

THE LAW STUDENT'S GUIDE TO

Must-see Legal TV Shows

Here are 20 shows every law student should watch and why.

Lawyer TV shows may be in their golden age. With networks, cable channels and streaming services all vying for viewers, the number of TV shows about lawyers has hit an all-time high.

But with so many options, how do you identify the shows that are realistic, meaningful and entertaining?

We turned to Bob Jarvis, a professor at Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad College of Law in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and author of the 1998 book "Prime Time Law: Fictional Television as Legal Narrative."

Don't expect him to update that book, however.

"There really is no such thing as 'prime time' anymore," he said. "With the number of cable channels having exploded, more and more content moving onto streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime, and the advent of watch-on-demand, there now are so many shows that no show really can capture a sizeable part of the TV-watching audience. Indeed, I am constantly amazed, when I mention a new lawyer TV show in class, how many of my students have never even heard of it, much less seen it."

So we asked Jarvis to identify the shows that law students will find worth watching. He chose 20 shows that have debuted since Jan. 1, 2022, or are scheduled to debut soon. Find out where to watch, number of episodes, a synopsis and his reasons to watch.

PROXIMA STUDIO/ADOBE STOCK



Judge Steve Harvey

Debuted: Jan. 4, 2022; second season began May 9, 2023
Where to watch: ABC
Number of episodes: 18 so far

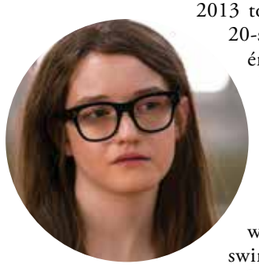
Synopsis: Comedian Steve Harvey provides a fresh spin on arbitration-based reality shows. Similar series, such as "Judge Judy" and "The People's Court," featured retired judges using standard legal principles to resolve disputes. Harvey is not a lawyer and therefore relies on common sense to reach decisions.

Reason to watch: A natural-born showman, Harvey routinely pokes fun at the parties appearing before him. His outrageous antics — such as holding up a sign asking, "WTF?"— his gold-colored gavel and the over-the-top courtroom all contribute to the show's riotous atmosphere.

Inventing Anna

Debuted: Feb. 11, 2022; original run completed
Where to watch: Netflix
Number of episodes: 9

Synopsis: "Ozark"'s Julia Garner plays real-life con artist Anna Sorokin. From 2013 to 2017, Sorokin, a 20-something Russian émigrée, defrauded New York City's elite by claiming to be a European heiress named Anna Delvey. In 2019, Sorokin was found guilty of swindling her victims out of $275,000 and was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Released from prison in 2022, Sorokin currently is fighting the U.S. government's effort to deport her to Germany. In the meantime, Rachel Williams, who helped expose Sorokin's crimes, has sued Netflix for defamation and false light invasion of privacy. See Williams v. Netflix Inc., 2023 WL 3478568 (D. Del. 2023).



Reason to watch: Who doesn't enjoy a good con, especially when it's perpetrated against self-important people who discover, much too late, that they're no smarter than the rest of us?

61st Street

Debuted: April 10, 2022; a second season is set for 2024
Where to watch: AMC (first season); The CW (second season)
Number of episodes: 16 (eight each season)

Synopsis: Moses Johnson (played by "Doctor Who"'s Tosin Cole), a Black high school track star, finds himself wrongfully accused of killing a White Chicago police officer named Michael Rossi ("Empire"'s Patrick Mulvey) during a drug bust. The task of exonerating Johnson falls to Franklin Roberts ("Law & Order: Criminal Intent"'s Courtney B. Vance), a 30-year veteran of the Cook County Public Defender's Office who had been planning to retire to spend more time with his wife and 17-year-old autistic son.



Reason to watch: Although fictional, "61st Street" shines a bright light on the corruption and racism that pervade America's criminal justice system.

Anatomy of a Scandal

Debuted: April 15, 2022; original run completed
Where to watch: Netflix
Number of episodes: 6

Synopsis: On trial for rape, married British politician James Whitehouse (Rupert Friend) insists that his five-month affair with parliamentary aide Olivia Lytton (Naomi Scott) was consensual. Doing her best to present the government's wobbly case is prosecutor Kate Woodcroft ("Downton Abbey"'s Michelle Dockery). Through a series of head-spinning flashbacks, viewers learn that Whitehouse and Woodcroft share a dark secret they have kept hidden for decades.



