

EUGENE'S LAW STUDY SYSTEM

THINGS TO NOT DO IN FIRST YEAR –IE, WHAT I DID

- I took lectures notes, wrote as much as I could, and rewrote the notes after class
- Read and re-read lecture notes
- Went into exam and things became foggy, couldn't put things together/remember it all (wouldn't gel)
- Almost failed every course.

TWO IMPORTANT LESSONS

- Need a system
- More than 95% of exam questions taken from material professors covered in class (if one knew the class material **cold**, would do well)

MY SYSTEM

- **Do not rewrite lecture notes.** Instead, go over notes carefully as soon as possible after class, fill in any blanks, and headings, and underline key words. **15-20 minutes max**
- **At the end of every week** and before the end of the weekend, do a 1-page summary of each course
 - have week's notes on class, think about how to summarize into 1 page (cannot be longer than 2 pages)
 - e.g. 5 courses, would have a summary of 1- 1½ pages for each course each week
 - that summary, learn and understand and almost commit to memory. (Don't use canned notes because material change changes and you can't understand summary if you don't understand material)
 - making a summary forces you to understand material and forces you to make a more understandable form – ie more easily remembered
- **At the end of every month**, look at the summaries from the end of each week and make a 1-page summary of those (a "Super Summary")
 - even if it looks like a table of contents, that's ok but need to know it
 - memorize summaries cold

SOME NOTES

- This method requires less time, but is more effective
- Two things for safety:
 - Make photocopy of notes and keep somewhere safe
 - Make a photograph of Summaries and Super Summaries and keep that safe as well
- Figure out lots of abbreviations
- For example:

Word	Abbreviation
Plaintiff	P
Defendant	D
Contract	K
Burden of Proof	B.O.P
Standard of Care	S.O.C

- You only get marked for what you write, no marks are given for thinking and what you try to remember
- If you know super summaries and summaries well, can be writing constantly during the 3 hour exam and will therefore write more
- What you write will be accurate because you memorized the summaries and super summaries

MAIN TYPE OF EXAM QUESTIONS

- **“A Short Detail Question”** – either know it or don’t, e.g. what are the main exceptions to a hearsay rule
- **“General Question”** – e.g. what is the rationale for the hearsay rule, and the rationale for the exceptions
 - #1 & #2 are deliberately easy
- **Here’s a complicated problem**, what is the solution/range of solutions (long complicated problem)

- **“Compare & Contrast”** – compare and contrast two things that don’t normally go together (makes student go “what?”)
 - by knowing Summaries and Super Summaries, can see the big picture of concepts and will be able to compare and contrast them

PREPARING FOR EXAMS

- You’ll know in advance the dates and times for Christmas exams
- 1 month before, get journal/diary and divide every day into morning, afternoon, and evening blocks (3-4 hour timeslots, don’t have to be equal)
- Decide in advance what you are going to study in each time slot
- Keep to that for a month
- Figure out schedule to determine when to study what/when
 - E.g. By the end of the first week, have it scheduled so that you can memorize the summaries for each course
- Schedule times to take off from studying
 - E.g. Take Sunday afternoon off, need to self-reward

EXAM

- Important to finish every single question
- 60-75% of law students do not complete the whole exam
- The way to finish the exam is by spending amounts of time that are proportional to how many marks the question has (e.g. 10% of time spent on a question that is 10% of exam marks)
- Put times next to questions (e.g. “9:45-10:00 am” next to question)
- Take 5 minutes in the beginning of exam to set times next to questions
- If professor is asking about a area of law in 1 small question, if it’s only worth 10% of the exam, the professor is telling you he/she only wants a fast superficial answer (so, only give basics)
- If you spend more than 10% of time, are wasting time
- That’s a lack of discipline, loss of emotional control
- If you have not finished a question by the deadline, you stop and move on.

SUMMARY

- Do a 1 to 2 page **Summary** of each course (not class) taken that week – and do on/before end of weekend
- Do a 1 to 2 page **Super Summary** of each course taken that month – and do on/before end of month
- **For the month prior to the exam period**, map out what you're going to study:
 - morning
 - afternoon
 - evening
- **Commit to memory:**
 - Summaries
 - Super Summaries.