

CARDOZO LAW

BENJAMIN N. CARDOZO SCHOOL OF LAW • YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING FALL 2020 SEMESTER

June 30, 2020

Overview

Because our first priority is to ensure the health and safety of the Cardozo community, we will follow New York State Higher Education Best-Practices Guidelines. In addition, **no student or faculty member will be required to attend class in-person during the fall semester.** All classes will be offered online and fall exams will be administered online. Exams and courses will be graded according to our usual policies.

After working for months on a schedule that would allow upper-level classes in the building, it became clear that the vertical structure of our building, limits on building occupancy and restroom capacity, the need for social distancing, and limits on cleaning and disinfecting between use greatly restricted the possibility for live instruction. In addition, any plan that would allow for some upper-level live instruction would have greatly restricted curriculum options for upper-level students. Therefore, we reluctantly came to conclusion that **all upper-level J.D. classes, and all LL.M. courses, will be held remotely.**

Our current plan is to open the library to students beginning August 17th, subject to social distancing rules and other safety protocols that will be developed over the coming month. We are working to create opportunities for all students to engage in meaningful academic and social interactions both remotely and in person on the Cardozo campus, and will have updates for you as the summer progresses.

Our current plan allows **every 1L student** the option to attend one first-year class in person for the entire semester (either Torts or Civil Procedure, depending on the section to which the student is assigned) as long as government regulations allow. These in-person classes will be held two days a week, for 2 – 2.5 hours each day (with breaks in between each hour). Classes will be staggered to limit the number of students coming into the building at any given time. In addition, each 1L student will have the option of attending one session of Elements of the Law in person during orientation week. Social distancing measures will be in effect, and all safety precautions will be taken. Again, no student will be required to attend class in-person, as each student shall have the opportunity to make their own choices about their health and safety. All other 1L classes will be held remotely.

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Our class schedule is flexible. We will be able to switch to entirely remote learning should health conditions warrant, or to offer some in-person upper-level classes should social distancing recommendations be modified or lifted during the semester. Should this occur, students who cannot or do not wish to travel to Cardozo will be allowed to “Zoom in” to any class that is offered in person. As public health conditions ebb and flow, **all decisions about whether and to what extent to offer in-person classes will be made in close consultation with the University’s medical director, with the top consideration being the health and well being of our students and faculty.**

Cardozo is able to offer our typical full range of classes for the upcoming semester, and faculty and administrators are working to bring every aspect of a Cardozo education, including crucial outside-class experiences, into the new blended learning environment. Some have asked about a tuition refund, which is not possible as the law school has actually incurred new costs as we expand our technology capabilities to meet new needs. We are confident that the value of a Cardozo education has not changed. Refunds for residential dorm payments are available for students who are no longer able to live in campus housing.

Calendar Information

- **Class Schedule:** In order to limit student travel during peak periods, we are altering our fall 2020 academic calendar. 1L Orientation will begin on **Monday August 17th**. Upper level classes will begin **Tuesday, August 25th**. The fall semester will end on **Wednesday, November 25th**, the day before Thanksgiving.
- **The Final Exam Period** will begin **Tuesday, December 1st** and end on **Friday, December 11th**.
- **Class Registration:** Registration for upper-class and LL.M students will open on **July 20th**.

Building Access and Safety

- **Building Entry:** In accordance with New York State guidelines, everyone in the building will be required to wear masks and practice social distancing. No guests will be permitted to enter the building. Additional health and safety precautions are being developed by the University’s medical director, and will be announced in future communications.
- **Common Spaces:** The library will have study hours by appointment; the lobby, Moot Court room, and select classrooms will be available for approved activities such as journal editorial meetings, study groups, and social gatherings. Details will be announced as the summer progresses.

In Development

In forthcoming updates, we will share how each of our departments is adapting to create an accessible and meaningful experience for every student and taking advantage of opportunities to be creative that come with a blended learning environment. Look out for more information about:

- **Academics**, including more information on exams and academic success opportunities;

- **Student life and community building**, including administration and student-sponsored programs, social gatherings on- and off-line, anti-racism programming as we continue our work to advance racial equity, and the introduction of new platforms like Microsoft Teams that will enable student organizations to organize and host meetings and programs;
- **Career services**, including additional support programs for students in every class; and
- **Alumni programming**, including new ways for students to network with Cardozo alumni.

We will share the next update the week of July 13th.