

If you need help building a study schedule or want to discuss outlining or any study aids, come see the Fellows! We have all experienced 1L year and would love to help in any way possible.

Elise’s Tip of the Week

Get to know your professors. Try to attend each one's office hours at least once during the semester. Prepare a couple of specific questions in advance, but also take the opportunity to enjoy meeting someone who is an expert in their field. They often can help you know what to focus on during each phase of the semester with course-specific advice.

(Also, if you have met them outside of class, it can make answering a cold call less intimidating.)
**Meghan’s Tip of the Week**

There’s a big difference between knowing the law and being able to apply the law. As you read for class, ask yourself how you would apply the concepts in a given case. What steps did the court take to get from A (the given facts) to Z (the case outcome)? This will help you turn your abstract understandings of your class material into practical steps you can take to answer questions on an exam.

Think of your outline as your very own exam instruction manual—a roadmap detailing all the practical steps needed to answer an exam question. How do the cases and concepts you’ve discussed in class fit into that roadmap? Are they part of the main highway? Are they detours you take when the main highway is closed? By outlining the steps you need to take to get from A to Z, you create a process you can use to apply the law.

Should you find yourself on the scenic route and want to get back to the interstate, the Fellows are here to point you in the right direction. Stop by during office hours (see below) or schedule an appointment for help creating your exam roadmap.

Finally, here’s Rachel Sims with the Academic Success Tip of the Week…

Use midterms and practice exams to your advantage. We are getting into midterm season. Law school midterms are the PERFECT study tool to test your knowledge (and your outline) halfway through the semester. To help you make the most of your midterms, here are three tips:

1. **Update your outlines before your midterms.** Not only will this help you prepare for the midterm, but also updating and using your outline on the midterm helps you identify gaps in your understanding.

2. **Treat your midterm like the final exam.** This doesn’t mean you need to take 100s of practice tests before your midterm, but you should use the midterm to test your knowledge from the first half of the semester, see where you may be confused, fix that confusion, and go into the rest of the semester confident that you are building on a strong foundation.

3. **Review your midterms.** Feedback is rare in law school, and having the opportunity to see how your professor thinks about problems and issues is invaluable. Schedule time to go over the midterm and any answer materials. And don’t be shy to ask questions!
Swapanthi’s Tip of the Week

RED FLAG: “Obvious” Assumptions
When tackling hypotheticals or practice exams, resist the urge to make assumptions. Most conclusions should not be assumed – they should be reasoned. The first step to fighting assumptions is to recognize that you made an assumption. The second step is to question that assumption: is there any possibility that there may be another side to this argument? (On a law school exam, the answer is likely yes.) A fact pattern may appear to lend itself to an “obvious” conclusion. But if it seems obvious, that should be a red flag.

For example, let’s say that you are doing a Criminal Law hypothetical on whether a defendant’s conduct was “reckless.” After reading the fact pattern, it seems obvious to you that the defendant was indeed reckless. You have an urge to answer the question by saying, “The defendant was reckless, so mens rea is satisfied.”

Reevaluate your assumption.

STOP
Ask yourself, did the defendant really consciously disregard a risk? Make a chart with two columns: one column for “yes, he did consciously disregard a risk” and the other for “no, he did not consciously disregard a risk.” Find particular facts from your fact pattern that support both positions. Once you input supporting arguments under each column, move on to analyze whether the risk was indeed substantial and unjustifiable. Again, make two columns, and find specific facts that support both sides: yes, the risk was substantial and unjustifiable on one side, and no, the risk was not substantial and unjustifiable on the other side.

After accumulating supporting arguments under both columns, move on to the next element. And the next. And the next. Continue this approach for every single element before you come to a conclusion. Following this methodology will result in a meticulous and exhaustive analysis. It will take a long time at first, but if you practice by tackling your hypotheticals in this manner, you will gain the necessary skills and speed in time for the exam.

And of course, if you would like to review hypotheticals or discuss strategies for exam preparation, come see the Fellows!
Alyssa’s Tip

In November, it’s time to start applying your knowledge (and your outlines!). This is the perfect time to

- Set a study schedule for what you want to accomplish for every class before the exam. It is so helpful to know which days you are preparing for which subject. Whether this is spending a week on a subject, or doing subjects for 2-3 days before switching to another one, it is so beneficial to find a schedule that works for YOU.
- Start creating attack outlines and other exam materials.
- Take some practice tests or work through hypos.

If you need help just getting started on creating a study schedule or want to discuss what exam materials might work best, come see the Fellows! We have all experienced the stress of a 1L November, and we would love to help create a plan that works for you!

Brad’s Tip of the Week

As we are now in November, it’s a good time to start focusing on practice exams. Because law school exams are likely very different than exams you have taken before law school, you want to take full advantage of available practice exams and problems. The best way to get an understanding of how to take a law school exam is to practice taking law school exams.

One way to help maximize the benefit you can get from working on practice exams and hypotheticals is to discuss your answer with another student or a study group (if permitted by your professor’s syllabus). Nobody writes a perfect answer that uses every fact in a problem in the best way possible. By comparing answers, it’s more likely that you will be able to see how each subtle fact in the problem can be used in your analysis. Your study partner will probably make some good points in their answer that you overlooked, and vice versa. In addition, this gives you the opportunity to try to clearly explain your reasoning to someone else, which can help solidify your understanding.
Elise’s Tip of the Week: Time Management

As you take exams, remember to read the question first. If you read the question before reading the fact pattern, you can better answer the call of the question as you absorb the facts. This approach will help you to read with a purpose and to use your time well.

Speaking of time management on exams, have a plan for how you will apportion time between questions on the exam, but remember that you can still adjust during the exam. Having your game plan helps you finish on time, but it also gives you the ability to be flexible to the questions and fact patterns you face on the actual day. If one question takes ten minutes longer than you planned, you can make up the ten minutes somewhere else—knowing you need to make them up is the key.

Remember that the Fellows are holding longer office hours (attached) during the exam period. Come by with one question or lots—we’re here to help!