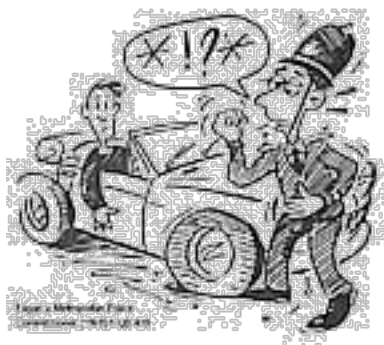


Laws Student Handbook

This 'Laws Handbook' is designed to be applicable from Sept 2009



"Being a good laws student is not just about examination results - it is also about being trustworthy and reliable." Dr Peter Jepson.

All students who are studying Law and/or Politics are encouraged/expected to also undertake AS/A2 Citizenship Studies. Indeed, the overlap between these subjects can be expected to help students obtain good examination grades.

All Laws students are also encouraged to undertake the Extended Project Qualification that is worth up to 70 UCAS points and a tremendous aid when applying to University. AS Citizenship students should also undertake the AQA (or English) Baccalaureate.

INTRODUCTION

This **Laws Student Handbook** provides information related to subjects delivered within the Department of Laws. After a brief introduction, information is displayed in three parts - with a short conclusion at the end.

Please note: In the Department of Laws we have a strict approach to academic discipline. Laws staff will not tolerate students missing lessons or failing to hand in homework on time.

Part One - [Academic Staff](#)

Part Two - [Important Information for ALL Students](#)

Part Three - [Laws Studies Board](#) (student representatives).

Part One - Academic Staff

All of the academic staff in the Department of Laws hold degrees in their main subject area. Indeed, there exists a combination of fun, experience, enthusiasm, knowledge, commitment and discipline. Our aim is to provide quality and breadth of learning in accord with the College's mission statement.



Dr Peter Jepson Dip Soc Studies (Oxford), LL.B (Hons)., LL.M., PhD (Lond).

Head of the Department of Laws - i.e. Subject Leader for Law, Citizenship, and Politics - and AQA Baccalaureate & EPQ Coordinator.

(In the event of my absence Mrs Lindley can be expected to assume responsibility in the Department of Laws. If she is absent, see Mr Bunce.)

Laws Lecturer/Tutoring staff:

Mrs Anna Lindley LL.B. (Hons).

Laws Lecturer (Law)

Ms Lisa Incedon LL.B. (Hons).

Laws Lecturer (Law).

Mr Duncan Bunce LL.B (Hons).

Laws Lecturer (Law and Citizenship).

Mr Nathan Scott B.A. (Hons).

Laws Lecturer (Politics).

Details of all Laws Courses can be found via the LawsBlog <http://www.LawsBlog.co.uk> .

Via the **LawsBlog** you will find links to syllabus and specifications details for AS Law, A2 Criminal Law, AS/A2 Citizenship, AS UK Government & Politics, A2 US Government & Politics, ILEX Paralegal, and Laws Research. Further enquiries can be addressed to Dr Jepson - pjepson@strokes.ac.uk.

Part Two - Important Information for Students

STUDY SKILLS for LAWS and LIFE ...

It is important that as a student of Laws you master a number of key study skills. Without these skills you will find it difficult to remember and apply properly the large amount of information you need to successfully answer examination and homework questions.

During the course itself your Laws Lecturer/Teacher will help you develop the appropriate study skills at the relevant time in the course. Also your Personal Tutor may well introduce you to some useful skills in Tutorial time, but it is still important that you understand from the outset what skills you need.

During the AS Laws 'Induction Week' you will be introduced to some key Study Skills. These will include: Research, Reading & Note-Taking (get into the habit of producing a précis of what you read), use of Internet/College Intranet and Developing Essay Writing Skills. The following list gives the major areas of study skills you must develop for Law, Citizenship, and/or Politics.

1. Studying in your own time

You cannot hope to do well simply by sitting in class and hoping to somehow absorb the information like some weird form of sponge - this does not work. **Law, Citizenship and Politics require active learning.** You only have 5.00 hours a week in AS/A2 Laws classes (3 hours for AS Citizenship) and you spend most of that time (we hope) participating in class discussions with some note-taking.

