The Association of American Law Schools states that students interested in pursuing a law degree should get a broad undergraduate education that provides "comprehension and expression in words, critical understanding of the human institutions and values with which the law deals and creative power in thinking." These qualities are to be achieved through disciplined study in fields of the student's choice. The question, then, that pre-law students ask most frequently is, "What should I major in if I plan to go to law school?"

Although law schools traditionally have encouraged pre-law students to acquire a broad liberal arts education, law schools do not require students to major in a particular discipline or to take specified undergraduate courses. Just about any major is acceptable, and law schools do not have a checklist of preferred "pre-law courses." Most law school applicants have pursued a traditional liberal arts curriculum; the second largest group of law school applicants comes from business schools. Liberal arts students should take some courses in the College of Business, particularly economics and perhaps a year of accounting. Conversely, business students should take work outside their major in traditional liberal arts courses.

Prospective law students should consider the following:

1. Select a major that is academically rigorous and which will encourage independent and analytical thinking.
2. Select a major you find interesting. Since no particular major is "required," there is little point in majoring in a subject you find uninspiring. Indeed, the pre-law student may pursue a broadly based liberal studies curriculum by completing any of the baccalaureate degrees offered in WSU's Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
3. One aspect of a liberal arts education is to give students knowledge of a wide variety of subjects. When selecting elective classes beyond your major or concentration, choose rigorous courses that require critical and analytical thinking and writing. (Research papers and essay exams are an advantage!)
4. Emphasize fundamentals. This means you should understand quantitative methods of analysis. The use of quantitative methods and statistical techniques is becoming more important in all fields of endeavor, including law. In addition, the ability to organize your thoughts and to express them clearly in writing has always been important. Both writing and oral communication skills are particularly important for pre-law students.
5. Before selecting a major or individual courses which purport to teach "law," keep in mind that a student with wide knowledge of history, literature, philosophy, and economics will be better equipped for law school than one who has completed a more limited undergraduate course of study.
6. Specific sections of the LSAT focus on logic and analytical reasoning, so prior background will prove beneficial. Consider taking Philosophy 125, Introduction to Logic. The LSAT is scheduled four (4) times per year and is given on the WSU campus.
7. Some pre-law students initiate employment as legal assistants or "runners" in local law firms. The experiences gained through this involvement may help to clarify and confirm professional goals and may also contribute to more effective selection of an academic major or concentration. Several on-campus resources, including the Cooperative Education Program, are available to assist students with possible placement.
9. Become involved with the Pre-Law Student Association who organizes special campus events related to the law field. Dr. Jeff Hershfield, advisor, 978-7883.

Good planning for admission to law school begins with the choices one makes in the first semester of college. Initiate a contact with one of the pre-law counselors indicated below as soon as possible after beginning university classes. You'll receive assistance in outlining a plan of study, which will meet your interests and needs. In this way you will build a network of resources, which will make the actual application process for law school in your junior year a good experience.

Courses Recommended for your consideration by various Schools of Law:

- CJ 315 Criminal Law
- CJ 394 Courts and the Judicial System
- PHIL 125 Introduction to Logic
- PHIL 311 Philosophy of Law
- POL S 551 Public Law

For further information concerning law schools, academic program planning, or the admissions process for law school, please feel free to contact any of the following pre-law advisors:

Marti Smith, Criminal Justice, 314 Lindquist Hall, 978-6679, martha.smith@wichita.edu
Jeffrey Hershfield, Philosophy, 307 Fiske Hall, Phone 978-7883, jeffrey.hershfield@wichita.edu
Neal Allen, Political Science, 418 Lindquist Hall, 978-7133, nealallen@wichita.edu

Or your initial contact may be with one of the academic advisors in the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Advising Center, 115 Grace Wilkie Hall, 316-978-4757.