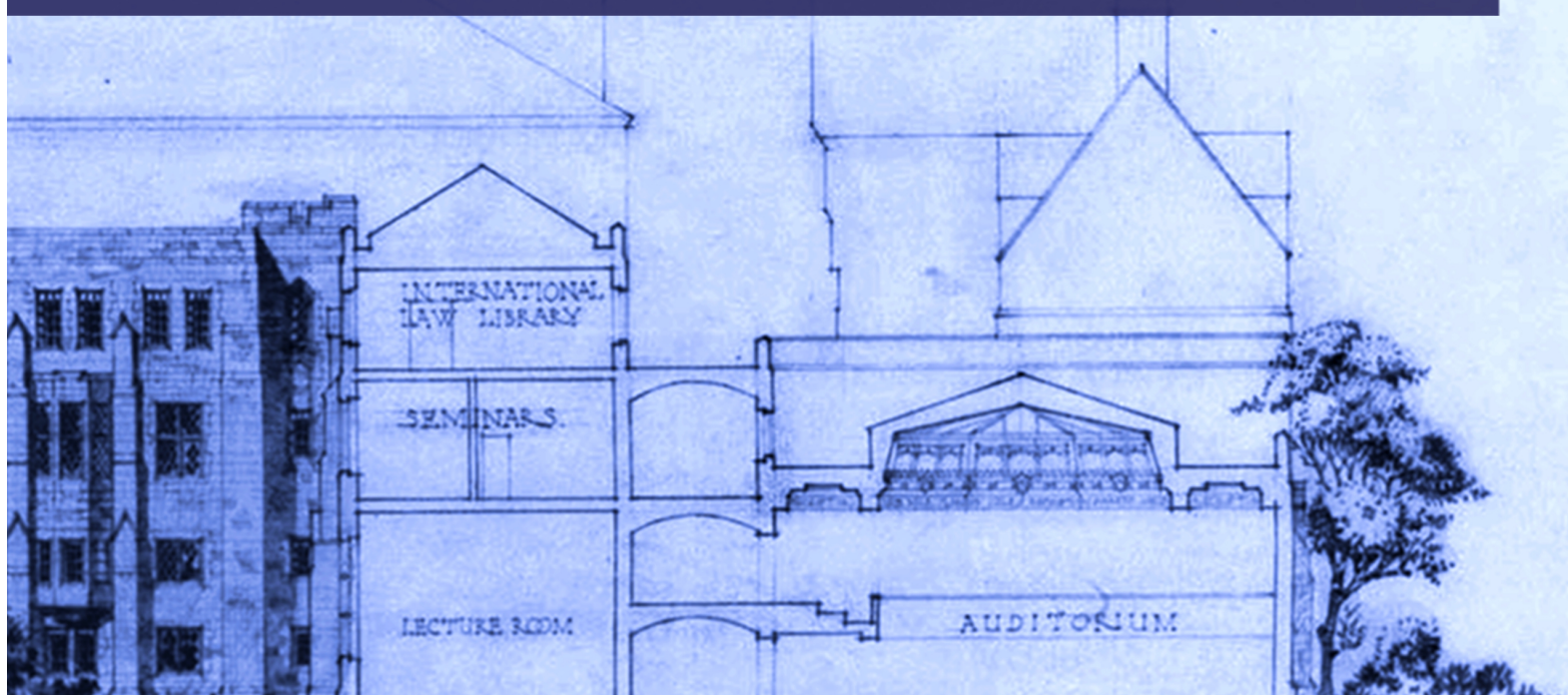


YLW GUIDE *to*

COURSE SELECTION



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December 2012/Updated November 2014

The YLW Checklist for Requirements & Course Selection

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Type	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	83 total credits	You must take 12-16 credits each semester. While you may request more than 16 credits, you may not go below 12 credits except under special circumstances. Overloading and underloading require approval from the Registrar and the Office of Student Affairs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	51 graded credits	Of the 83 total credits required, 51 must be graded. This averages out to 10.2 graded credits per semester for the 5 semesters after 1L Fall.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Criminal Law and Administration	“Criminal Law” and “Criminal Law and Administration” will both satisfy this requirement. This is because the difference in title just reflects professorial preferences. This is NOT the same thing as Criminal Procedure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional responsibility course	Both the professional responsibility and professional skills courses must be attached to a course of at least 2 credits. The same course can satisfy both requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional skills course	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Substantial Paper	The Substantial must be attached to at least 2 credits, while the SAW must be graded and attached to at least 3 credits. At least one of these papers MUST be completed before you can register for 3L fall.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervised Analytic Writing (SAW) Paper	

There are also specific rules that cap the number of credits available through the following **optional** activities.

