

# Sustainable Lawyering: An Introduction to Mindfulness for 1Ls

Berkeley Initiative for  
Mindfulness in Law

Sustainable Lawyering is a four-week, non-credit course designed to help 1L students learn skills for success, balance and wellbeing in law school and law practice. It was offered in 2013 to nearly 20% of the 1L class, and received an enthusiastic response from students. The course is designed to be a manageable time commitment while providing significant benefits to students facing the rigors of law school.

## ➤ ***Why Mindfulness in Law School?***

Mindfulness meditation is a simple practice of paying attention to our moment-by-moment experience. While the benefits of meditation have been understood for centuries, recent studies in neuroscience and psychology confirm that regular practice increases the ability to concentrate, to make empathic connections with others and to be present with challenging situations. Of particular interest to lawyers and law students, meditation is a highly effective means of relieving stress and anxiety.

This course, taught by Charlie Halpern and Dan Carlin, Director and Associate Director, respectively, of the Berkeley Initiative for Mindfulness in Law, is an introduction to mindfulness as a skill for law students who wish to cultivate these benefits. By building a foundation of these simple practices early in their careers, students can be more effective in their studies and work, find greater quality of life and establish a sustainable career in the law.

### **Student comments:**

*“Law school is a stressful experience, especially 1L year. Mindfulness provides you with skills that will be beneficial to you throughout your life and there really is no better time to start this practice!”*

*“In stressful times, I now find myself able to take a breath and remain calm before reacting. I am more joyous in daily interaction and experiences.”*

## ➤ ***Course summary***

Over the course of four weeks, students will learn basic mindfulness practices, including sitting meditation, qi gong (a moving meditation practice) and others, that help them cultivate a sense of presence, focus, and equanimity. Through class discussions and assigned exercises, students learn to integrate mindfulness into their daily law school experience. At the conclusion

### **Schedule**

- 11:20 a.m. -1:20 pm Fridays, 8/29-9/19

### **More info and registration**

[law.berkeley.edu/mindfulness.htm](http://law.berkeley.edu/mindfulness.htm)

### **Questions?**

Contact

[BIML@law.berkeley.edu](mailto:BIML@law.berkeley.edu)

of the formal course, students will have the option of enrolling in a mentorship and support program that helps them maintain and deepen their mindfulness practice. In addition, on Saturday, October 25, 2014 the Mindfulness Initiative offers a free, day-long meditation retreat which serves as a useful capstone experience for students in the course.

## ➤ ***Expectations***

Students are expected to attend all four class sessions and to complete the weekly assignments, including maintaining a regular meditation practice throughout the course.

## ➤ ***Beginners & Experienced Meditators Welcome!***

Beginners and those with some meditation experience will benefit from the course and are welcome to enroll.

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