By electing to study a Laws subject you have committed yourself to a course that requires you - the student - **to take responsibility for your own learning.** This means that you will need to spend some of your own time - in the evenings and at weekends, as well as your undirected time at college - getting to grips with the subject. At times you will be given homework that needs to be done (homework must be handed in on time - if it is late, you 'Fail'), while most of the time you will be expected to undertake independent study. This means that you may not be told do some extra reading - but **extra reading is necessary if you wish to obtain a reasonable to good grade in the examination.**

So, how much extra time will you need to give? There is no specific guideline or rule - some weeks may be very busy indeed. However, **you can expect to do at least one hour of study outside of class - for every hour inside the class. REMEMBER, YOU ARE A FULL-TIME STUDENT.**

2. Read and précis the textbook BEFORE you attend Class

Laws subjects can be complex subjects that you are studying possibly for the first time. The textbooks/workbooks are designed to provide you with some basic information and it is vital that you read and précis the subject area of discussion BEFORE you attend the classes.

To many students this often seems odd, since at best they may read the textbook after class. However, the subjects require much discussion and analysis and this can seem

difficult if you are considering material for the first time. If you read before you attend class you will be able to follow the lesson. Indeed, if you read and précis first, you will have more time in class to listen and play a constructive part in the lesson - contributing to the debate or discussion. This helps bring life and fun to the subject and the class. **REMEMBER, READ AND PRECIS BEFORE CLASS** (staff check précis notes). When you go on to University you will be expected to read before Lectures, we are simply preparing you for this methodology.

3. Taking notes in class

Before we look at this, let us quickly examine what you need to **BRING TO EVERY CLASS**.

- (a) **A pen** - Yes, it sounds obvious but it is truly amazing how many students forget to bring a pen. The College does not supply you with one so bring one to every lesson!
- (b) **Paper** - Again it sounds stupid, doesn't it? But experience shows that students seem to think that a day in College requires neither pen nor paper!
- (c) **Your law dictionary and textbook** - Often you might not be called upon to use it, but bring it anyway.
- (d) **Something to keep your notes safe** - ideally a ring-binder (see later under 'Organising Your Notes') Handouts and the College Intranet form the basis of class work and provide a fair amount of information. However they are NEVER to be regarded as all you need! They must be supplemented by other information sources. One of the most obvious of these is the information that your Laws Lecturer/Tutor will give you in the lesson - this will usually be explanations, examples, facts and figures which are additional to the handouts. It is vital that you take this information down. You will probably not be told "write this down please" - it is not like GCSE - you will just be expected to do it. A lot of the time you will have to take it down on another piece of paper. In short you will not be spoon-fed - you will only get from a lesson what you put in it. If you sit there and let the lesson wash over you, you may think that you are learning. However, if you don't take notes - even if you haven't been told - you will leave the lesson with just a handout and this will not be enough.

4. How will you be taught?

Most lessons will be based on handouts, the Intranet, and notes taken from the PowerPoints and relevant discussions. But it is not just a question of reading the handouts/Intranet and taking a few extra notes. Our topics are designed to provide auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles, with differentiation evident and to enhance important skills. The handouts/Intranet will often contain several exercises and questions for the class to discuss (sometimes in heated fashion!) and answer. Other topics lend themselves to role-play exercises to be done in Law Firms (small groups) and some exercises require research and/or assessment outside the classroom in the Library and/or via a PC. Above all, lessons are used to encourage students to actively discuss and debate contentious issues and to develop the important legal skills of expressing one's own argument and - equally as importantly - listening to and understanding the arguments of others. It will be at these times of debate and discussions that Key Skills Assessment may be evident.

Where possible, lecture notes will be displayed on the Intranet site to assist students. **Students should print off Intranet materials BEFORE attending class (take them to class with you).**

5. What about Homework?

Please note that Dr Jepson is of the opinion that any student who fails to do **scheduled homework** and/or have a poor attendance record should be considered for withdrawal from the examination.

Read and précis is compulsory for all Laws Students. Details will be posted on the Intranet. In addition a wide variety of homework exercises - including essays and computer networked assessments - will be set at different times during the academic year by your Laws Lecturer/Tutor.

EXCUSES - are NOT acceptable? If you have been ill you may ask for an extension (but illness generally means you have more time to do your homework). If you are ill and offer the excuse that *"I did not know that there was work set"* - this is not acceptable and your work will be recorded as being handed in late and fail. If you miss a class it is **your responsibility** to find out if you missed anything, not your Laws Tutor's responsibility to find you and tell you what you have missed.