MAXIMUM CREDIT RULES*		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Type	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	12 credits outside YLS	No more than 6 of the 12 non-YLS credits can come from foreign language courses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 to 10 supervised research/writing credits	You can receive at most 10 combined credits for Reading Groups and supervised research/writing. (Ex: If you take all 4 Reading Group credits, you can only take up to 6 credits of supervised research/writing).
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 Reading Group credits	
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 student-awarded credits	These include all YLS journals and some extracurriculars such as service projects.

* Once you exceed the maximums, additional credits **cannot** be used to satisfy degree requirements (e.g., 83 credits). However, additional credits can be used to satisfy the 12 credits per semester minimum requirement.

See page 11 for a requirements and course selection planning worksheet.

1. THE BASICS

A. Types of Credits

1. Classes: There are two basic types of classes at Yale Law School:

- Black letter: ~3-4 credits. Relatively substantive, foundational courses on major areas of legal study, usually taught as larger lectures with Socratic questioning, and generally ending with an exam. During 1L fall, you're automatically signed up for 16 credits of black letter classes.
- Seminars: ~1-3 credits, paper (or option). Often, but not always, fewer students.

Note: Not everything fits the black letter/seminar distinction. Some black letter courses may have a paper option, and some seminars are exam-only.

2. Clinics: May be graded or not, and credit amounts vary. The time commitment for a clinic can vary widely. Please see the section on clinics later in this guide.

3. Reading Groups: Mostly student-led and ungraded. You cannot take the same Reading Group more than once for credit.

4. Student-Awarded Credits: Ungraded. They include journals and extracurriculars (e.g., TRO Project, Moot Court, and Barrister's Union).

5. Supervised research/writing: These require faculty sponsorship, so talk to your professors before you sign up. Instead of writing their Substantial/SAW through a course, some students choose to take supervised research/writing credits. These credits may be graded or ungraded. (Note: SAW work must be graded).

B. Graded v. Ungraded

Many courses allow you to choose whether you want to take them for graded or ungraded credit. These two grading types are mutually exclusive.

- Graded credits follow the honors (H), pass (P), low pass (LP), and fail (F) scale.
- Ungraded credits will simply result in a credit (CR) or fail (F).

Grading policies are largely at the discretion of the faculty, including on a student-by-student basis. A student must elect a grading type for each course within the first two weeks of the term, which cannot be changed.

Note: During first semester, 1Ls cannot receive any credit for Reading Groups, journals, or student-led service projects.

C. Exams v. Papers

Courses can be: **Exam** (grade is mostly or completely based on the final exam)
Paper (grade is mostly or completely based on the final paper)
Paper option (your choice of final exam or final paper)
Other (there are classes – few – that are both exam and paper)

Exams can be: **Scheduled** (exam can only be taken at designated date/time, and sometimes can be taken from off-campus – check with your prof)
Self-scheduled (exam can be taken at any time during exam period, and usually can be taken from off-campus - check with your prof)

In general, after 1L Fall, you don't want to take four exam courses. Instead, try to achieve balance between exams, papers, clinics, and other non-course options. The YLS:Courses site at <http://ylsinfo.law.yale.edu/wsw/default.asp> lists which classes have papers and which have exams—as well as exam type and time.

Note: Papers you write for class may also be eligible for SAW/Substantial credit. Check with the professor early in the semester if you want to pursue this option.

D. Researching Your Options

The most important thing you can do when selecting courses is to research your options thoroughly. While there is no one “right” path, researching available courses will help you make an informed decision that can impact your ability to take courses in later years. Below is a list of great resources to help you choose from Yale's many offerings.

