FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COURSE SELECTION

- **Can I select courses from the J.D. curriculum?**

  Yes. You may select courses from the entire upper-level J.D. curriculum (with the exception of clinics and first-year courses, such as Torts and Contracts) and as well as the graduate curriculum. Many of the J.D. courses are cross-listed which means that there are seats set aside for LL.M. students. You must register for the “LAWG” side of cross-listed courses. For J.D. courses that are not cross-listed, graduate students have priority below all J.D. students for getting into the course if there is a waiting list.

- **Must my graduate courses be taken from the list of classes in my degree program?**

  No. You may choose from the entire graduate curriculum. The list of courses that meet the requirements for your degree program [e.g., those listed on-line for International Legal Studies or International Business and Economic Law or on the grids in this packet for each program] are a useful way to identify courses that likely will interest you, but you should also look through the alphabetical list of graduate courses to get an understanding of the wide range of classes open to you. When selecting classes outside your degree area, bear in mind the number of “specialization credits” you need for your degree. For example, foreign-trained lawyers in the Taxation degree must complete 16 tax-related credits; and foreign-trained lawyers in the Securities & Financial Regulation degree must complete 14 securities-related credits.

- **I applied for one degree program but now realize another one better suits my interests. Can I change my degree specialization?**

  Yes, you may switch your degree program after your arrival; the two exceptions are our LL.M. in Global Health Law and National Security Law. For now, choose the courses that interest you, and we will take care of your degree specialization or no specialization after you meet with your academic advisor and attend classes. Many students make up their minds about their degree specialization in January after the Spring semester begins.

- **Should I try to meet the requirements of a certificate along with the LL.M.?**

  A certificate can be a nice bonus but employers usually are more interested in the legal knowledge and skills you have developed at Georgetown Law than in whether you have a specialized certificate. As with your degree specialization, you should not let the requirement of a certificate limit your course choices. If you have a highly specialized career plan and we offer a certificate in that area – such as WTO Law or International Human Rights – you will find that you can complete the certificate requirements easily. Otherwise, it is better to think about the courses you are interested in and the skills you wish to develop.

- **How do my career goals impact my course selection?**

  If you already know what career path you want to follow, there may be a series of courses that will help you acquire substantive knowledge and develop useful skills for that particular career. Generally speaking, employers do not require you to take a specific course or courses. Do you want to work on your writing skills? Do you want to learn how to negotiate? Employers that focus on a particular subject matter or type of legal work, however, often do expect that...
applicants will have taken at least a basic course in the related area. There are a wide range of courses for you to choose from that will help you develop a broad foundation in numerous areas of law. For instance, while some courses will familiarize you with the governing regulatory body of law, others will focus on specialized topics that you find of interest. “Course clusters” provide some guidance in helping you choose courses related to a specific career path and can be found. To search for a course by cluster, please go to http://www.law.georgetown.edu/curriculum/tab_schedules.cfm and select the area of law from the drop down menu (e.g. LL.M.: Taxation; LL.M.: International Legal Studies). For more advice about course selection and your career path, please consult with your career and academic advisors.

What is an “externship” and should I do one?

An Externship is a placement in a work setting outside of the law school. For LL.M. students, it is possible to do an externship at a US government agency, at an NGO, or at a for-profit enterprise like a law firm or business. Students work at least 10 hours a week under the direct supervision of a lawyer and receive 2 credits. Our students work in a variety of placements including the World Bank, the Internal Revenue Service, US Securities & Exchange Commission, National Institutes of Health, the US Attorney's Office, KPMG, the Joint Committee on Taxation, The Center for Justice and International Law, and the Center for Telehealth & E-Health Law. International students are eligible to do an Externship only in the Spring semester. For more information, go to http://www.law.georgetown.edu/graduate/AdmittedStudentExternInfo.htm.

Are there other practice-oriented courses available, in addition to Externships?

We offer a number of courses that emphasize practical skills. Generally speaking, courses with “workshop” in the title are skills-based courses. For Tax and Securities students, these courses include International Business Planning Workshop, Tax Practice Workshop, Cross-Border Tax Controversy Workshop, Drafting Partnership and LLC Agreements, and International Debt Workouts. For international LL.M. students, courses that emphasize practice skills and writing include the various courses with “U.S. Legal Discourse II” in the title; International Negotiations, Pre-Negotiation Strategies for Cross-Border Transactions, Presentation Skills for Lawyers, and Advanced International Commercial Arbitration.

I am an international student who is thinking of taking the N.Y. Bar. Should this affect my course selection?

