

The Lawyer's Path

Course Syllabus

COURSE SYLLABUS

2 Credits (30 hours)

What You Will Learn

Every society relies on laws to function, and every law requires people who understand and apply it.

Course Length

This course can be completed during a relaxed 7 week period if you do one chapter a week, or it can be done in two weeks if you have a few hours each day to commit to reading and doing the assignments.

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Number of Credits: 2 Credits (30 hours)

Objectives

LEARN CONCEPT 1: Law is a system that shapes everyday life. The legal system affects housing, business, education, family life, and individual rights. Lawyers operate within this system to solve problems, protect people, and navigate complex rules that impact society daily.

LEARN CONCEPT 2: Lawyers are professional problem-solvers—not just courtroom performers. Most legal work happens through reading, writing, researching, and advising. Strong lawyers understand details, anticipate risks, and use logic to guide decisions long before a case ever reaches court.

LEARN CONCEPT 3: Logic, reading, and argumentation are core legal skills. The foundation of law is the ability to analyze information, identify flaws in reasoning, and construct persuasive arguments. These skills are valuable not only in law, but in any career.

LEARN CONCEPT 4: You can begin building legal skills now. Students do not need to wait for law school to start developing relevant skills. Reading deeply, writing clearly, debating respectfully, and thinking critically are all accessible starting points for a future in law.

Course Overview

Every society relies on laws to function, and every law requires people who understand and apply it. This course introduces students to the legal profession, exploring what lawyers actually do, the different types of legal careers, and the path required to enter the field.

From Student to Legal Thinker

Most people see law from the outside—as rules or court cases. Lawyers see the structure behind those rules: how laws are written, interpreted, challenged, and applied. This course helps students shift from simply following rules to understanding how legal systems work.

Students will examine real-world legal scenarios, learn how arguments are constructed, and explore how lawyers influence outcomes that affect individuals, businesses, and entire communities. By the end of the course, students will understand both the opportunities and responsibilities of a career in law.

The 5 Traits of Successful Legal Professionals

- **Analytical Thinking:** Ability to break down complex information and identify key issues
- **Communication:** Clear writing and persuasive speaking
- **Attention to Detail:** Precision in reading and interpreting legal language
- **Ethics:** Commitment to fairness, honesty, and professional responsibility
- **Resilience:** Ability to handle pressure, complexity, and long-term challenges

Course Outline

Introduction: What Is Law and Why It Matters?

Chapter 1: What Lawyers Actually Do

Chapter 2: Types of Lawyers and Career Paths

Chapter 3: Winning Arguments and Legal Reasoning

Quiz 1 (Chapters 1–3)

Chapter 4: The Road to Law School

Chapter 5: Good Lawyers vs. Bad Lawyers

Chapter 6: Professional Skills: Thinking, Presentation, and Judgment

Quiz 2 (Chapters 4–6)

Chapter 7: Famous Lawyers and Legal Impact

Chapter 8: Your Future in Law

Final Reflection / Project

Description of Activities

- Read and analyze course chapters and real-world legal scenarios
- Watch educational videos on legal reasoning and career paths
- Participate in discussions about ethical dilemmas and legal decisions
- Practice identifying flaws in arguments and building logical responses
- Engage in classroom activities such as mock client interviews and debates
- Complete quizzes to assess understanding of key legal concepts
- Reflect on personal interests and potential career pathways in law
- Complete a final written or presentation-based project

Rubric for Final Assignment

FINAL PROJECT

Your Culminating Assessment · Day 3

Choose ONE of the two options below. Both options require you to demonstrate what you've learned and to think about how you'd present this career to a high school audience.

Option A — Persuasive Essay (Individual Assessment)

Write a 500–800 word persuasive essay responding to ONE of the following prompts:

- "Every high school student should take at least one semester of law or civic reasoning. Agree or disagree and make the case."
- "Which type of lawyer does the most important work for society? Defend your answer with specific reasoning."
- "The ability to read carefully and argue logically is the most important skill any person can develop. Make the case."

Your essay should include a clear thesis in the introduction, at least two supporting arguments with specific examples from this course, acknowledgment and refutation of a counterargument, and a conclusion that brings your thinking full circle. Write for a general audience, someone who hasn't taken this course.

Option B — PowerPoint Presentation (Classroom or Career Fair)

Create a 10–15 slide presentation called 'Careers in Law: What Every High Schooler Should Know.' Design it to be presented to a class, a career fair, or a parents' night. Your slides should include:

- Slide 1: Title and a compelling opening hook (a question, a statistic, or a brief story)
- Slides 2–3: What lawyers actually do in their daily work, not just courtroom drama
- Slides 4–6: At least 4 of the 6 types of lawyers with brief descriptions
- Slides 7–8: The educational path from high school to bar exam
- Slides 9–10: One famous lawyer and what made them effective
- Slides 11–12: Key skills students should start building now
- Slides 13–15: Salary ranges, career path, and your call to action for students

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Points	Earned
Demonstrates clear understanding of legal career types	25	
Uses specific examples drawn from course content	25	
Clear logical structure and persuasive argumentation	20	
Content is appropriate and accessible for high schoolers	20	

Criteria	Points	Earned
Accuracy of all legal information presented	10	
TOTAL	100	/ 100

Further Reading & Resources

These resources extend the learning in this course and are suitable for both teachers and motivated high school students.

Books Worth Reading

- Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson — A public defender's account of fighting for those wrongly condemned. Remarkable story of law as a calling. (Also a film.)
- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee — Still the most powerful fictional portrait of a defense lawyer in American literature.
- The Innocent Man by John Grisham — A true crime account that reads like a thriller. Excellent for discussing wrongful conviction and the stakes of legal work.
- My Own Words by Ruth Bader Ginsburg — A collection of her writings that traces her legal philosophy from law school to the Supreme Court.
- Getting to Yes by Fisher & Ury — The classic text on negotiation. Every aspiring lawyer should read it.

Online Resources

- Khan Academy LSAT Prep (khanacademy.org/prep/lSAT) — Free, comprehensive, and highly regarded. Start here.
- LegalEagle on YouTube (youtube.com/@LegalEagle) — Best general-audience legal education channel online.
- Leeja Miller on YouTube (youtube.com/@leejamiller) — Excellent for legal reasoning and current events.
- Law School Toolbox (youtube.com/@LawSchoolToolbox) — Practical advice on law school admissions and success.
- Street Law (streetlaw.org) — Free classroom resources for teaching law to high schoolers.
- Innocence Project (innocenceproject.org) — Real case studies in wrongful conviction. Powerful reading for students.
- American Bar Association Career Center (americanbar.org) — Official information on every legal career path.
- Coursera: Introduction to American Law — Yale Law School, free to audit.

For Your Students Specifically

- If They Want to Explore Now: Street Law's resources + LegalEagle on YouTube + Khan Academy's LSAT prep
- If They're Serious About Law School: Reach out to a local law school — many offer high school shadowing and outreach programs.
- If They Want to Read a Real Case: Search '[your state] Supreme Court opinions' — they're public record and readable online.

Instructor: Daniel Hage (Email: Daniel.ed4equity@gmail.com)

How much time does it take to finish this course: This course can be completed during a relaxed 7 week period if you do one chapter a week, or it can be done in two weeks if you have a few hours each day to commit to reading and doing the assignments.