



New Structure of the First Year of the Juris Doctor Program

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? Due to changes recently adopted to improve the first year of the JD program, first year classes will begin two weeks earlier than in past years. We are writing to provide you with as much notice as possible of the accelerated start date. Mandatory first year classes begin at the law school on **Monday, August 18, 2014**.

WHAT STARTS ON AUGUST 18, 2014? There are two things:

- LEGAL METHODS INTENSIVE** The central goal of our JD program is to train students to “think like lawyers.” To this end, the program begins with a two-week “legal methods” intensive designed to introduce students to the foundational information and reasoning needed to make the most of the JD program from the outset.
- ORIENTATION** Orientation will include a variety of social, cultural and professional activities designed to introduce you to your classmates and to help you to get to know the law school, its environs, and the city more generally. It will be coordinated with the legal methods intensive and also run over the last two weeks of August.

Legal methods intensive	Core A: Constitutional	Core D: Property
	Core B: Contracts	Core E: Torts
Orientation activities	Legal Research and Writing	Legal Process
	Core C: Criminal (Small Group)	

First Year Program Key Dates

2014

August 18-29	Legal methods intensive
September 2	Fall term begins
November 3-7	Reading week
December 5	Fall term classes end
December 8-17	Examination period

2015

January 5	Winter term begins
February 16-20	Reading week
April 10	Winter term classes end
April 13-22	Examination period

WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF THE OTHER COURSES IN FIRST YEAR? In addition to the legal methods intensive and a legal research and writing (LRW) course, there are six substantive law courses taught in the first year. For each student, all but one of the substantive law courses will be taught in larger sections of up to 90 students over a single term (two in the first term, three in the second). These courses will be evaluated through final exams in December (two) and in April (three). The other substantive course will be taught in a small group of 16 students taught over both terms and will be evaluated principally through writing assignments (and will not have a final examination). The LRW course offered in the first term will provide an opportunity to further develop the ability to think like a lawyer, and also to write and conduct research like one. LRW will be taught in classes of 25 students, and will be evaluated through a series of writing and research assignments that will allow for plenty of direct instructor feedback.

WILL ALL THE COURSES BE OFFERED IN THE SAME ORDER AND FORMAT FOR ALL STUDENTS? No. Legal methods, LRW, and legal process will be offered in the same format and order for all. The five core courses (constitutional, contracts, criminal, property and torts) will vary in their format and ordering for each student.

If you have questions, I would be delighted to field them at ben.alarie@utoronto.ca or 416-946-8205.