Reason to watch: While the trial and the protagonists' wildly differing accounts of their affair will have viewers on the edge of their seats, the real jolt comes after the jury delivers its verdict.

Guilty Minds

Debuted: April 22, 2022; second season possible but unlikely
Where to watch: Amazon Prime Video
Number of episodes: 10

Synopsis: After graduating from law school, former lovers Kashaf Quaze (Shriya Pilgaonkar) and Deepak Rana (Varun Mitra) follow different career paths in Delhi, India. While Kashaf opens a public interest law firm that handles class action lawsuits for the poor, Deepak becomes a partner at Khanna and Khanna Associates, a private law firm catering to the rich and powerful. As a result, the pair often find themselves on opposite sides of lawsuits involving hot-button social issues. Much of the series, however, focuses on the "Bhalla Case," a murder investigation that threatens to tarnish the reputation of Munawar Quaze (Benjamin Gilani), a Supreme Court judge who is Kashaf's father.



Reason to watch: A rare and realistic look at the world's largest Western-style legal system.

The Lincoln Lawyer

Debuted: May 13, 2022; second season began July 6, 2023
Where to watch: Netflix, which picked up the series after CBS passed on it (For the now-settled lawsuit spawned by CBS's decision, see Frank & Bob Films II, LLC v. ViacomCBS, 2021 WL 359954 (Cal. Super. Ct. 2021))
Number of episodes: 10 each season

Synopsis: Manuel Garcia-Rulfo plays Michael "Mickey" Haller, a Los Angeles criminal defense lawyer who works out of the back of a Lincoln Navigator. Based on a 2005 novel by Michael Connelly and 2011 movie starring Matthew McConaughey.



Reason to watch: To see if Haller can keep his demons at bay. Although outwardly charming and quick-witted, inside Haller is a mess. He has just kicked a drug habit, he is full of insecurities, and he has two failed marriages under his belt.

Extraordinary Attorney Woo

Debuted: June 29, 2022; second season expected in 2024
Where to watch: Netflix (via ENA)
Number of episodes: 16 (first season)



Synopsis: After graduating at the top of her law school class at Seoul National University, Woo Young-woo (Park Eun-bin) lands a job at Hanbada, a large South Korean law firm. Because she has autism, Woo initially is shunned by her colleagues. As the series progresses, however, they come to appreciate her intelligence (she has a 164 IQ), photographic memory and unique problem-solving abilities. Woo is fascinated by dolphins and whales, and thinking about them often helps her with her cases.

Reason to watch: Besides providing a look at how law is practiced in South Korea, the show sympathetically portrays individuals with autism.

She-Hulk: Attorney at Law

Debuted: Aug. 18, 2022; original run completed
Where to watch: Disney+
Number of episodes: 9

Synopsis: Jennifer Walters ("Orphan Black"'s Tatiana Maslany) is a lovelorn assistant district attorney. While driving with her cousin Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo), the pair crash and their blood becomes cross-contaminated. As a result, Walters discovers that she has gained the power to turn herself into a 6'7" muscle-bound green-skinned giant. After an untimely transformation in court causes her to lose her job, Walters is forced to go to work for Goodman, Lieber, Kurtzberg & Holliway, where she is placed in charge of the firm's new Superhuman Law Division. The rest of the series focuses on her work for such clients as Abomination, Leap-Frog and Runa. In the show's final episode, Walters breaks the "fourth wall," confronts the show's writers, and forces them to write a new ending to the series.



Reason to watch: Because it's fun — and to get tips on how to represent super villains.

Partner Track

Debuted: Aug. 26, 2022; original run completed
Where to watch: Netflix
Number of episodes: 10

Synopsis: Ingrid Yun ("Teen Wolf"'s Adren Cho) is a mergers and acquisitions lawyer trying to make partner at a New York City law firm. To do so, she'll have


Partner Track

to navigate office politics, overt racism and a rekindled romance with fellow associate Jeff Murphy (Dominic Sherwood), all while working on a $2.9 billion energy deal.

Reason to watch: As a first-generation Korean American female lawyer, Yun and her efforts to shatter the glass ceiling take viewers on an inspiring ride, while at the same time reminding them how much discrimination still exists in the legal profession.



