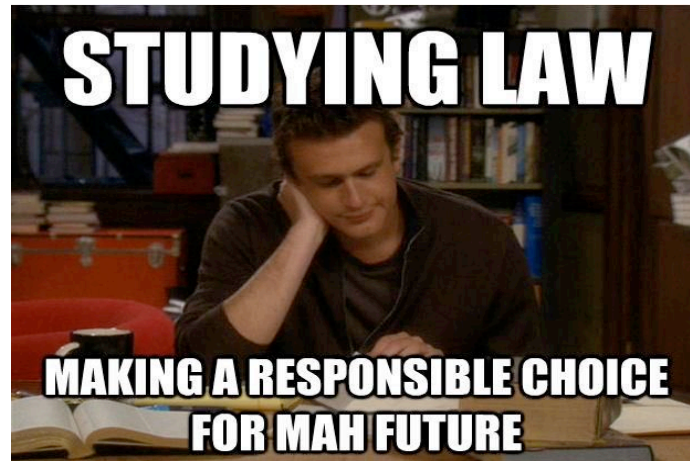


Is Studying Law Boring?

Zafar Iqbal Kalanauriⁱ



I recall that in an episode of “The Simpsons”, the juvenile delinquent Jimbo Jones helps a group which is trying to reduce crime in the community. The scheme, however, goes badly wrong. Disenchanted, Jimbo turns to another member and says *"Hey man, you've really let me down. Now I don't believe in anything anymore. I'm joining Law School"*.

Although law is sometimes portrayed as a dull discipline pursued by ethically dubious practitioners, it is a spellbindingly vivid and varied subject which affects every part of human life. Physics, history, french, business, architecture, and other subjects are all vital disciplines but law permeates into every cell of social life. Law governs everything from the embryo to exhumation. Law regulates the air we breathe the food and drink that we consume, our travel, family relationships, our property, sport, science, employment, education, and health, everything in fact from neighbour disputes to war.

A university law degree is the most adaptable of academic qualifications. Only people who want to become doctors study medicine whereas people with diverse career plans study law.

Law degrees have always been among the most sought-after and widely respected courses to study at university. For many, a law degree is the first step along the path to a career in the legal sector, often followed by the further study and training needed to become a practicing attorney, solicitor or barrister. However, this is certainly not the only reason to study law at university. Law degrees are notoriously challenging, and for many students, the attraction lies in the unique combination of human interest and intellectual stimulation provided. Many law graduates, of course, do go on to become advocates, attorneys, solicitors, barristers, arbitrators, mediators and judges but, equally, many others use the qualification to become successful in companies, academic research, the media, the civil service, local government, teaching, campaign organisations, and politics – many of the parliamentarians, have law degrees.

Being educated in logical thinking, the articulate expression of complex ideas, the composition and art of argument, and how to use evidence and rules, law graduates have an excellent record of employability. A law degree can prepare someone for work at the highest levels – many world leaders were lawyers including Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, Abraham Lincoln, Clarence Darrow, Thurgood Marshall, Sandra Day O'Connor, Janet Reno, John Grisham, John Quincy Adams, James Polk, , James Garfield, Grover Cleveland, Richard Nixon, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Bill Clinton Barak Obama. Other law graduates such as Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Derren Brown, Gaby Logan, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Gerard Butler, chose different careers.

Historically, legal education had a bad start. The law schools set up in London in the early thirteenth-century were banned in 1234 by a writ of Henry III. He thought trouble would come from people knowing the law. Later, it was the disciples of Jeremy Bentham who launched the first degree in English law, at University College London in 1826. The first graduating class of three was in 1839.

Legal study develops organically in line with social needs. Today, areas of study and practice like sports law, media law, immigration law, human rights, and international criminal justice are very important, though they did not exist as recently as fifty years ago.

Much legal study involves reading and discussing the decisions of appeal courts. Only particularly unusual cases are appealed so the law reports are brimming with interesting and unusual human dramas.

There are over a million decisions you can study – reading them all, though, is not compulsory as your law lecturers appreciate the need for you also to engage in essential life-supporting activity such as sleep. You will learn many areas of law including the rules that determine whether a judge is being impartial, how contracts are made, and how careful the law requires people to be when they do everything including surgery, sport, science, and even maneuver during relationships.

The courts showcase a constant run of extraordinary and bizarre cases spanning eight hundred years, and there are many colourful decisions from other jurisdictions. Recent examples have included whether you can sell your soul on the internet, a court order which forbade a man from laughing in public, a lawyer who tried to use quotations from the film *The Hangover* in arguing for his drunken client, another lawyer who was caught using Wikipedia for his arguments, and the question of whether a test tube baby is technically legitimate and mercy killing is legal.

Law is an organic body of rules and good lawyers help to reshape it. As one judge, Lord Denning, noted in a case in 1954, just because something has never been argued before doesn't mean it is wrong. He said:

"If we never do anything which has not been done before, we shall never get anywhere. The law will stand still while the rest of the world goes on: and that will be bad for both".

Knowing the law is empowering. The American comedian Jerry Seinfeld said that a lawyer is: *"the person who knows the rules of the country"*. He said *"we are all throwing the dice, playing the game, moving our pieces around the board, but if there is a problem the lawyer is the only person who has read the inside of the top of the box"*. Controlling everything, law is a constantly stimulating and hugely important game.

So, the answer is:
studying law-boring, maybe.
Interesting, oh yeah!

It depends on how you take it. Basically, law is regarded as a very dry subject theoretically. Well, please answer, which subject is interesting theoretically for that matter? Unless and until we apply what we learn from the theories in real life we won't find anything interesting. For me therefore, the practical application of the laws that we study in law schools in real life cases is what makes law alive and super duper interesting. The case studies that we do, analyzing various judgments and verdicts, expressing one's opinions on newly enforced laws and policies, following cases that are going on in various Courts and adding our own comments and suggestions on the same, all these make law exciting. We discuss our views and opinions on plethora of topics. There are laws on almost everything on this planet. It's a natural tendency of us humans to be inquisitive about what's happening around us. And if you are a voracious reader, have an eye for detail, like to express your views openly, good in communication skills and want to create a difference in the lives of people in distress, then this is the career for you! The takeaway is we need to keep updating our own skill sets and knowledge base throughout our lives. So, law is indeed quite a lively and interesting field if you make it lively. You always have a choice to specialize in the area of your interest and make it big. So, follow what your heart says and do give it a try.

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