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I. Introduction

Welcome to Duke Law School! The Goodson Law Library has a wide collection of materials that can help you get the most out of your law school experience. These resources cover a broad range of topics, from how to plan your course load to managing stress and studying for exams. Due to high demand, some print materials are located in the **Reserve** collection behind the library's service desk, and they may be checked out for four hours at a time. Many popular resources are available electronically in addition to print. If you need help locating additional materials or would like further recommendations, be sure to check with a librarian.

II. The Law School Experience

These materials provide a general overview of what to expect in law school. Chapters include how the Socratic method works, case briefing, legal research, legal writing, study strategies, and exam preparation. Later sections of this guide include materials devoted exclusively to some of these topics. Locate additional titles like these in the catalog (<https://law.duke.edu/lib/>) with a **subject heading** search for "Law students-United States-Handbooks, manuals, etc."

- Effross, Walter A. *Keeping Your Own Counsel: Simple Strategies and Secrets for Success in Law School* (KF283 .E447 2023).
- Hegland, Kenney F. *Introduction to the Study and Practice of Law in a Nutshell*, 8th ed. (KF273 .H4 2020 and online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE009648313>).
- Herman, G. Nicholas. *Navigating the First Year of Law School: A Practical Guide to Studying Law* (KF283 .H47 2016).
- Jerry, Robert H. *A Daily Reader for 1Ls: Becoming a Better Law Student and Lawyer in Four Minutes a Day* (2025).

<https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE99119743601708501>

- Llewellyn, Karl N. *The Bramble Bush: The Classic Lectures on the Law and Law School* (KF273 .L54 2008 and online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE99119509521308501>). A legal classic which grew out of Llewellyn's lectures to first-year law students at Columbia in 1929 and 1930. It remains a valid introduction to the study of law and a thoughtful introduction to the life of a law student.
- McClain, Russell A. *The Guide to Belonging in Law School* (2020). Online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE009644412>.
- McClurg, Andrew J. *1L of a Ride: A Well-Traveled Law Professor's Roadmap to Success in the First Year of Law School*, 4th ed. (2021). Online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE010577790>.
- McKinney, Ruth Ann. *Reading Like a Lawyer: Time-Saving Strategies for Reading Law Like an Expert*, 3d ed. (KF283 .M398 2022).
- Noyes, Shana Connell and Noyes, Henry S. *Acing Your First Year of Law School: The Ten Steps to Success You Won't Learn in Class*, 2d ed. (KF283 .N69 2008).
- Ruskell, Alex. *A Weekly Guide to Being a Model Law Student*, 3d ed. Online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE99119743602408501>

III. Study Guides & Aids

These materials help explain the legal concepts covered in the doctrinal courses most students take in their first or second year of law school. They can be accessed through the catalog (<https://find.library.duke.edu/>) using the strategies explained below for each series.

CALI (<https://www.cali.org/>): The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) hosts more than 1000 online lessons on virtually every legal topic. Register an account with the **Duke Law School authorization code** (visit <https://law.duke.edu/actech/download/downloadlist/#CALI>).

Examples and Explanations Series: Titles in this popular series are written by law professors who give a narrative overview of the key concepts and rules for a particular subject, followed by “examples” (hypothetical questions) and “explanations” of the answers. Search the catalog for the **title “examples and explanations”** to retrieve a list of all available titles. Current editions are available in print in the Law Library stacks and as e-books through the Aspen Learning Library study aid platform at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE009409021>.

Hornbooks: The library has purchased the entire Hornbook series set, which can be accessed as e-books through the catalog <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/advanced>. These one-volume books are written

especially for law students and summarize specific areas of law in a narrative form. Find the volume you need by entering the topic in the **subject** field (for example, *torts*) and entering “hornbook” in the **series** field.

Mastering... Series: These slim volumes provide a basic overview of a specific area of law, with minimal footnotes. They are available on most law school course subjects, and their locations can be found in the Stacks with a **title** search of the catalog for “mastering [subject]”; e.g. *mastering contract law*.

