

## **bar review courses**

There are various bar review courses that are available to graduates to help them prepare for the Texas Bar Exam. Two major companies offer these courses: BAR/BRI and Kaplan PMBR. A first-year student can “freeze” the price against any price increase by making an early deposit. Deposits for bar review courses vary in amount. The student receives appropriate outlines of courses and other study aids along with helpful hints on studying for and taking the bar exam. Representatives of these courses will be available in the student lounge at various times throughout the year. (See also *Free South Texas College of Law Bar Preview*, page 301.)

## **a guide to the basics of law practice**

All lawyers licensed in the State of Texas on and after July 1, 1996, are required to take the course entitled *A Guide to the Basics of Law Practice*, sponsored by the Texas Center for Legal Ethics and Professionalism. The Texas Center for Legal Ethics and Professionalism shall offer the course a number of times each year in cities where law schools are located. The requirement of course attendance may be satisfied by a prospective lawyer taking the course within 12 months before licensure, or within 12 months after licensure. Topics covered include: Law Office Management, Advertising and Marketing Legal Services, Professionalism, Practicing in State and Federal Courts, A Client’s Honesty, Your Role in a Law Firm, A Malpractice Primer, Guide to Attorneys’ Professional Liability Insurance, Law Practice Killers, Lawyer Disciplinary Procedures.

The dates, times and places are available in the Registrar’s Office.

## **state bar examination information: other jurisdictions**

Any student planning to take the bar examination in another jurisdiction should stop by the Registrar’s Office to obtain information regarding dates and locations, applications, filing requirements, bar exam fees, bar exam format, grading formula, MPRE score requirements, and reciprocity.

## **the doctor of jurisprudence degree**

The Doctor of Jurisprudence degree (JD) will be conferred upon students who have successfully completed all requirements of South Texas College of Law for graduation. There are three graduating classes each year (May-spring semester; July-summer session; December-fall semester) with two graduation ceremonies. The May graduation ceremony honors the May and

July graduates and is traditionally held off campus. The December graduation ceremony honors the December graduates. The size of the graduating class will determine the location of the ceremony, whether on or off campus.

## requirements for graduation

A candidate for a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree is required to:

1. Meet all entrance requirements.
2. Earn at least 90 semester hours of credit with a passing grade and a cumulative grade average of 2.200 or better within seven years of the date of first enrollment. No more than 30 semester hours may be earned at other law schools. (*See Visiting Student Status.*)
3. **Complete with a passing grade the following required courses for graduation:** Civil Procedure; Constitutional Law; Contracts I and II; Criminal Law; Evidence; Federal Income Taxation; Legal Research & Writing I and II; Professional Responsibility; Property I and II; Torts I and II; substantial writing (minimum of two hours credit) and professional skills (minimum of two credit hours).
4. Complete the degree no earlier than 24 months and no later than 84 months after commencing law studies.
5. Complete all required courses in residence, unless required courses were accepted when a student transferred into the college.
6. Make formal application for graduation.
7. Pay all fees and tuition charges incurred prior to graduation (*see Accounting Services Office Approvals, page 72*).
8. Participate in commencement, unless permission to graduate in absentia is granted by the Dean.
9. A student under Academic Supervision (*see Academic Supervision*) must satisfy the following additional requirements for graduation:
  - a. Complete with a passing grade the following courses: Consumer Transactions, Payment Systems, Secured Transactions, and Texas Pretrial Procedure.
  - b. Complete with a passing grade at least six of the following nine courses: Agency and Partnership; Corporations; Criminal Procedure; Family Law; Marital Property; Oil, Gas, and Mineral Law; Texas Criminal Procedure; Texas Trial & Appellate Procedure; and Wills, Trusts, and Estates.

- c. Attend the college's bar examination preparation course. Students satisfy this requirement only by attending at least 80 percent of the course's regularly-scheduled sessions. Students are not obliged to pay for this course, and it will **not** count toward the 90 semester hours credit required for graduation.

If any of the above requirements is not met, the degree cannot be conferred and the anticipated graduation date will move to the next semester. Examples typically include: 1) a grade of "F" or "incomplete" entered on the record or 2) credit not received for a course taken as a visiting student. All requirements must be met within a period no later than one year after the original graduation. The degree will be conferred in the semester when all requirements have been finally met.

## **graduation plan**

Students who have completed their second year of study (60 semester hours) should make an appointment in the Registrar's Office to have their record reviewed to ensure they are on track to meet graduation requirements.

## **official notices**

Students will be deemed responsible for having received official college information when delivered through the following sources:

**Mailboxes:** Each student is assigned a mailbox in which various official communications from the college will be placed. This includes, but is not limited to, checks, grade notices, financial aid notifications, etc. (For complete information on student mailboxes, refer to the Student Organizations Office description under the *General Information* section of this handbook.)

**Bulletin Boards:** Students are responsible for checking the college's official bulletin boards located on the first floor across from the student mailboxes and on the second floor outside the Registrar's Office for postings of such items as class changes, cancellations and class assignments, registration and course information.

