CORNELL LAW SCHOOL
2015-16 Curricular Recommendations and Degree Requirements

Curricular instruction
The professional curriculum at Cornell Law School conforms to American Bar Association Standard 302 for Approval of Law Schools.

(1) the substantive law generally regarded as necessary to effective and responsible participation in the legal profession;

(2) legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem solving, and oral communication;

(3) writing in a legal context, including at least one rigorous writing experience in the first year and at least one additional rigorous writing experience after the first year;

(4) other professional skills generally regarded as necessary for effective and responsible participation in the legal profession; and

(5) the history, goals, structure, values, rules and responsibilities of the legal profession and its members.

It also offers substantial opportunities for:

(1) live-client or other real-life practice experiences, appropriately supervised and designed to encourage reflection by students on their experiences and on the values and responsibilities of the legal profession, and the development of one’s ability to assess his or her performance and level of competence;

(2) student participation in pro bono activities; and

(3) small group work through seminars, directed research, small classes, or collaborative work.

JD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS
Please read thoroughly to understand the credit and curricular requirements for the Cornell JD degree.

Summary of requirements for the JD degree
All students must satisfy three specific upper-class course requirements. Each student is responsible for ensuring that all graduation and bar admission requirements are met. The Registrar and his staff are available to advise students on requirements.

- A course which satisfies the skills requirement.
- A course which satisfies a writing requirement [a writing course designated as a skills course might not satisfy both the writing and skills requirements in which case a student must notify the registrar which requirement they will use the courses to satisfy.]
- A course dealing with issues of professional responsibility.

In addition, a student electing a course outside the Law School for credit or otherwise must also register for at least 9 credit hours in the Law School each term. Regardless of the number of courses elected outside the Law School, a student must earn 72, of the required 84, semester credit hours in professional law subjects. Here no exceptions are allowable.

JD/MBA, JD with Specialization in International Legal Affairs, Three-Year JD/LLM Degree, JD/French Master En Droit, JD/MLLP, JD/Master, and other program candidates must complete the JD requirements in addition to additional program requirements. Please consult individual program requirements or contact the registrar for assistance.
CREDIT RESTRICTIONS

Semester credit restrictions:
All students must comply with the ABA Standard 304(e).
A law school may not permit a student to be enrolled at any time in coursework that would exceed 20 percent of the total coursework required by that school for graduation. Students in the JD program may not take more than 16 credits in any one semester. Students in the JD/LLM program may take a maximum of 20 credits per semester. The Registrar will provide similar maximum semester credit information for those in various joint degree programs.

Credits outside of regularly scheduled law school classes
Students may take no more than 20 credits outside of regularly scheduled law school classes. These 20 credits include full-term externships, part-time externships, directed readings, supervised writings, supervised teaching (including Lawyering Honors Fellows), courses taught in other university divisions, and clinics taught by instructors whose primary professional employment is not within the Law School. The course registration materials will identify the courses that are subject to the 20 credit maximum. In the past, very few law students (if any) exceeded such a 20-credit limitation on nonregularly scheduled courses. However, particularly for those interested in doing a full-term externship or a semester abroad, advance planning will be more critical to avoid disappointment. See ABA Standard 311 and Interpretation 311-1(b).
http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards.html

The total credit limits on each category follows and you may take no more 20 combined credits overall.
Directed readings: one 2-credit directed reading each upperclass semester for a total of 8 credits.
Supervised writings: one 3-credit supervised writing each upperclass semester for a total of 12 credits.
Available with permanent law faculty members [adjuncts, visitors, and others who are not members of the permanent faculty may supervise such courses only with the written consent of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs].
Supervised teaching: one 2-credit supervised teaching each upperclass semester for a total of 8 credits.
Available with permanent law faculty members [adjuncts, visitors, and others who are not members of the permanent faculty may supervise such courses only with the written consent of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs].
Externships: maximum of 20 credits
Courses in other University divisions – maximum of 12 credits (Regardless of the number of courses elected outside the Law School, a student must earn 72, of the required 84, semester credit hours in professional law subjects. No exception.)

Grading: All externships and directed reading, supervised writing and supervised teaching will be graded S/U. (Note that students will continue to have the ability to take two graded upperclass courses S/U if that option is made available by the course instructor).
JD GRADING POLICY

Faculty grading policy calls upon each faculty member to grade a course, including problem courses and seminars, so that the mean grade for J.D. students in the course approximates 3.35 (the acceptable range is 3.2 to 3.5).