Reasonable Doubt

Debuted: Sept. 27, 2022; renewed for a second season
Where to watch: Hulu
Number of episodes: 9 (first season)

Synopsis: Jax Stewart (Emayatzy Corinealdi), an African American woman, has gone from working as a public defender to being a name partner at Binder, Hurwitz & Stewart, a high-powered Los Angeles law firm. At home, Stewart is raising her two children by herself, as she and her husband, Lewis (McKinley Freeman), have separated.

Reason to watch: Although easy to write off as a sex-driven soap opera, "Reasonable Doubt" regularly provides nuanced insights into the roles that class, gender and race play in the legal system.

So Help Me Todd

Debuted: Sept. 29, 2022; renewed for a second season
Where to watch: CBS
Number of episodes: 21 (first season)

Synopsis: Unable to pay back the $9,000 he owes his mother (Oscar winner Marcia Gay Harden), private detective Todd Wright (Skylar Astin) begrudgingly agrees to go to work for her Portland, Oregon, law firm. The pair regularly butt heads over Todd's unorthodox but highly effective investigation techniques, which offend his mother's sense of ethics.

Reason to watch: Anyone who has ever argued with their mother will find this show a guilty pleasure.



Inside Man

Debuted: Oct. 31, 2022; second season possible but unlikely
Where to watch: Netflix (via BBC)
Number of episodes: 4

Synopsis: Jefferson Grieff (Emmy Award winner Stanley Tucci) is a former criminology professor who is on death row for murdering his wife. Despite this fact, Grieff has become a sought-after cold case analyst, assisted by wisecracking fellow inmate Dillon Kempton (Atkins Estimond). With his execution date looming, Grieff agrees to serve as a consultant on a British missing person's case. A running plot line involves Grieff's refusal to explain why he killed his wife.



Reason to watch: To see Grieff solve seemingly unsolvable crimes from behind bars.

The Recruit



Debuted: Dec. 16, 2022; renewed for a second season
Where to watch: Netflix
Number of episodes: 8 (first season)

Synopsis: On his third day at the Central Intelligence Agency, rookie lawyer Owen Hendricks (Noah Centineo) comes across a letter from a woman named Max Meladze (Laura Haddock), a former operative who's threatening to spill government secrets unless she's sprung from jail. It forces Hendricks into the field, where his law school training proves only marginally useful.

Reason to watch: To see what new hole Hendricks has dug for himself, and then look on as he miraculously manages to dig himself out of it.

Night Court

Debuted: Jan. 17, 2023; renewed for a second season
Where to watch: NBC



Number of episodes: 16 (first season)

Synopsis: Like the original "Night Court," which aired on NBC from 1984 to 1992, this reboot features an endless parade of oddballs who appear before a judge with a heart of gold in one of New York City's dingiest courtrooms. Following in the footsteps of her late father, Judge Abby Stone ("The Big Bang Theory"'s Melissa Rauch) is committed to seeing that everyone receives a fair shake.

Reason to watch: Viewers will be charmed by this highly likeable show.

Accused

Debuted: Jan. 22, 2023; renewed for a second season
Where to watch: Fox
Number of episodes: 15 (first season)



Synopsis: In this weekly crime anthology series, each episode opens in a courtroom. After being introduced to the accused, the audience learns about the defendant's actions and motives. Although inspired by real-life events, the plots are fictional.

Reason to watch: The show's stories are compelling, and viewers will find the moral questions they raise both disturbing and thought-provoking.

