LAW EXAM STRATEGY

Tips for 1Ls

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR SAMUEL BESWICK



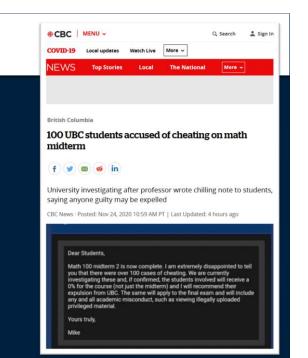
https://blogs.ubc.ca/beswick/ | November 18, 2021

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Don't cheat. It's not worth it.

Academic integrity is a big deal. The Law School and the Law Society take it very seriously. For a lawyer, dishonesty is worse than a criminal conviction.

Keep perspective: it'll be okay!



PREPARING FOR EXAMS



PETER A. ALLARD SCHOOL OF LAW

- CAN the syllabus. See 2021 CanLIIDocs 1859, p ii.
- Practice, practice, practice! See <u>https://blogs.ubc.ca/beswick/torts-quizzes/</u>.
- Study and practice with friends: attempt problems individually; discuss answers together.
- Read the exam cover page 24 hours before the exam.
- Keep perspective: it'll be okay!
- Follow the Prime Directive.
- Read instructions carefully before beginning.
- Pinball method of issue-spotting: hit the bumpers = points.
- Apply law, not emotions. (Beware the trap of sympathising with one party.)
- It is good to <u>distinguish</u> doctrine. It is not good to discuss <u>irrelevant</u> doctrine.

SITTING ISSUE-SPOTTER EXAMS



• Breathe.

- Do a plan:
 - Issue-spotting: what are the major and minor issues?
 - Issue-sorting: what order/structure to address them in? How much time on each?
- For each issue: follow the IRAC structure.
- Use headings (for each issue) and signifiers/markers where useful.
- Abbreviate case names after first use (and underline/italicise if possible).
- No need to repeat the details of rules if they come up more than once.
- Very brief quotes are fine (no more than a sentence), but do not quote at length.
- Don't copy/paste.
- Do use symbols to signal when content jumps around the page.
- Remember to answer the question asked!

3

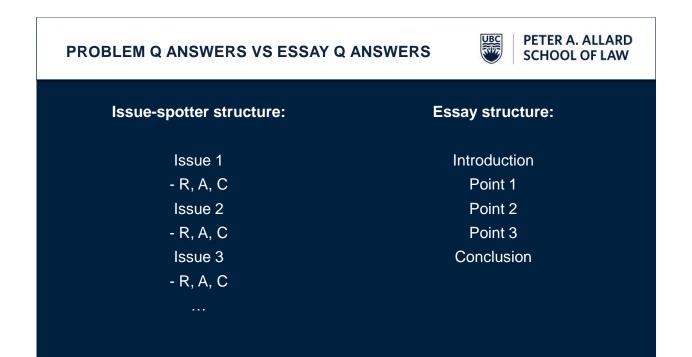
WHAT IS THE EXAMINER LOOKING FOR?



PETER A. ALLARD

SCHOOL OF LAW

- Spotting and sorting relevant <u>i</u>ssues.
 - And side-lining irrelevant issues: don't throw in the kitchen sink.
- <u>Applying relevant rules/law to the facts in a considered and balanced way.</u>
 - Reasoning with respect to relevant facts.
 - Citing, and applying or distinguishing, relevant authorities. Binding or dicta?
 - Considering arguments on both sides.
 - Allocating time/detail according to importance/complexity of issues.
- Reaching <u>c</u>onclusions that are supported by analysis.
- Clarity (structure, comprehensiveness, and persuasiveness) of answer.



SO YOU WANT A JOB AFTER LAW SCHOOL?



PETER A. ALLARD

SCHOOL OF LAW

• Find two professors who will know and appreciate you well enough to be able to write you reference letters in future. How?

- Upper-level seminars/courses/clinics.
- Self-directed research papers.
- Research/teaching assistant positions.
- Office hours.
- Identify people whose careers you admire. Consider their path. Reach out to them.
 - Maybe blog or write an article in the same fora or on the same topics as they do.
- Treat your classmates/peers with respect. Reputations travel fast ... and stick.



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA