

## **PRE-LAW STUDY IN THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT**

The Department of History respects the guidelines issued by the American Bar Association for pre-law education. The ABA Section of Legal Education stresses that no specific major is superior as preparation for law school or for a career in law. Rather, students are encouraged to choose a major that interests them and that develops skills in research, writing, and critical thinking. The ABA also recommends a challenging curriculum to provide the potential law student with the abilities and experience to succeed in law school.

History department course offerings provide future law students with the preparation necessary for success, demonstrated by a proven track record at some of the nation's finest law schools. Upper-division courses require students to synthesize and analyze diverse concepts, a practice of great value in legal studies. These courses often require research projects that introduce students to the practice of finding and analyzing documentary material, skills that are essential to the study and practice of law. As the capstone experience, history majors complete a senior seminar designed around an extensive research paper that makes use of the various skills they have learned in the department.

The Department of History thus offers an exceptional preparation for admission to and success in law school. Existing courses are often augmented by courses taught by local attorneys on such topics as constitutional history and various aspects of the history of law. The department also offers various internship opportunities with local law firms and government agencies to provide pre-law students with valuable experience.

Although the skills developed as a TTU history major provide a sound base for the study of law, the required minor offers an additional advantage. The flexibility of this program allows the potential law student to develop a more specialized curriculum to parallel his/her interest. A pre-law student interested in pursuing a career in corporate law, for example, could design a minor around the various business and economics courses available each semester. Criminal justice and psychology courses might be of value for those students intrigued by criminal law. The expanding field of environmental law requires specialized knowledge from such disciplines as biology and chemistry, but the pre-law student in the TTU history department could also profit from the highly regarded programs in Wildlife and Fisheries Science, Environmental Biology, and Environmental and Sustainability Studies. In short, the combination of history department requirements for the major and the minor provides pre-law students with the skills and knowledge needed for a successful law school experience.

Within the Department of History, each faculty member works diligently and individually with each student to achieve their academic goals. For pre-law students, gaining admission to an accredited law school is among the most important of these goals. Indeed, the history department actively discourages students from considering attending a non-accredited law school, as these offer curricula of questionable quality, limited career options, and a poor rate of graduates who pass the bar examination. History graduates have attended such law schools as Harvard, Cornell, Vanderbilt, Emory, and the University of Tulsa, as well as the law schools of the University of Tennessee and the University of Memphis.