- **YLS:Courses:** <http://ylsinfo.law.yale.edu/wsw/default.asp>
 - This is the official place to get a comprehensive look at what classes are available next semester. This site also contains important information such as credits available, paper options, exam dates, and type of exam.
- **Online Course Evaluations:** <http://oce.law.yale.edu/CourseEvaluations.aspx>
 - This site enables you to view student evaluations for courses since 2003. It is the best source for details such as workload and teaching style.
 - This is also a great way to figure out how often certain courses are offered by particular professors. Knowing how often a course is offered can help you prioritize which courses to select for the coming semester.
- **WebSIS:** <http://www.yale.edu/sis/>
 - During Add/Drop period, you can add or drop courses online, although some classes require you to turn in additional paperwork.
 - In WebSIS, you can sort by class type and requirements fulfilled, e.g., the Professional Responsibility requirement.
- **Clinics Website:** <http://www.law.yale.edu/academics/clinicalopportunities.htm>
 - Yale's website does not always contain a complete listing of clinics, but you can find additional information here. Feel free to ask 2Ls and 3Ls to introduce you to someone in a given clinic who can tell you more about it.
- **YLS Bulletin:** <http://www.yale.edu/prINTER/bulletin/pdffiles/law.pdf>
 - Often overlooked, this booklet is the authoritative source for information on credits and academic requirements, course selection, and a variety of other necessary details. Note that the course/clinic listings/info may not be the most up-to-date.
- **Other students**
 - Your classmates are a great resource for all types of questions. Feel free to reach out to any 2Ls or 3Ls. Your Coker Fellows or DAs are particularly good resources for you, and they can generally introduce you to other upperclassmen who might be able to answer your specific questions.

Advice from Yale Law Women: How to build your course schedule

- My strategy is to look early at the full year's course offerings. I note what might be a one-time offering and what will be offered multiple times.
- I make a spreadsheet of the 10-15 courses that sound interesting and select my "must take" class. This course becomes the anchor for my schedule and allows me to eliminate all of the classes that conflict with it. I then read the course evaluations and comments for other professors, which helps me sort the classes based on quality as well as time and workload.
- I also talk to other students. Even if others don't exactly share my interests, they will typically know someone who can give me the information I need.
- Some people talk to the professor directly about courses they are considering.

2. COURSES

A. Balancing Your Schedule

You'll likely want to have a balance among different kinds of credits. The most common recommendation from 2Ls and 3Ls is to aim for two black letters, one seminar with a paper option or a skills-focused class, and a clinic. Some students recommend adding in at least one ungraded extracurricular that fits your interest, such as a Reading Group.

Second semester 1Ls have to take a minimum of 9 graded units, but beyond that there is no formal prescription about how you distribute your graded v. ungraded credits. Here too, you should aim for balance, and aim to have at least 10-11 graded units per semester.

Advice from Yale Law Women: Timing

It's important to consider not only *which* courses to take, but *when* to take them.

- **Weigh the advantages of black letters v. seminars.** Taking black letter law helps develop background knowledge for many seminar classes. Black letter courses are also known quantities taught regularly by the same professors, so you will have a better idea of what to expect going in as opposed to seminars, which may be taught only once or twice. BUT the intimate setting of seminars can offer a way to get to know professors - they can also offer a good opportunity to work with professors and write early and often (see below).
- **Write early.** Many students recommended getting their Substantial (traditionally the shorter of the two writing requirements) out of the way during spring semester of 1L year. Doing so allows you to get to know at least one professor well early on, which can be helpful for mentorship, clerkship and other recommendations, and publishing opportunities.
- **You may want to get Crim out of the way early.** Some students suggested taking Crim early so you don't have it hanging over your head. However, other students noted that if you have no interest in criminal law, you may want to wait to take Crim until later so you can focus on your areas of interest first.

B. Building Blocks

Many professors and students recommend taking certain “building block” classes. For students with very specific interests, these general suggestions may not be as relevant. However, some people consider such classes essential for a well-rounded legal education.