**Websites, Internet, the STANLEY Portal, and E-mail Accounts:** South Texas College of Law provides each student with a Student Computer Account to access the STANLEY portal. This account allows a student to conduct legal research, serves as a vehicle to receive official notifications from faculty and administrators via the student's e-mail, and provides access to personal academic and financial information. Each student is required to

obtain a Student Computer Account to access the above services and receive official college communications. The account is furnished free of charge upon admission to South Texas College of Law. Contact Susan Spillman, Portal Manager, 713-646-1718, for further Student Computer Account information. For further information on the STANLEY portal, refer to STANLEY (see page 73) or Information Technology-STANLEY (see page 34). The South Texas College of Law website is located at [www.stcl.edu](http://www.stcl.edu).

**It is the student's sole responsibility to check these sources on a regular basis.**

## **discipline**

South Texas College of Law reserves the right to terminate the attendance of any student at any time, to remove any student from the list of candidates for the Doctor of Jurisprudence degree, or to otherwise discipline any student whom it may deem unworthy on account of neglect of study, incapacity for the law, or conduct or character not in keeping with the standards of the college and the legal profession. Any person, by registering in the college, agrees to this reserved right of the college to place such person on probation or to sever his or her connection with the college at any time circumstances warrant and without a refund of tuition or fees paid.

From time to time the Dean may appoint a hearing committee with respect to such misconduct. The hearing committee may adopt the applicable procedures provided in the *Rules Concerning Academic Misconduct*, or such other procedures as deemed appropriate by the committee.

## **academic advising and counseling**

The Office of the Registrar advises students with regard to all academic regulations, including:

- class scheduling
- attendance
- residency requirements
- graduation
- final examinations
- grading system and calculation rules
- requests for exception to academic rules and policies, and
- student records

Assistant Dean Gena L. Singleton oversees the Office of Student Academic Affairs. She and her staff are available to counsel students

regarding curricular planning, study habits, class preparation, and exam-taking techniques. She is also in charge of the Academic Assistance Program (see page 42). The Office of Student Academic Affairs coordinates the Faculty Student Advisory Program (see page 42). This program assigns second-semester students to a faculty advisor. The faculty advisor assists the student with academic and curricular planning. Students who need accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act must contact Assistant Dean Singleton (see pages 74-75). Students who need to amend or update their admissions application regarding character and fitness matters must contact Assistant Dean Singleton immediately (see page 43). She and her staff are available to assist students with professional and personal problems affecting their academic endeavors. If necessary, Assistant Dean Singleton and her staff can also help with referrals for professional assistance and to other wellness programs. An appointment is recommended.

## **full-time and part-time student classification**

A full-time student is any student devoting substantially full time to the study of law, enrolled for 12 hours or more during any semester (or the equivalent in any summer session), and, if employed, working no more than 20 hours per week.

Full-time students should be aware that the full-time study of law is an arduous task demanding substantially all of the student's working hours. For that reason, employment, especially for first-year full-time students, is discouraged. Additionally, South Texas College of Law strictly adheres to the interpretations of the American Bar Association Standards for Approval of Law Schools [Section 304(f)] which provides that a student may not work in excess of 20 hours per week while attending law school on a full-time basis.

A part-time student is any student enrolled for fewer than 12 hours during any semester (or the summer equivalent thereof).

Students enroll initially as either full-time or part-time students and are required to remain in that status for the academic year. During the first academic year, a student experiencing an extraordinary change in circumstances must obtain approval from the Registrar to change enrollment status from part time to full time.

**Under no circumstances is a student allowed to be enrolled full time if he/she works more than 20 hours per week. Violations of this regulation may result in disciplinary action.**

# course loads

## minimum and maximum course loads

	<u>Full time</u>	<u>Part time</u>
Long Semester (Fall and Spring)	12-16	8-11
Summer Session	6-9	3-5

During a long semester, full-time students are allowed to register for 16 semester hours without seeking special approval. Full-time students seeking to register for more than 16 semester hours during a long semester must submit a request to the Registrar using the Course Add/Drop Waiver form.

Part-time students may not enroll for more than the maximum number of hours stated above.

During the summer session, students are not allowed to register for more than 9 semester hour credits.

Graduating seniors in their final semester who need less than the minimum load to graduate are permitted to enroll for less than the minimums set forth above.

The following minimum semester hour course loads are pertinent for payment of veterans' benefits:

	<u>Full time</u>	<u>Three-quarter time</u>	<u>One-half time</u>
Fall & Spring Semesters	12	9	6
Summer Session	6	5	3

## financial aid special enrollment rules

Notwithstanding the number of hours required for full- and part-time South Texas College of Law classifications, any student receiving financial aid must comply with federal requirements. No student will be eligible for financial aid if registered for less than six credit hours during the fall or spring semester or for less than three hours during the summer session. Students who do not complete at least the above-stated hours are treated as if they had withdrawn and the resulting adverse effect under federal regulations may be severe. Students are further advised that under federal regulations a change from full-time to part-time status may result in an over-award of financial aid and require repayment of some or all financial aid received.

