



STUDY HABITS

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF: *MÉTHODES DE TRAVAIL*

1. CLASS WORK

1.1 BEFORE CLASS

- ✓ Do all required readings;
 - Depending on the nature of the class (Civil Law), summaries of decisions (available on SOQUIJ) can be a good preparatory class reading;
 - Summarize the decision yourself when you face difficulties;
 - Don't spend too much time on the facts;
 - A court case might touch on different law concepts : make sure you focus on the ones that will be relevant for your course (Use the Course Outline);
 - Identify the ways in which the decision can be referenced in an exam (What principles are created or illustrated?);
- ✓ Read your notes from the previous class;
- ✓ Read relevant laws or Code sections;
- ✓ Read the Course Outline;
- ✓ Read the doctrine and include important passages in your notes for the courses where the professor focuses on the doctrine or when a concept is difficult to understand;

1.2 DURING CLASS

- ✓ Have necessary class material with you;
- ✓ Take notes in class;
- ✓ Record the classes that are more difficult to follow, and take note of any time you miss a portion;

- ✓ Follow the structure of the Course Outline while taking notes. Ask the professor to send the Outline electronically;
- ✓ Underline in a separate colour the passages of a court decision quoted by your professor;
- ✓ Visually organize your note (using colours or bold type-face, titles and subtitles);
 - You can even use different colours for articles of different laws)
- ✓ Take note of any ideas the professor mentions (implicitly or explicitly) as being important or specific exam material;
- ✓ Be careful when your professor says not to take note of something. Write it down anyway, in case your professor forgets to say when (s)he's back on subject;
- ✓ Note the pages of doctrine your professor mentions to more easily find important passages;
- ✓ Identify pages from court decisions your professor quotes.

1.3 AFTER CLASS

- ✓ Read the doctrine if you have doubts or when the professor mentioned it;
 - ✓ Put articles mentioned by your professor directly into your class notes;
 - ✓ Re-read your notes to complete and correct them after class;
 - ✓ Make a Table of Contents of your notes as you go;
 - ✓
 - ✓ Focus on what the professor mentioned in class with regards to jurisprudence and doctrine. If needed:
 - Insert jurisprudence and doctrine into your notes;
 - Make tables or summaries of each decision and of the doctrine;
 - Read decisions and identify what has been mentioned by the professor in class.
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2. EXAMS

2.1 BEFORE AN EXAM

- ✓ Sleep;
- ✓ Make a realistic study-schedule and stick to it as much as possible. Include in your schedule some free time;
- ✓ Plan for approximately two full study days per exam;
- ✓ Start preparing for your exams from day one. Keep your notes up-to-date so that you can concentrate on review in the short period before an exam;
- ✓ Print your notes and use *Post-its* to easily find important pages;
- ✓ Compare your notes with a colleague if you have doubts or think you missed something important;
- ✓ Identify and define important concepts, and include related jurisprudence and code sections;
- ✓ Practice using previous-years exams, ideally in a group to compare answers;
- ✓ For closed-book exams, make tables and point-form summaries using keywords. Re-write them a few times to help memorization. Keep in mind that a closed-book exam requires greater preparation;
- ✓ Be familiar with all the tools you will have with you at the exam (notes, coursepack, codes, doctrine, etc.)

2.2 DURING AN EXAM

- ✓ Use the washroom before your exam;
- ✓ Bring a watch to manage your time;
- ✓ Verify the number of pages, to make sure your exam is complete;
- ✓ Verify the duration of the exam;

- ✓ Read the questions carefully. Properly dissecting the question will allow you to grasp all elements of the question;
 - o If the question contains several elements or sub-questions it may be useful to highlight each part in a different colour. Verify afterward that you've answered everything asked in the question.
- ✓ Refer to important concepts by describing the facts of the case;
- ✓ Organise your answer;
- ✓ Make sure to put things in chronological order (especially in *Droit des biens*);
- ✓ Bring loose-leaf paper with you to prepare an outline of your answers;
- ✓ Pay attention to your vocabulary. Ensure the term you use is the right one, and the same one used by your professor;
- ✓ Write quickly (don't waste your time on grammar or penmanship);
- ✓ Do not make a draft of your answer. An outline is enough;
- ✓ Re-read your answer, while asking yourself if there is a decision or a law to add-in;
- ✓ Do not compare yourself to those around you;
- ✓ Divide your time according to the number of questions on the exam; additionally, take note of the point allocation for each question. The time spent on that question and the depth of your answer should reflect accordingly.
- ✓ If you are stuck on a question, skip over it and come back to it at the end;
- ✓ Keep your cool. Don't panic when you run into a difficult question;
- ✓ If you begin to panic, breathe, put the exam aside for a moment for a short break or a sip of water, and then resume your exam.

2.3 AFTER AN EXAM

- ✓ Comparing answers with others after an exam is a personal choice;
- ✓ Keep your class notes. You may want to bind them as they may be useful later;
- ✓ Remember that once an exam is finished, there is nothing you can do to change your answers. Focus on preparing for the any other upcoming exams;
- ✓ Go to the exam-review sessions to see what points you missed. It is possible to contest a grade, but it must be grounded and for a specific reason. The form can

be filled out during review. Be advised, however, it is possible to lose points when you contest a grade;

✓ Relax.



3. PAPERS AND TAKE-HOME EXAMS

3.1 BEFORE DRAFTING

- ✓ Choose your teammates carefully;
- ✓ Get a head-start to be able to manage your time in case of unforeseen problems;
- ✓ Prepare for the event that your teammate does not complete the required work, or does it poorly forcing a task-redistribution amongst teammates;
- ✓ Study even if you don't have an exam, especially in the case of take-homes with exam-style questions;
- ✓ Sketch out your answer, keeping in mind the Course Outline;
- ✓ Set deadlines for yourself before the actual due-date;
- ✓ Do research outside of the sources suggested by your professor. Often, professors use real cases as inspiration for their questions.

3.2 DRAFTING

- ✓ Make a draft outline;
- ✓ Don't waste your time on your bibliography at this stage (do them at the end);
- ✓ Make a list of all material to include in your answer. Check it off when it has been added to your text;
- ✓ Divide research between teammates;
- ✓ When you are writing a text, do no separate parts between teammates as the writing style will lack consistently. Instead, write as a team;
- ✓ Always go back to the question / hint to stay on target;
- ✓ Do not copy/paste your notes. Reformulating your ideas shows a better understanding of the material;

3.3 AFTER DRAFTING

- ✓ Re-read the question;
- ✓ Re-read your work;
- ✓ Have someone else re-read it;
- ✓ Print the document to re-read it;
- ✓ Review your document using *Antidote* (available on the computers in the Law Library.)