

Book Reviews

Simon Askey and Ian McLeod, *Studying Law*, Palgrave Macmillan (2005). Paperback; 194 pp (ISBN-13: 978-1-4039-9926-9; ISBN-10: 1-4039-9926-0)

Studying Law sets out to provide students coming to Law for the first time with a tool kit to get them started. Unlike most similar titles it emphasis matters such as the relationships between law, morals and justice; the constitutional context within which the English legal system functions; and the way in which English Law seeks to protect human and fundamental rights.

It also provides an introduction to the English doctrine of binding precedent, while its treatment of legislative interpretation explains the failure of literalism and the rise of purposivism.

The book also provides useful guidance on how to write good English. This chapter includes one of the book's most entertaining anecdotes, which derives from the story of a customer who wrote a letter to a dealer in pet animals, ordering *two mongooses*. Having read through the letter before sending it off, he felt that *mongooses* did not sound quite right. Accordingly, he wrote another letter, this time ordering *two mongeese*. On further consideration, this also seemed to be wrong, so he wrote a third letter, ordering *one mongoose*. Having signed this letter he added a postscript saying *on second thoughts, please make it two*. Thus what the authors call the *mongoose principle* states: *if in difficulty or doubt, rewrite it*.

The main text concludes with invaluable advice to students on how to tackle assessments, including essays, problem questions and oral exercises. The book concludes with appendices containing relevant extracts from the European Convention on Human Rights and an explanation of the abbreviations for the most commonly encountered law reports and law journals.

The style of the book is lively and accessible throughout. It deals with all the topics which it addresses in a way which is both short enough to be understood by beginners in the earliest stages of their studies, and long enough to provide a genuinely useful initial underpinning for subsequent, more detailed, study.

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