

# Tips From JD Students

## Cold Calling: How Do You Navigate a Cold Call?

- It can be nerve-wracking, but remember that the other students in the class are not totally focused on your answer, and the only one who will remember your answer is you!
- Professors want to guide you in the direction of the right answer, so lean into that. The professor is not trying to stump you; they are trying to coax the right answer out of you.

## Briefing:

- What is it? Taking down the main points of a case, e.g., facts, procedural history, main question, rule of law, legal reasoning
- Be brief: if trying to read a page of notes it's hard to use the brief to respond to a cold call
- What you will use most is the rule of law and legal reasoning so focus on that
- Can be helpful to add another section at end: "takeaway." That will be what the professor highlights about the case in class and will be useful for studying for exams
- Ways to organize: Create a column with your brief – facts, main question, etc. In another column next to it, write the professor's comments. Alternatively, you could use one font color for briefs and other reading notes and a different color for what the professor says.

## Course Outlines:

- What is outlining? Condensing a semester's worth of info so that you can use it in an exam
- Be sure to include anything the professor emphasized
- If you know that starting early on outlining is helpful to you, do that.
- Great idea to look at course "outline banks" for a collection of past outlines students have created (try to find the most recent!)
  - o Student Bar Association (SBA) maintains an [outline bank](#) anyone can access
  - o Specific student groups maintain their own outline banks – Great reason to join student groups! The groups try to get outlines from students who did well in the class.
- One strategy for outlining:
  - o Merge two good outlines created by past students with your own class and reading notes

## "Attack" Outlines:

- What is an "attack" outline? A specific outline to respond to questions you know will come up on the exam. The more you are delving into and preparing for what you know will be asked, the more helpful your outlining will be.
- For example, in Civ. Pro., you know there will be a question on personal jurisdiction. Prepare the answer in advance by having an outline of how you will address the issue (include names of the relevant cases, rules of law, etc.).

## Policy Questions on Exams:

- An exam may include a policy question(s), and it's helpful to anticipate what the question will be.
- Try to get clues from the syllabus; what are topic headings and themes
- If practice exams are available, look at what the question has been in the past; the prof. probably won't ask the same policy question in consecutive years
- Often professors will give clues in class about what the policy question may be. For example, they might say "there has been a lot of litigation about issue x"
- You can look into what the prof. has been writing about in law reviews – that may inform the prof.'s policy question
- When answering policy questions: bring in your argument and counterarguments. If the prof. has a known stance, doesn't hurt to highlight it.

## Office Hours/TAs:

- If there are teaching assistants (TAs) for your classes, talk to them. They have taken the class before (and they have done well!) so they are an extremely helpful resource when studying for an exam
- Don't be afraid to go to professors' office hours, even if you don't have a specific question
  - o You will learn by listening to other students' questions
  - o Or this is a great time to get to know your professor on a more personal level (can be helpful to develop relationships with faculty if you need a letter of recommendation in the future but don't start with that request)
  - o Be considerate: if other students have come with questions, give them time to speak

## Quimbee:

- An online resource students use to help with case briefs, outlines, and exam prep
- There is a fee for a monthly subscription
- Don't ONLY rely on Quimbee! You still need to listen in class and learn what your professor thinks is important

## Study Groups:

- Particularly helpful for reviewing practice exams. Do practice exams by yourself and then share your answers in a group.
- Can be helpful to some to talk in a small group about what was covered in class

## Final pieces of advice:

- Try to treat law school as a full-time Monday through Friday job and then take 1-2 days off each weekend, otherwise you WILL burn out!
- Do something small for yourself every day to help you stay sane, whether that is grabbing a quick coffee with a friend or going to a workout class. Something for you.
- Don't stay in your shell. If you need help, ask for it. Being at NYU is an excellent opportunity to leverage connections and use the resources at your disposal.
- Meet everyone you can. NYU students are incredible people and this is a unique opportunity to learn from them and make new friends.