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Julia Sonenshein • Published February 01, 2023

Students making their way through their 1L year have a lot to balance: demanding coursework, new schedules, and an endless amount of material to study in a limited time. Law school is a big adjustment, and if you're feeling stressed as a 1L, you're not alone. We spoke to 2Ls and 3Ls to get their best advice for first-year students, and they offered words of encouragement from people who truly understand.



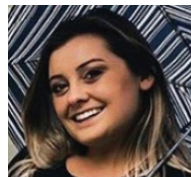
Outline, outline, outline.

"Make attack outlines," says **Ben Kaner '24**. "It's one thing to understand the subject, but it's an entirely different experience to be able to apply those concepts on an exam or in a real-world setting. Making attack outlines has helped me so much while I was studying for exams and in my real-world experiences."



Feed yourself to feed your mind.

"Don't forget to eat," **Jacob Ehrlich '24**, says. "And, when you feel like you're tired of studying and you want to be done, just put in one more hour. That one extra hour will make all the difference, and you'll feel so much more confident in yourself."



Repetition is key.

"Rewatch the classes so that you can see if you missed any notes," says **Meghan Yarussi '24**. "This practice can also help you understand information that you might not have gotten the first time. If you're confused about anything, you get a chance to have the professor explain all of the information to you again!"



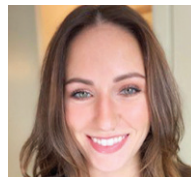
Plan ahead.

"Put your finals in your calendar as soon as possible—and plan for them!" says **Andrei Moraru '24**. "You'll also want to make sure you take the test with your specific professor in mind: Know what your professor wants on their exam and cater to those wants."



Track your study time, and aim for 40 hours per exam.

"Plan on studying for 40 hours for each closed-book final you have," says **Holly Summers '24**. "These 40 hours include time to outline and to create hypotheticals, etc. You can also get a jump on the professional world: Track your study hours as if they are billable hours."



It's okay for learning to be messy.

"Don't judge yourself during the process of learning a subject, because that process is always messy," says **Caitlin Parise '23**. "You'll convince yourself you're never going to get it. Instead, wait until after the final exam to assess how well you did—you likely just needed to give yourself time to absorb all of the information and get it to click."



Remember how unique you are.

"No one piece of advice will work for everyone, so start your reading and study habits early to see what methods work for you," says **Eva Zhou '24**. "It's okay to have unique study needs—just make sure you start experimenting early, so you'll know what works for you come exam time."

At NYLS, we have several programs and offices dedicated to your success—with some programs aimed specifically at incoming students or 1Ls.

“NYLS prides itself on having some of the most comprehensive academic success programming available at any law school in the country,” says **Shane Dizon**, Interim Associate Dean for Academic and Bar Success. “Our excellent team of academic success educators, adjunct faculty, and student teaching fellows is singularly devoted to fostering a learning community in which students can build towards their academic and professional goals.”

NYLS's strategies for academic and bar success combine collaboration with professors across the curriculum, individual coaching and feedback for students, first-year and upper-level skills courses, skills development workshops, newsletters, and other guidance and support materials.

“Every year, the Office of Academic Planning and Career Development looks forward to beginning its work with the entering cohort of first year students,” says **Erin Bond '08**, Associate Dean of Academic Planning and Career Development. “We are well aware that in a few short years, the new students will enter the profession and become part of our growing network of legal professionals. The NYLS network is powerful, and our team of advisors is proud to be part of each student's journey into the profession.”

Signature Programming and Resources for Students

Summer Advantage Institute

The Summer Advantage Institute (SAI) is a five-week program designed to introduce incoming students to basic legal reasoning skills and professional standards of practice. Workshops are taught by a combination of NYLS faculty and staff who will guide our newest community members in their transition to law school.

First-Year Academic Success Program

In the Day Division, the First-Year Academic Success Program (ASP) is a voluntary program that matches participants with a teaching fellow—a high-achieving, upper-level student who's been selected especially for that role. Each teaching fellow leads their small cohort of first-year students through hour-long weekly skills sessions throughout the fall semester.

In the Evening Division, first-year students can work with teaching fellows who serve as teaching assistants for the Foundations for the Study of Law course in the fall. The teaching fellows also facilitate academic success workshops for first-year Evening Division students in the spring.

Teaching Fellows not only teach the skills that first-year students need to succeed but also serve as mentors, helping first-year students adjust to and manage the demands of law school.

Foundations for the Study of Law

This first-year, first semester course begins during new student orientation and teaches the foundational skills necessary for learning, studying, and understanding legal concepts. Key discussion of time management, reading, note taking, outlining, analytical writing, essay and multiple-choice strategies, and exam taking ensures that all entering students have the tools to succeed in law school.

Success in 2nd Semester: ASP Workshop Series

As NYLS students mark the halfway point in their first year, our Academic Success team provides a helpful Success in 2nd Semester workshop series. The series features panels centered on success in spring doctrinal and legal writing courses as well as focused programming to level up students' study skills in the face of their new academic challenges.

Foundations for the Pursuit of Professionalism

In the spring term of the first year, all students complete Foundations for Professionalism as a follow-up to Foundations for the Study of Law. This course provides a framework for exploring the wide range of pathways into the legal profession and guidance on self-reflection as part of developing one's professional identity. Working with the professor and advisors, students are instructed on effective résumé drafting, persuasive cover letter writing, interview preparation, and networking.

Office of Academic Planning and Career Development

New York Law School's Office of Academic Planning and Career Development provides law students with tailored guidance beginning in the first semester of school and continuing well beyond graduation.

The Office helps students with all aspects of their academic planning and career development. From talking through the ideal upper-level course progression to polishing résumés, preparing for interviews, negotiating salaries, and developing a professional network, the advising team is a consistent resource for students from first year orientation through graduation. The team also connects alumni to resources and works with a wide range of legal employers.