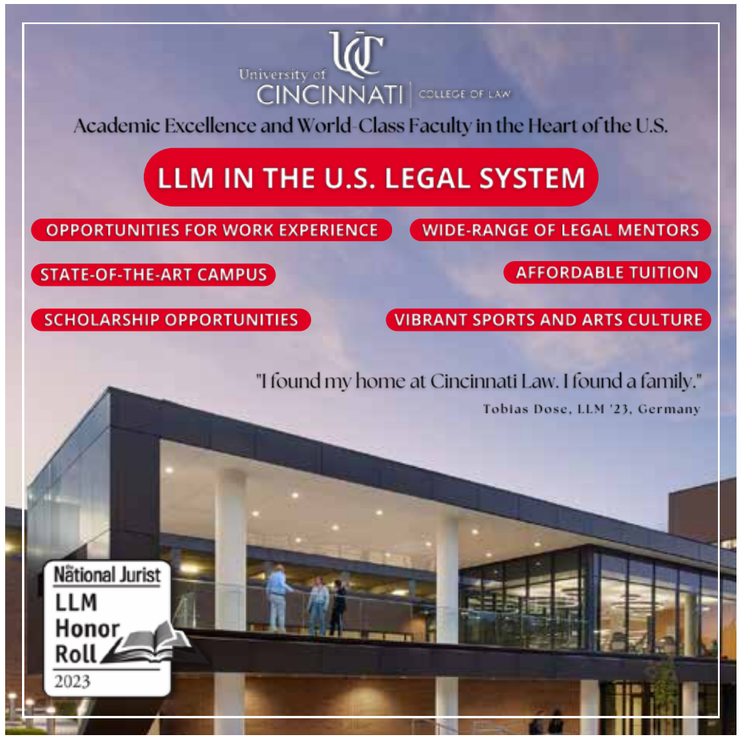
The Law According to Lidia Poët

Debuted: Feb. 15, 2023; a second season is expected
Where to watch: Netflix
Number of episodes: 6 (first season)

Synopsis: Based on the life of Lidia Poët (1855-1949), Italy's first female lawyer, the show recounts Poët's struggle to gain admission to the bar and the government's ultimately successful effort to have her law license revoked because of her gender.


The Law According to Lidia Poët

Reason to watch: Matilda De Angelis is brilliant as Poët, and the show will appeal to anyone interested in history or women's rights.




Elsbeth

Divorce Attorney Shin

Debuted: March 4, 2023; second season possible but unlikely
Where to watch: Netflix (via JTBC)
Number of episodes: 12



Synopsis: After his sister, Shin Ju-hwa (Kong Hyun-ji), is betrayed by her divorce attorney (who throws her case in exchange for a partnership at one of South Korea's top law firms), Shin Sung-han (Cho Seung-woo), a piano professor in Germany, returns home, becomes a divorce lawyer, and while fighting for his underdog clients, makes plans to avenge his sister, who has since died in a suspicious car accident.

Reason to watch: Although he is something of a loner, Shin Sung-han is an attorney who is easy to root for, especially as he struggles to gain custody of his late sister's son, Seo Gi-yeong (Kim Joon-eui).

Jury Duty

Debuted: April 7, 2023; a second season is under discussion
Where to watch: Amazon Freevee
Number of episodes: 8

Synopsis: In this mockumentary, jury foreman Ronald Gladden, a solar panel contractor from San Diego, is unaware that everyone else in the courtroom is an actor. As a result, Gladden believes that Hilgrove v. Morris, which pits a clothing company against one of its former employees, is a real case. Gladden is so convinced that everything is on the up-and-up that he refuses to become sidetracked, even as his fellow jurors engage in increasingly bizarre behavior.

Reason to watch: Although Gladden's befuddlement is its own gem, viewers will find themselves hooked by the other members of the jury, especially David Brown as Todd Gregory (Juror No. 2) and actor James Marsden (playing himself) as Alternate Juror No. 14.


Jury Duty

Elsbeth

Debuts: Fall 2023
Where to watch: CBS
Number of episodes: TBD

Synopsis: Elsbeth Tascioni (Carrie Preston), an astute but unconventional attorney, moves from Chicago to New York City, where her unique skills help the police solve difficult cases.

Reason to watch: Audiences have long loved the quirky Elsbeth Tascioni, who was a recurring character on both "The Good Wife" (CBS, 2009-16) and its spinoff, "The Good Fight" (CBS, 2017-22). Now they finally get to see her as a leading character.

Matlock

Debuts: Fall 2023
Where to watch: CBS
Number of episodes: TBD



Synopsis: From 1986 to 1995, Andy Griffith starred as Ben Matlock, a folksy but cantankerous Atlanta criminal defense lawyer. In this new series, Oscar winner Kathy Bates plays Madeline "Matty" Matlock, a wily septuagenarian who comes out of retirement to work for a prestigious New York City law firm. While introducing herself to her new colleagues, Matty makes it clear that her last name is just a coincidence: "Yes, Matlock, like the old TV show."

Reason to watch: If anyone can re-create the magic of the original Matlock series, it's Bates.