



.....

# FIRST-YEAR CURRICULUM

.....

University of  
California, Irvine  
**School of Law**

# Boldly Redefining Legal Education

---

Since we were given a blank slate, our accomplished, nationally-ranked faculty designed a cutting-edge approach to legal education not found at other law schools. Law school students everywhere must learn subject areas like constitutional law, contracts, procedure and torts. But at University of California, Irvine School of Law the differences are *how* the doctrinal coursework is taught and *what* courses our students take.

## **Focus on Methods of Analysis**

Unlike other law schools, our first-year curriculum is structured according to the different methods of legal analysis, learning how to apply similar analyses in other doctrinal classes. In the Statutory Analysis class, for example, students learn how to analyze statutes using criminal law to learn skills that translate well to other statute-based practice areas like tax law, labor law or intellectual property law.

## **Real World Client Advocacy**

In addition to developing traditional research, writing and oral advocacy skills, all first-year students are required to do intake interviews at a local legal aid or public defender office.

Thus, our students, with supervision, interact with real clients beginning in their first year of law school. First-year students are also encouraged to participate in UCI Law's Pro Bono Program — one of the most robust among U.S. law schools — developing practical legal skills with real clients while providing much-needed assistance to underserved members of the community.

## **Distinctive Courses**

We have designed a curriculum for the 21st century. For example, first-year students take International Legal Analysis, a critical course in a world of increasing globalization. Legal Profession, a first-year course, is designed to introduce students to many aspects of the profession they are joining.

## **Practical Training Integrated into Traditional Study**

Also different from other law schools, beginning in the first year the UCI Law curriculum integrates traditional doctrinal coursework, teaching current legal theory with skills-based practice exercises.

## Collegial and Interdisciplinary Collaboration

UCI Law combines the best features of a small, collegial and supportive community with a large and renowned research institution. Our small class size and student-faculty ratios enable students to have more individual time with faculty. Moreover, many faculty members from across the campus hold joint appointments in the Law School, incorporating breakthrough multidisciplinary scholarship into the UCI Law curriculum. Additionally, all first-year students are assigned a lawyer-mentor from the local legal community to provide guidance in academic and career matters.

These differences are at the heart of UC Irvine School of Law's first-year experience. Here, first-year students learn not just the subject matter of areas of law, but how to apply legal concepts and think like a practicing lawyer. This innovative, hands-on approach prepares our students for legal practice at the highest levels of the profession.

---

## First-Year Courses

### Common Law Analysis: Contracts

Instruction in this course focuses primarily on the common law of contracts to teach common law analysis, in which the law is derived from judicial decisions rather than statutes or the Constitution.

### Common Law Analysis: Torts

This course considers the law of negligence, products liability and intentional wrongdoing to examine how courts make rules, how those rules change over time, and the role of lawyers in causing such change.

### Constitutional Analysis

Students are taught basic areas of constitutional law, including separation of powers, federalism and individual liberties. This course focuses on how constitutional arguments are made, and how courts and lawyers analyze constitutional issues.

### International Legal Analysis

In virtually all fields of practice – from criminal law to family law, business law to immigration, intellectual property to human rights – lawyers increasingly face legal problems that cross international borders. This course focuses on the knowledge and skills needed to analyze and solve these problems, thus providing essential foundations for practicing law in today's globalized world.

### Lawyering Skills

Taught over two semesters, this course focuses on teaching skills that all lawyers use: fact investigation, interviewing, legal writing and analysis, extensive legal research, negotiation and oral advocacy.

### Legal Profession

Students learn in this course how to chart rewarding and responsible careers. Drawing from various disciplines, including economics, history, sociology and psychology, students learn about the variety of practice settings in which lawyers work and the professional opportunities, ethical dilemmas and challenges of each. Among the practice settings considered are small, medium and large law firms, prosecutors' offices, public defender organizations, corporate counsel offices, nonprofit advocacy groups, legal aid and the judiciary. Lawyers from each type of practice will join the class to talk about their work and careers. The course also addresses larger issues facing the profession as a whole, including the legal services market and its regulation, and the implications of globalization for the profession.

### Legal Research

This short-session immersion program prepares students to handle challenging research assignments typically encountered in school and in the workplace. Students learn research skills through a combination of lectures, in-class exercises, written assignments and a final project.

### Procedural Analysis

This course focuses on the knowledge and skills needed to analyze and solve procedural issues in the law, and on related questions of ethics and strategy. Although these issues pervade all areas of the law, this course examines them primarily in the context of civil litigation in the U.S. federal courts.

### Statutory Analysis

Criminal law is used as a basis for teaching students the methods employed in all areas of law for analyzing statutes.



“The faculty at UCI Law really inspired me to be holistic in the way I approach the practice of law. I learned to think not only about the black letter law, but also how the law affects different communities and the impact of my actions. The faculty showed me how to approach the law from a multidisciplinary perspective.”

*Jesse Welsh-Keyser, Class of 2014  
Associate, Alston & Bird's Technology, Privacy & IP Transactions Group*

“During my first year I met with clients and worked on real cases, which allowed me to enter my 1L summer judicial externship with a federal bankruptcy judge with confidence. I stood out from my peers from other schools because I was willing and able to jump right in and tackle big issues.”

*Kelly Galligan, Class of 2015  
2L Summer Associate, Rutan & Tucker*

“The best part of my UCI Law experience has been the general attitude of collaboration. I had an idea that law school would be more competitive, but the students, faculty and advisors have really promoted a sense of collaboration and working together.”

*Morgan McCombe, Class of 2016  
1L Summer Intern, Public Law Center*

**University of  
California, Irvine  
School of Law**

[www.law.uci.edu](http://www.law.uci.edu)