Professor Langbein is famous for declaring that Yale students are walking liabilities if they haven’t taken all of the following black letter courses by the end of 2L year:

Course	Why?
Property	Every other law school requires Property and it’s odd that we don’t. Property is also very helpful for some courses (IP, Trusts and Estates).
Business Organizations (“Biz Orgs”)	This is helpful for FIP and law firm work, but also useful for working at a nonprofit.
Administrative Law (“Admin”)	Admin is a building block for many courses, and Admin law has an impact on almost all U.S. law.
Federal Income Taxation (“Tax”)	Tax is helpful if you have any interest in public policy, as a lot of policies are impacted by or enacted through tax law. It is also helpful for those interested in nonprofits. Some students recommended taking Biz Orgs before Tax.

You may want to take at least one of these foundational courses during 1L spring. Some of them are prerequisites for later courses. Because these building block courses are so key, they tend to be offered often and by several different professors—make sure you do your research about when you take them, and with whom.

C. Choosing Courses

The single most consistent piece of advice we have heard from students is to **take the professor, not the course**. While you should certainly take your areas of interest into account, don’t let that be your primary driver in selecting courses. Regardless of the substantive focus of the course, the information you learn will probably be useful at some point. Instead, many students have suggested paying more attention to professors in selecting courses, although it varies widely in terms of what qualities students deem important. Some choose professors who are engaging lecturers or professionally well-connected, while others look for those known for mentoring or writing with students. Visiting professors can be popular because they often offer a fresh perspective and a special emphasis on classroom teaching. Students also recommended choosing professors early in order to maximize the amount of time you have at YLS to develop relationships.

Courses and Career Planning

For students with more general career interests, our sources recommend certain courses to help explore and prepare for those plans. Note that these are NOT requirements. Students, professors, and administrators consistently emphasize that course selection is not determinative in most job interviews.

Career Path	Recommended Courses
Clerking <i>Note that judges, more than other employers, will expect to see these courses on your transcript. It's important to demonstrate that you love the law, rather than idolize it. Do this by taking a good number of black letter courses.</i>	Fed Courts (Not recommended for 1Ls) Evidence Criminal Procedure Admin
Law Firms/FIP <i>Advice varies on how much law firms actually care about your transcript. Some students recommend taking a few black letter classes that students from other schools would be taking during 1L Spring. Others emphasize that employers are unlikely to care about specific coursework. If you're asked about courses in a FIP interview (perhaps by a Yale alum), your best bet is to talk about a professor you find genuinely fascinating, regardless of subject. A final note is that firms may be able to see the courses you've selected for 2L Fall, so you can add some black-letter courses onto your schedule during bidding.</i>	Biz Orgs Corporate Accounting Tax
Government	Admin Legislation Intro to the Regulatory State
Academia	Seminars and other classes with paper-writing options
Public Interest	Admin Clinics

Specific interests within these career paths can also inform the courses you should take. If you have (or claim to have) a specific interest (e.g., immigration or IP), you should demonstrate that interest by taking related courses. This will have the added benefit of letting you explore a subject before committing to a summer (or long-term) job.

Other Considerations

Graded or Ungraded

Prioritizing graded courses is important for competitive government honors programs, highly desired clerkships, and some public interest fellowships. Firms tend not to care as much about grades, but doing well can be helpful in more competitive markets (DC, NY or CA). Firms outside of these markets will focus more on your ties to that area. Legal services providers will care more about your experience in internships and clinics.

Note: Beginning with the Class of 2015, the New York Bar created a new Professional Responsibility requirement, and fewer courses fulfill this than Yale's Professional Responsibility requirement. On the YLS:Courses website, you can search for which courses fulfill the New York Bar requirement.

3. CLINICS

A. Choosing Clinics

Clinics offer the opportunity to gain firsthand legal experience under the close supervision of YLS faculty members and/or experienced lawyers. Your clients may be individuals, nonprofit organizations, small businesses, or community groups, and your work may include drafting legal documents (memos, briefs, bylaws, filings), interviewing and advising clients, conducting legal research and advocacy, and/or representing clients in court. Clinics usually include both a class-time and an extracurricular component.