- **If you hand in an essay/assignment late - you will fail the assignment** (which will be recorded on your file) and you could be given some additional work.
- **If you fail to hand in work, or fail to sit assessments,** a 'Cause for Concern' or 'Verbal Warning' may/will be issued and your Personal Tutor may become involved to decide whether you may continue on the course.

6. Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

Your Laws Lecturer/Teacher will hold a one-to-one tutorial/review with you to discuss your essay (and your Individual Learning Plan/Progress) when they return marked essay homework.

7. Organising Your Notes

It is important that you keep a well-ordered file filled with appropriate notes. Every year students lose large chunks of their notes on trains or around college or at home or wherever. Losing your notes severely hampers your chances of success in examinations, as does having a badly organised folder, which takes a week to sort through before you can even start revising. **If you miss a class and miss some work, or lose it, is your responsibility to catch up again** (either with the help of a fellow student or via the Intranet). **It is NOT your Laws Tutor's responsibility to replace the work.** If you know you're going to miss a lesson because of an appointment, make arrangements with a 'Study-Buddy' to collect any handouts and notes that you need. It is advisable to copy those notes up by hand before putting them in your folder.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A. READING/RESOURCES

1. The LawsBlog/Internet/Intranet

The first place to visit for information about subjects we teach in Laws is the LawsBlog (<http://www.LawsBlog.co.uk>). This site is the personal website of Dr Peter Jepson, being designed to help all laws students. On this site you will find specific details of the Laws Courses, with details of work that you need to undertake, Lecture Notes, Case Notes, Essay Assignments, and messages from Lecturers/Teachers etc. **You should check the LawsBlog and your College email daily.**

2. Texts

There are three basic sources of book materials:

- (a) **Course Textbooks** - Please see the Intranet [Book Advice](#) page for recommended textbooks [this book advice can also be found at <http://www.peterjepson.com/law/book%20advice.htm>].
- (b) **The Law classroom** has a small number of additional textbooks, which are occasionally used in the classroom (you must have a teachers express permission to take a book out of the classroom).
- (c) **The Library** also has a growing number of texts at basic, standard and further reading level.

Remember books are often out-of-date before they leave the publishers - this is because law, politics, and citizenship are fast-moving subjects. **You should always try to use the most up-to-date version of any text.**

3. Journals and Newspapers

Because law, citizenship and politics moves so fast it is important to keep up-to-date. Good newspapers have a lot to offer. By a "good paper" we mean a paper that addresses serious political and legal issues NOT a tabloid paper which concerns itself with the latest events in the social life of the Supermodels or David Beckham's new haircut. You should read a broadsheet newspaper like The Times, The Sunday Times, The Guardian, The Observer, The Independent, and The Telegraph. **You should cut out and save important law, citizenship and politics articles.**

4. Information Technology

Newspaper CD-ROM's - the Library holds 'The Guardian' for the previous year. The Laws Intranet site is constantly being developed and contains lecture notes, information and many links to useful Legal resources. In addition, students can make use of subject Podcasts (see the [LawsBlog](#)). You can also find valuable information via <http://www.ycponline.co.uk>

5. Other Media

There are many serious documentaries and news features about the Law, Citizenship and Politics on the television - watch them and learn!

6. Tutors

Your Laws Lecturer/Tutor is an experienced teacher of laws - a veritable mine of information. Never feel that you cannot ask them a question, no matter how stupid you

think it might be (but please try using the dictionary before you ask - What does this word mean?). Your Tutor is paid to answer your questions - they are a valuable resource so use them!

7. Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when you copy someone else's ideas and/or words, from an article, book or song, and pass them off as your own¹. Examiners are very strict on plagiarism since it is certainly immoral and could well be unlawful. The rule is: If you quote or extract from an article, web page, book etc., you must indicate the source (to do this simply insert a footnote which gives the name of the author, name/details of the materials, and where they can be located).

8. Recording of Lectures/Classes

On occasions Laws staff record Lectures/Classes and these recordings are made available for students use on the College intranet. A STUDENT IS NOT PERMITTED TO RECORD any part of a Lecture/Lesson unless they have first obtained the permission of the Lecturer/Teacher taking that class.

B. ABSENCE POLICY

1. Staff Absence

If your teacher is unexpectedly absent from college, every effort will be made to deliver an appropriate lesson. **You MUST attend all the classes.** A member of staff will record your attendance and pass on the details of the work that has been set by your teacher. **You MUST stay in the classroom for the duration of the lesson** (to do otherwise can result in you facing disciplinary action. Please note that only a member of academic staff can excuse you from this requirement).