Nutshell Series: These pocket-sized books contain a comprehensive outline of a specific subject, usually written by a noted authority. The complete Nutshell series is accessible through the catalog in e-book format <https://find.library.duke.edu/advanced> by entering the topic in the **subject** field and entering “nutshell” in the **series** field. Current editions are available in print in the Law Library stacks and as e-books through West Academic Study Aids <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE008887385>. Nutshells offer a big-picture look at the law but do not give the in-depth analysis hornbooks offer.

Q&A series: Books in this series provide a review of legal subjects using a multiple-choice and short-answer question format. The library owns selected titles, particularly in subject areas where multiple-choice exams are commonplace. To locate available titles, conduct a **title** search for “questions and answers and [subject]”; e.g., *questions and answers and professional responsibility*. (A similar multiple-choice approach is taken in the **Glannon Guides**, which are also available for selected subjects and can be found online through the Aspen Learning Library study aid platform at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE009409021>.)

Understanding... Series: Published on a variety of legal topics, this series can be found in the Stacks with a **title** search of the catalog for “understanding [subject]”; e.g., *understanding criminal law*. The *Understanding* series contain an overview of an area of law, with footnotes to primary sources for further reading.

IV. The Bluebook & Legal Writing

In addition to guides listed below, the library keeps the most current Legal Analysis, Research and Writing textbooks, including the custom writing textbook, on Reserve. More titles on legal writing (including advanced topics such as law review competitions and moot court drafting) can be found in the online catalog (<https://find.library.duke.edu/>) with a **subject heading** search for “Legal composition – United States” and “Legal briefs – United States.”

- *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*, 22nd ed. (Reserve KF245 .B58 2025). The latest edition of the standard legal citation manual.

- Barris, Linda J. *Understanding and Mastering the Bluebook: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*, 4th ed. (KF245 .B37 2020). Demystifies the basic *Bluebook* forms, with cites to specific rules for further information.
- Bouchoux, Deborah E. *Cite-Checker: Your Guide to Using the Bluebook*, 4th ed. (KF245 .B68 2016). A brief, practical approach to learning the “Bluepages” style of the *Bluebook*.
- Dworsky, Alan L. *User’s Guide to the Bluebook*, (KF245 .D853 2020). A distillation of the most common *The Bluebook* tasks and questions, written for those using the “Bluepages” style.

V. Exam Preparation

The library does not maintain a collection of past Duke Law School course exams. Past exams for a particular Duke Law School course may be posted to the course Canvas site at the discretion of the instructor. The library does have materials that provide general assistance with exam preparation, and many contain sample exam questions.

- Burkhart, Ann M. *Law School Success in a Nutshell: A Guide to Studying Law and Taking Law School Exams*, 3d. ed., (KF283 .B87 2017 and online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE008891371>).
- Calleros, Charles R. *Law School Exams: Preparing and Writing to Win*, (KF283 .C35 2007).
- Darrow-Kleinhaus, Suzanne. *Mastering the Law School Exam: A Practical Blueprint for Preparing and Taking Law School Exam*, 2d ed. (2023), online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE99119664048908501>.
- Dernbach, John C., *Writing Essay Exams to Succeed (Not Just to Survive)*, 3d ed. (KF283 .D47 2010).
- Fischl, Richard M. *Getting to Maybe: How to Excel on Law School Exams*, 2d ed. (Reserves KF283 .F57 2023).
- Friedman, Barry. *Open Book: The Inside Track to Law School Success*, 2d ed. (KF283 .F75 2016).
- Schimel, Alex. *Law School Exams: A Guide to Better Grades*, 2d ed. (KF283 .S335 2018).
- Strong, S.I. *How to Write Law Exams: IRAC Perfected*, 2d ed. (2020), online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE010113960>.

You can locate additional exam preparation guides in the catalog (<https://find.library.duke.edu/>) with a **subject heading** search for “Law examinations–United States.” Although the *content* of sample answers in some older titles might be outdated, the analytical process and answer structure of law school examinations have remained fairly consistent over time.

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