In order to sit for the N.Y. Bar, an international LL.M. student must complete 20 credits of course work. Credits earned in non-law main campus courses or for Graduate Independent Research project do not count for this purpose. In addition, students must take at least two courses in U.S. law from an approved list. See http://www.law.georgetown.edu/international/documents/Bar-approvedcoursesNYMarch2006edited2008.pdf Beyond these basics, we generally do not recommend that students load up on courses that are tested on the bar exam. Since the subjects tested on the bar exam are not well-suited to the type of international law classes many of our students come to Georgetown Law to study, few take courses just for the bar exam. Yet,
enrolling in classes like Introduction to U.S. Legal Methods, and Introduction to U.S. Constitutional Law, and taking a writing course will give you valuable knowledge without taking time away from your longer-term goal of understanding how to be a lawyer in a global community. The majority of preparation for the bar exam is done after graduation through enrollment in a bar preparation course and devoting yourself to studying during the ten weeks between graduation and the bar exam.

Please note that the New York Board of Law Examiners has announced new rules that will go into effect for international students establishing their eligibility to sit for that exam by enrolling in an LL.M. in the U.S. The rules do not affect students enrolling in the 2011 – 12 year, but only for the class beginning in Fall 2012.

Should I choose a course because I hear that the faculty member is great?

Yes, by all means. But remember that each year nearly two thirds of the faculty members are nominated by at least one student as the teacher of the year! Teachers have different styles and different strengths. Read the course evaluations available online. Take a course with an interesting visiting faculty member, including international visiting faculty. Also, don’t forget our outstanding adjunct faculty. They include current and former judges and distinguished lawyers from private practice and private industry, government, and the non-profit and public interest sectors. Most students do not make their final decisions about which courses to take until after they have attended one class session during the first week of classes. It is usually prudent to have a few alternative course selections in mind, in case a particular teacher’s style or focus is not the one you prefer.

How do I get started with course selection?

There are a number of tools that you will want to explore when selecting courses, from the online Curriculum Guide to faculty evaluations and biographies to the “How Courses Close” statistics provided by the Office of the Registrar. But before diving in to these materials, it is helpful to ask yourself a few questions:

- What are your goals for your time at the law school, and how would you prioritize them? How important is it to you to develop specific legal skills, such as drafting legal documents, public speaking, or managing client relationships? To have significant time for personal commitments or pursuits outside the law? To maximize your GPA? To take a course just for fun? To develop deep expertise in a specific field of law? To develop mentoring relationships with faculty?

- What classes have you enjoyed in other educational settings, and why? (Think about teaching style, substantive material, size of class, nature of graded exercises, the reading material, etc.)

- Do you already have a clear idea of what you want to do after you receive your LL.M.? Are there several areas of law you hope to explore?
Are there courses every law student must or should take?

Each LL.M. degree and certificate has its own requirements. Review the Curriculum Guide for your specific area of law at http://www.law.georgetown.edu/graduate/AcademicPrograms.htm Be sure to enroll in any required courses and obtain the sufficient number of credits by selecting among the courses listed in the guides to receive the degree or certificate.

What are the maximum and minimum number of credits I can take per semester?

Georgetown requires full-time students to take no fewer than 8 and no more than 13 credits in a semester. Part-time students may not enroll in more than 7 credits in a semester. Students whose first degree in law is from the U.S. must complete at least 24 credits for their degree. Students whose first degree in law is from outside the U.S. must complete at least 20 credits for their degree.

Should I register for both Fall 2011 and Spring 2012?

Yes, make your selections for both semesters by the June 27 deadline. If you do not make your Spring Semester course selections now, you may find yourself at the bottom of waiting lists for Spring courses. You will have plenty of time to modify your course selections after you get here, during the so-called “Add/Drop period” during the first week of each semester. For now, do your best to identify classes you want. Pay attention to the prerequisite and recommended courses listed.

Can I enroll in a course that lists another course as a prerequisite?

Yes. You do not need to have taken a prerequisite course at Georgetown. For example, a common prerequisite is “International Law I.” If you have taken this course or a “public international law” course in your first legal degree then you meet the requirement. Faculty members often will waive a prerequisite if you are taking the prerequisite concurrently with the course, or if you have knowledge through other study or work experience. If you are uncertain about whether you have the necessary background knowledge, you can consult with the professor or an academic advisor.

Is it preferable to take a heavier load in the fall or spring semester?

The timing and nature of the workload is much more important than the number of credits. A course-load of four exam classes will demand intense focus at the end of the semester for outlines and exam study, but may leave more room earlier in the semester for other commitments. By contrast, the deadlines and “deliverables” tend to spread out more evenly in a schedule that includes a practice-oriented course or an externship, a few exam classes, and one or two paper seminars.