What does it mean to be Pre-Law?

In a word, FREEDOM!

Law is a field that crosses over many industries and professional settings. No matter what you do professionally, chances are there’s a law or regulation for that applies to it!

This means that no specific academic subject matter is deemed to be the best way to prepare for law school or a legal career. In fact, having a broad base of knowledge and skills is the best way to prepare yourself.

Pre-law preparation is tailored to the individual interests of the student. You have the ability to select any major of interest to you and to pursue any experiential opportunity that you like.
Why is Liberal Arts the best education for pre-law preparation?

Law schools do not have an specific academic course requirements for admission to law school. Rather, they will be focused on assessing whether the applicant has taken the sorts of courses that are likely to teach the key skills required for success in law school.

The good news is that many academic disciplines across the liberal arts and sciences offer these skills. As a student at Emory, an institution deeply steeped in the values of the liberal arts, you will be uniquely positioned to design your academic pathway to suit your own interests while also building the necessary skill sets for success in law school.

Your decision to go to law school does not restrict your academic choices. You will be able to explore the full liberal arts curriculum as you see fit while still being competitive for law school admissions.
What are the pre-requisites (courses I will need to take)?

• As mentioned before, no academic subject is deemed necessary for success in law school or as a lawyer. Therefore, law schools do not have any academic pre-requisites for admission.

• However, the American Bar Association (ABA) recommends that students gain some core skills, values, and knowledge in preparation for a career in the law:
  - Problem-solving
  - Critical reading
  - Writing and Editing
  - Oral communication
  - Research
  - Organization and Management
  - Public Service and Promotion of Justice
  - Relationship-building and Collaboration
  - Background Knowledge
  - Exposure to the Law
What classes should I start with in my first semester? In my first year?

• Without needing to worry about specific academic pre-reqs, first-year pre-law students are encouraged to use their first semester as a time to explore.

• A few strategies for selecting first-semester courses:
  • Take courses that will help you complete some General Education Requirements (GERs)
  • Take introductory courses in disciplines that you are considering for a major track
  • Take courses that seem interesting to you based on their subject matter

• Your goal for the first semester is to get adjusted to college life and academic rigor. Focus on doing well academically, no matter what courses you take.
Do AP/IB test credits count?

- AP/IB test credits do not count toward admission to law school.
- Upon applying to law school, your grades will be calculated based only on what you have achieved as a college student. High school work will not be counted.
- The only caveat to this is dual-enrollment grades, where you took classes at a college or university while in high school and received college credit for them. These grades will need to be reported to law schools when you apply and will be factored into your overall GPA that is used for admission.
  - NOTE that dual-enrollment grades MAY not be on your Emory transcript and MAY not count towards your Emory degree.
What if I have multiple interests (pre-business and pre-health and pre-law and dual degree)?

• GREAT! Because law schools do not have any academic pre-requisites, you can pursue another track that does have specific coursework requirements and still apply to law school. Again…FREEDOM!

• Many pre-law students have interests in more than one area, and choose to use their undergraduate education to study an area of interest (e.g. environment) and then pursue law school after college as an extension of that interest (e.g. becoming an environmental lawyer).
• Your application to law school will consist of five major components:
  • GPA/Transcripts
  • Standardized test scores (LSAT, or GRE for the schools that accept it)
  • Personal Statement
  • Resume
  • Letters of Recommendation

• In addition, some schools may have additional application steps, such as optional essays or application interviews.
When will I apply to law school?

You may choose to apply to law school in the Fall semester of your senior year, if you plan to begin law school right after college, or you may choose to take time between college and law school to work or pursue other opportunities prior to applying. The choice is yours!

There is no penalty for taking time between college and law school. In fact, most first-year law students nationally have taken at least one year off between college and law school. Time out of school can be used to enhance the application by gaining work experience, allowing more time to prepare for standardized tests, or simply taking time to consider if law school is right for you.
What Pre-law advising is available?

Individual advising is available through the Pre-Law Advising Office, located in The Career Center. Appointments can be scheduled by calling The Career Center. Individual appointments are scheduled for 1 hour.

In addition, the Pre-Law Advisor also holds weekly drop-in hours that you can utilize for quick questions. Drop-in slots are 15 minutes.

The Pre-Law Advisor also communicates important information to pre-law students through the Pre-Law Email Listserv. In order to be placed on the listserv, you must register with the Pre-Law Advising Office on our website, www.prelawadvising.emory.edu.
When can I connect with Pre-Law advising?

Once you have made a decision to attend Emory, you may reach out to the Pre-Law Advisor with any questions you may have.

Registering as a pre-law student should be done as soon as possible once you have arrived for Orientation Weekend. This will ensure that you begin receiving communications from the Pre-Law Advisor from the beginning of your time at Emory.
What other expectations are there?

Although law schools do not have any specific academic requirements, it is expected that students will excel academically in whatever pathway they choose in order to be competitive for law school.

Additionally, law schools do expect to see professional experience during college (i.e. internships, work study, etc.) as well as community engagement (i.e. volunteerism/community service, club involvement and leadership, etc.).

While it is up to you what kinds of experiences you want to pursue, it is important that you show robust performance both inside the classroom (as indicated by your transcript) and outside of the classroom (as indicated by your resume).
What other expectations are there?

In addition to your transcript and resume, you will submit other application components for law school, including an LSAT score, letters of recommendation (from faculty), and admissions essays. These materials are reviewed in a holistic way to determine your admission status.

Law school applications will also contain “character and fitness” questions that address academic or conduct-related sanctions at your university, as well as any legal issues relating to arrests, charges, and/or convictions. Be mindful of your conduct and associations during college to avoid having to answer uncomfortable questions on law school applications.
What do I need to do BEFORE Registration?

• Do some self-reflection and consider your motives for being pre-law:
  • Where did your interest in law begin?
  • How have you fostered it thus far?
  • What would you like to learn to further your interest?
  • Are there particular areas of law in which you are most interested?

• Taking the time to answer these questions in advance may be helpful to you in selecting your first classes, as you can search the Course Atlas for courses that may connect to your interests in the law and/or help you develop skills that will be necessary for success in law school and in a legal career.
How do I reach the Pre-Law Advisor?

- Email: rodia.vance@emory.edu
- Drop-ins: Will be virtual for Fall 2020. Details will be shared via the Pre-Law Listserv closer to the start of the semester (get registered!)
- 1:1 Appointments: Not available until November 1 for first-year students.