## add/drop procedures

A student registering or adding a course after classes have begun will be counted absent for classes missed prior to entering the course. These absences will be included in the computing of eligibility to take the final examination and to receive credit for the course.

Students have a period of time in all semesters and the summer session to drop a course without prejudice. These dates are published in the school year calendar. After this period, if a student drops voluntarily or is dropped administratively, a failing grade of “WF” will be entered on the student’s record and counted in computing the student’s grade point average. Similarly, a student who withdraws from or leaves the college at any time without following the required procedures will receive a grade of “WF” in every course. (*See Attendance and Class Participation, below.*)

The college will not be responsible for discrepancies in the record of a student who fails to follow the prescribed procedure for adding or dropping courses or otherwise changing his or her registration.

## attendance and class participation

Regular and punctual class attendance is an important part of the learning process for all law students. A student registering or adding a course after classes have begun will be counted absent for classes missed prior to entering the course. These absences will be included in the computing of eligibility to take the final examination and to receive credit for the course. The faculty has determined that while a student should attend 100 percent of scheduled classes, a student must attend at least 80 percent of the classes regularly scheduled in each course; absences in excess of 20 percent of the classes scheduled for any course during the semester will result in the student’s being dropped automatically from such course. An administrative drop due to excessive absences results in a “WF” being entered on the student’s permanent record, even if the drop occurs before the last day to drop voluntarily. No refund of tuition or fees will be made when students are administratively dropped for excessive absences.

**Note: In addition, financial aid entitlements may be adversely affected when a student fails to drop a course officially but allows an administrative drop to occur due to excessive absences.**

Every student sitting for a final examination will be required to sign a statement that he/she has attended at least 80 percent of the classes regularly scheduled for each course for which the student was enrolled during that

semester. Individual members of the faculty, in their discretion, also may adopt some additional reasonable method of enforcing the 80 percent attendance requirement, such as distribution of an attendance roll sheet. A student's false declaration on that statement or any other attendance document is an act of academic misconduct, subjecting the student to expulsion, suspension, or other discipline. Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, the Registrar, and Professors do not have authority to grant absences in excess of those allowed.

Students also are expected and required to prepare all assignments, to attend classes promptly at the time scheduled, to remain in attendance until excused by the professor or until class is dismissed, and to participate in classroom discussions. A professor may deduct up to two grade increments (e.g., change a student's grade from a B- to C+ or C) from the final grade of any student who, in the opinion of the professor, has been deficient in classroom punctuality, conduct and/or performance. Further, with the permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the professor may drop any student from the course for unsatisfactory classroom performance or for misconduct. There is no system by which grades can be increased for outstanding classroom performance.

All students are required to enroll for classes during each fall and spring semester. Attendance in the summer session is optional with the student. Failure to register for any long semester, or dropping all courses, is considered to be a withdrawal from law school, unless withdrawal without academic prejudice has been approved in advance. Students who have or are deemed to have withdrawn may not re-enroll except with permission from the Registrar.

## **auditing courses**

Students regularly enrolled in the college will not be permitted to audit courses. Permission will be given to graduates of approved law schools and licensed attorneys to audit a course, depending on space availability and instructor approval. Such permission conveys only the privilege of hearing and observing but not taking part in class discussions or examinations. Auditors pay the regular tuition and fees, except that graduates of South Texas will not be assessed any tuition or fees. Auditors will not receive credit for any course(s) taken; however, their attendance may be reflected on the official transcript of the college upon request.



## bar card

Texas state law permits qualified law students and qualified unlicensed law school graduates to participate in the trial of cases in Texas under the supervision of a licensed attorney. The application form for obtaining a “temporary bar card” is available through Gladys Radetti, Room 1035T.

There are two situations that make an enrolled student eligible for a temporary bar card:

1. Completion of at least two-thirds of the required hours toward graduation.
2. Completion of at least half of the required hours toward graduation and enrollment in a clinical program.

In either case, the student must not be on scholastic probation. The student must also certify that he/she has read and is familiar with the Code of Professional Responsibility of the State Bar of Texas and will abide by those rules, including the grievance procedures of the State Bar.

## bar-related courses

The following courses contain topics tested on the Texas bar examination:

- Administration of Estates & Guardianships – 2 hours;
- Agency & Partnership – 3 hours;
- Consumer Transactions – 3 hours;
- Corporations – 3 hours;
- Criminal Procedure – 4 hours;
- Family Law – 3 hours;
- First Amendment – 2 hours;
- Marital Property – 3 hours;
- Oil & Gas – 3 hours;
- Payment Systems – 3 hours;
- Secured Transactions – 3 hours;
- Texas Criminal Procedure – 2 hours;
- Texas Pretrial Procedure – 3 hours;
- Texas Trial & Appellate Procedure – 3 hours;
- Wills, Trusts & Estates – 3 hours

**Note: Possible bar crossover questions may come from Federal Income Taxation (already a basic required course), Estate & Gift Taxation, Business Bankruptcy and Consumer Bankruptcy (all elective courses).**