When selecting a clinic, think about the type of work you will be doing and the skills you will be learning, not just the subject matter. Some students and faculty even recommend pairing a clinic with a related course, when possible (e.g., the Community and Economic Development Clinic with Biz Orgs). If you're not sure about the type of work from the clinic description, ask around. Reach out, either to the clinic's faculty directors, or directly to students. (Remember all those 2L and 3L contacts you met at the Clinic Fair?)

Note that while the majority of YLS students will choose to do a clinic at some point during their law school career, doing a clinic is *not* required. Clinics can be a fantastic way to gain practical legal experience. However, some students and professors have noted that they also come with a significant opportunity cost. Clinics can take up a lot of time that could otherwise be used to take classes or get involved in other activities. You only have 3 years to take classes, while you have the rest of your legal career to practice.

Students take clinics to supplement their academic work, to pursue particular interests, to develop proficiency in legal practice, to signal something to potential employers, or something else entirely. Some students will do one clinic, some two at the same time, some multiple clinics at different points during their three years. And some students never take a clinic. The choice is yours, depending on your personal goals and interests. When in doubt, explore and inquire.

Advice from Yale Law Women: Clinics

- If you choose to get involved with clinics, consider starting early. The more you get involved early on, the further you can go in the clinic, in terms of serving as a student director, writing with the professor, or taking on more advanced/complicated cases.
- Clinics are a great – perhaps the best – way to get to know a professor. Some professors who teach clinics are clinical faculty, while others are academic faculty who run clinics. In the latter case, you get an unusual amount of access.

B. Logistics

The Student Guide to Clinics and Experiential Learning at Yale Law School is an excellent resource for basic information on clinic logistics, including the substantive areas of focus, legal skills emphasized, length of commitment required, and grading policies. Every

clinic at YLS is profiled in the Guide. You should also read the clinic descriptions on YLS:Courses to find out the most up-to-date information.

It is worth noting that clinics at Yale operate under different umbrella firms. Clinics in the same firm share the same funding sources, office space, and client confidentiality umbrella. The main firm is the Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization (LSO), which includes about a dozen clinics that usually focus on direct client representation. This distinction can be important because there are some restrictions on doing an LSO and non-LSO clinic at the same time, due to conflicts of interest between clients. Check the Course Bulletin for more information.

C. Getting into Clinic(s)

In addition to bidding for clinics through YLS:Courses, many clinics also include some “Permission of Instructor” component, like a resume or statement of interest/experience. Don’t be put off by this. You should assume that 1Ls are welcome in clinics unless expressly stated in the clinic description (e.g., if it’s a full-year clinic but you’re just starting 1L spring). Do take the personal statement seriously.

Advice from Yale Law Women: Getting into Clinics

- Before you bid or apply, talk to current students about what they do day-to-day. You can also speak with the professor to ensure that you like his or her style. This is particularly important when the clinic is closely tied to the prof’s interests. You can then apply the insight you gain to your application, if a personal statement is required.
- The best way to figure out how to navigate and approach the bidding and/or application process is to talk to current students. Not sure who to ask? Reach out to your Cokers, your YLW Sib, another student org mentor, or students who are in the clinics you are interested in. People are happy to help and offer frank assessments.

4. GETTING INTO COURSES

A. Bidding Course Types

Registering for courses at YLS is a process known as bidding. Each student creates and ranks a list of the courses s/he would like to be enrolled in via the YLS:Courses website. YLS then uses a computer program to analyze this info and generates class lists for every course. If a student is not automatically admitted to a course bid on during pre-registration, s/he will be put on that course’s waitlist.

Bidding strategically requires an understanding of the four different types of enrollment:

1. General: General (or open) courses are typically large, black-letter courses. Usually there is no cap on the number of students who can enroll, so anyone who wants to enroll will be admitted. However, some of the more popular general courses do become oversubscribed, so plan accordingly.

2. Limited Enrollment: Limited enrollment classes have a cap on the number of students who will be admitted. You are permitted to bid on five courses, ranking one first, one second, and three third choices. Students who rank a course first will be admitted ahead of anyone who ranked that course second (and similar preference will be given to students who rank a course second over those who rank it third). When this process doesn't resolve the course enrollment (for example, when more students rank a course first than can enroll) a computer program gives preference to 3Ls and then uses a random lottery system to fill any remaining spots.