However, faculty who announce to their classes that they might exceed the cap are free to do so. If the 3.5 cap is exceeded in any class pursuant to such announcement, the transcript of every student in the class will carry an asterisk\* next to the grade for that class, and for various internal purposes such as the awarding of academic honors at graduation, the numerical impact of such grades will be adjusted to be the same as it would have been if the course had been graded to achieve a 3.5 mean. Because the possibility of higher grades and a transcript asterisk may be relevant to some students in selecting courses, all faculty must announce their intentions regarding this aspect of the grading policy. As a practical matter, this can be as simple as a statement by faculty that they intend to grade within the cap set by faculty policy, or, alternatively, that they reserve their right under the policy to award asterisked grades with a course mean above that specified by the policy.

Faculty are not obliged to adhere to the 3.35 goal in grading courses with fewer than ten J.D. students receiving letter grades. They are expected, however, to be mindful of the goal.

Students who opted for Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading in the class should be awarded a grade of S if they would have received a C- or better. A grade of U should be given to any student who would have received a D+ or worse.

GRADING OPTION

Each J.D. student, after the first year, may elect to take up to two upperclass courses at Cornell Law School on an S/U basis. Students must make this election in writing to the Law School Registrar’s Office during the two week period following the add/drop period each semester. If made, the election shall be irrevocable. Students may not make this election in courses that they use to satisfy the law school’s upperclass writing requirement. In addition, instructors may designate specific courses that they teach as not eligible for the S/U election. The Registrar’s Office will issue a grade verification slip after the add/period has ended for students to declare grading options. Check individual course descriptions in the online Course Description http://support.law.cornell.edu/Students/students/CourseDescriptions/index.cfm.

FIRST YEAR

As a First Year student, you will be taught by our gifted faculty. Many faculty members hold academic chairs at the Law School and are the authors on the leading law casebooks in the subjects they teach. All first year law students must enroll in the required first year curriculum. Every first year student takes 16 credits each semester as listed below. This creates a solid foundation for the rest of law school. In contrast to the first year law curriculum, there are no required courses during a law student’s second and third years of study (upper-class years), but there are requirements that must be met.
SECOND YEAR CORE COURSES

Recommended Second Year Core Courses - The faculty recommends that students take four core courses during the second year. The second year provides students an opportunity to broaden the foundation laid in the first year.
6011 Administrative Law
6131 Business Organizations
6401 Evidence
6441 Federal Income Taxation

A complete list of course offerings for the 2015-16 academic year can be found here:
https://support.law.cornell.edu/Students/students/CourseDescriptions/CoursesByCategory.cfm

SKILLS REQUIREMENT

Required Skills Courses - The faculty requires that all students take a course emphasizing the application of legal theory and doctrine in the performance of fundamental lawyers’ tasks such as interviewing, fact investigation, counseling, negotiation, drafting, and advocacy. The skills courses are marked with a (1) symbol on the Courses by Category site.
https://support.law.cornell.edu/Students/students/CourseDescriptions/CoursesByCategory.cfm

All students are required to take a skills course for at least one credit hour before graduation. Many students already enroll in clinics, externships and simulation classes, such as alternative dispute resolution, that will satisfy the requirement. Each semester, students will be provided with a list of courses that can be used to satisfy the skills requirement. Note that in general the same course cannot be used to satisfy both the skills requirement and the writing requirement. See ABA Standard 302(a)(4).

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY REQUIREMENT

Required Professional Responsibility Course - All law students must complete an upperclass course in professional responsibility before graduation. The professional responsibility courses are marked with a (2) symbol on the Courses by Category document.

WRITING REQUIREMENT

Required Writing Course- All law students must satisfy the writing requirement before graduation. The writing requirement for JD is met by satisfactorily completing a three-hour seminar or problem course. The course must be taken for a letter grade. Enrollment in colloquiums, problem courses and seminars is limited. The writing courses are marked with a (3) symbol on the Courses by Category document.

THIRD YEAR CONCENTRATION OPTION

In the third year, students diversify or specialize through pursuit of individual interests. A wide range of elective courses, including many seminars and problem courses, makes that possible. The third year also permits concentration through in-depth study of a single field. To encourage this use of the final year, the school offers the opportunity to concentrate in one of four areas and a complete roster of the courses in the four concentrations is available at: https://support.law.cornell.edu/students/forms/Concentration_Option.pdf

- Advocacy
- Business law and regulation
- General practice
- Public law