NEVER ASSUME THAT YOUR LECTURER/TEACHER WILL BE ABSENT OR THAT YOU CAN MISS A LESSON.

2. Student Absence

The starting point is that you are expected to attend 100% of your Laws classes (we publish student attendance data). Please note: should you miss just one single lesson in a week, your attendance for that week is at 80% and below the minimum. **YOU MUST EXPLAIN IN WRITING - to you Lecturer/Teacher - SHOULD YOU MISS ONE SINGLE LESSON.** If you miss a lesson you are expected to bring to your next lesson some 'additional work' as evidence that you have made efforts to make up for any work that you have missed. A 100% attendance at lessons is expected and we will not tolerate anything below 85%. **Should your attendance fall below 80% you are in danger of being asked to leave the course.**

If you know that you will miss a lesson, you must obtain a signed Exeat from your Personal Tutor, tell the teacher in advance and find out what you will miss. If you become ill during the day and need to go home, try to find your teacher and let them know, **or** leave a message at reception. You **must** also sign out at reception.

C. GUEST SPEAKERS

There may be the opportunity to bring in guest speakers to talk about particular legal issues. In recent years an MEP, MP, Councillor, Senior Police Officer, Solicitor and Magistrates have visited the College to speak to students.

D. VISITS

During the courses there are trips to the Crown Court in Reading to see judges; lawyers and other legal personnel involved in "real life" criminal cases. Politics students may visit the House of Commons. There are also other opportunities to attend law, politics, and or citizenship events.

E. INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

The College and its staff have always offered support to individual students outside of normal lessons.

This support takes three forms:-

1. Subject Support:

If you experience difficulties with any part of the course, for example if you don't understand a topic or find writing essays difficult, then talk to your Subject Lecturer/Teacher. They may (if applicable) offer to give you extra help during the set Targeted Student Support time. They can also refer you to 'Learning Support', a team of specialist support staff who help students with learning difficulties. Your tutors are also available to give advice to students who are considering studying Law, Politics, or Citizenship at University.

2. Personal Tutor Support:

If you experience broader problems whilst at the College, do consult your Personal Tutor. For example, if you are finding it difficult to meet homework deadlines because of personal problems they may offer you some advice. Or perhaps you may need to be referred to another member of staff who has specialist knowledge in a particular area, for example careers, or the special needs advisors (dyslexia, physical, sensory etc.)

3. Supervision of an 'Extended Project':

Laws staff are happy to support students who are undertaking an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). Once allocated as a EPQ Supervisor, staff will endeavour to find time within the support elements of lessons, and/or outside of lessons, to supervise students.

F. KEY SKILLS

The government now requires all students to develop certain Key Skills designed to make them more employable. In Laws, a core key skill is one of 'Presentation', which can be undertaken as part of the AS.

You will be provided with more detail of both what Key Skills involve and how they will be assessed during your academic year.

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Part Three - Laws Studies Board

A Laws Studies Board exists within the Department. The idea of this board is to provide a forum for student and teacher discussion, where students can discuss with staff issues such as course content, book choice and changes to the syllabus. Indeed, any issue relevant to the running of the Department of Laws can be discussed at meetings of the forum (i.e. excluding discipline issues which are the prerogative of the Lecturing/Teaching staff). Each class will have a student representative on the Laws Studies Board, who shall be selected/elected by their fellow classmates. All Laws academic staff are also members of the Laws Studies Board.

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In Conclusion

By choosing a Laws course you have chosen a fast moving and interesting subject area that touches all our daily lives.

Studying a Laws subject can be extremely rewarding but it requires hard work and commitment from you. Remember, the more you put into a subject the more you get out of it. Taking a real interest in the subject, reading articles, watching documentaries and so on, will lead to a good grade and an increased awareness of this most important aspect of modern life.

Our hope is that your experience in the Department of Laws will be both valuable and enjoyable.

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Should you have any concern, or complaints, please feel free to discuss matters with the Head of the Department of Laws -
Dr Peter Jepson
Email: pjepson@strodes.ac.uk

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As per the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act [2001].

Strode's College is committed to ensuring disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, are treated fairly. All reasonable adjustments to provision in the subject/course will be made to ensure that disabled students are not substantially disadvantaged. Any disclosure of disability will be used to help us ensure that we can support you in your College studies.

In accord with Strode's College policy and procedures, we are fully committed to Equal Opportunities.