3. Permission of Instructor: This category is similar in many ways to limited enrollment, except that instead of relying on a lottery/ranking system, you gain entrance through permission of the professor. Professors generally request additional information from applicants, e.g., a statement of interest, a resume, or a paper proposal. While you are not required to rank these courses, you do signal your level of interest by listing your course selections in this category in a general order of preference.

4. Clinics: Students rank up to four clinics in their order of preference. Some clinics also require a statement of interest/resume. For those clinics, clinic participants are selected by the clinical professor or clinical fellows based on submitted materials, whereas spots in clinics that don't require a statement of interest/resume are apportioned using a similar rank-based lottery system as is used for Limited Enrollment classes.

After the period to submit bids has ended, the Registrar generates a course schedule for each student. Courses are added to your schedule in the following order:

- 1) Limited enrollment courses to which you are accepted.
- 2) Permission of instructor courses to which you are accepted.
- 3) Clinics to which you are accepted.
- 4) General enrollment courses (until you reach a max of 20 units).

B. Bidding Strategies

When crafting a bidding strategy for yourself, remember the following key points:

1. Courses will be added to your schedule in the order outlined above, up to 20 credits. This means that if you bid on and are admitted to a large number of limited enrollment or permission of instructor courses, there will not be any room in your schedule for general enrollment courses. Most of the time this will not be a problem, as many general enrollment courses do not fill up and can be added during the add/drop period. However, there are a few popular general enrollment courses that often are oversubscribed and thus need to be bid on. If one of the courses you really want to take is general enrollment, make sure it will get on to your schedule by limiting the other courses you bid on.

2. Try to figure out how popular a course is so you can rank it accordingly. There are some courses that you will not get in to unless you rank them first. There are other courses that

generally don't fill up, so you can rank them second or third. Talk to 2Ls and 3Ls to determine which courses fall into these various categories and bid accordingly.

3. If you really want a class, put it first. It may be difficult to predict how popular a course is going to be, so if there is a course you really want to take, rank it first unless it's completely open enrollment.

4. If you're on the fence about whether you want to take a particular course, err on the side of bidding on it. If a class you are interested in taking is oversubscribed, it will be almost impossible to get in if you are not on the waitlist. Therefore, you should bid on every class you have a genuine interest in taking, because you may not be able to add it later.

5. Only bid on courses you have a genuine interest in. While it may be tempting to bid on a lot of courses to defer making decisions about your schedule or to maintain flexibility, adding and dropping courses can be annoying and shopping extensively during the add/drop period can be stressful. Bid on the few classes you really want to take, and then add one or two backup classes. This will make the start of the semester much calmer, as well as help you make sure you get into the classes you really want.

C. Shopping Period & Waitlists

Shopping period at YLS differs in important ways from the shopping periods at most undergraduate institutions in terms of norms and professors' expectations. Professors treat classes during shopping period like normal classes. Therefore, many cold-call or require students to do the readings during the first week of class.

Dos and Don'ts of Shopping Period	
Do:	Don't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend class on the first day. • Read and prepare for all classes you have an interest in getting into, particularly if your name is on the roster. • Add general classes to your SIS page if there is space available. • Speak to profs re: availability for Permission of Instructor courses. Contact the registrar and copy the prof if you are admitted. • If you're waitlisted, speak with or email the prof to reiterate your interest. Attend class until you hear a definitive response. The registrar will ask you if you want to stay on the waitlist, and if you are truly interested say yes – it is possible to get in a few weeks into the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow yourself to fall behind in classes in which you will likely enroll. • If you're waitlisted, try not to miss more than one class to shop other classes of interest.

Don't forget: your fellow students are your best resource. Happy course selection!

The YLW Planning Worksheet for Requirements & Course Selection

	Semester 1 Fall 1L	Semester 2 Spring 1L	Semester 3 Fall 2L	Semester 4 Spring 2L	Semester 5 Fall 3L	Semester 6 Spring 3L
Graded Credits						
Ungraded Credits	16					
Criminal Law						
Professional Skills						
Professional Responsibility						
Substantial						
SAW						