

Laure: "You will rarely have as much intellectual freedom as during your studies"



Meeting with Laure Barbé, Graduate in 2019 of the Sciences Po Law School.

Can you describe your academic and professional background?

As many Sciences Po undergraduates, I entered 27 rue Saint-Guillaume with a lot of enthusiasm but few specific ideas about the professional path I wanted to follow. After two years in Paris where I had the opportunity to explore most areas of social sciences, I spent a year in Chicago at Northwestern University at the end of which I did an internship in an asylum law firm. Eager to discover the professional world, I also did a summer internship in the legal department of a film production company.

Although I still had many questions about the career path I wanted to take, both these experiences made me sure of one thing before selecting my master degree: law is the ideal field for tackling a wide range of subjects, whilst acquiring a strong technical expertise.

With that in mind, I chose the [Master in Economic Law](#). After a very engaging first year, I worked for six months at Ormen Passemard, a law firm specialised in banking and insurance litigation. This experience, which enabled me to work on numerous international disputes, reinforced my desire to practise law, particularly in courts. I also spent six months in the office of the Mayor of Paris, working alongside her legal advisor. During this period, I had the chance to witness and participate in the solving of sensitive situations, such as the migrant crisis in the north of Paris, the closing down to cars of the "voies sur berge" for environmental reasons, or the aftermath of the November-2015 terrorist attacks.

Based on these experiences, which gave me many ideas on how law could be used to change everyday life, I started the [Global Governance Studies](#) programme at the Sciences Po Law School. Wishing to pursue a career as a lawyer, I passed the bar exam in 2019, in criminal law. I then went on pursuing my studies in law in London, with an LLM at the London School of Economics (LSE).

At LSE, which shares many characteristics with Sciences Po, I learned more about international criminal law and discovered other ways of legal thinking. During this time, I became involved in the association Notre Affaire à Tous, working for climate justice. This allowed me to meet other people who wanted to use law, sometimes in an original way, to advance a political cause.

Eventually I came back to Paris to complete my training as a lawyer. I thus spent six months in a law firm specialised in criminal law and international criminal law, and am currently doing my final internship at the law firm [Betto Perben Pradel Filhol](#).

What was your experience at Sciences Po Law School?

I spent two wonderful years, where I made the most of a rigorous training in law, whilst keeping an open mind specific to Sciences Po. This was possible by studying the links between law and other areas, such as politics and philosophy. Two courses in particular stood out in my mind: Laurent Neyret's class "Droit économique et environnement", which not only taught me a lot about environmental law, but also opened my eyes to the kind of citizen-lawyer I could become, and [Emmanuelle Tourme-Jouannet's](#) course on international public law, because of her benevolence and her ability to transform any theme into a fascinating subject involving history, geopolitics, sociology and law.

In addition to the courses I underwent, I truly enjoyed spending time alongside the students of the Law School, who, especially in the Global Governance Studies programme, come from all over the world. We had a tradition of having a drink every Thursday night, which regularly ended with debates on how to change the world, in French or English, but most often both.

What are the main characteristics of your job and can you give us more information about your next projects?

Currently, I am finishing my internship at the law firm Betto Perben Pradel Filhol, in the criminal law department. I am working on cases in criminal business law, terrorism, human rights and business litigation. It is a very challenging and demanding experience, which can often spark stress due to the sensitivity and social and political importance of the cases I have been given to tackle.

On a daily basis, I draft legal acts and client memorandums, and participate in hearings. I also recently had the chance to plead for the first time in the courtroom!

At the end of this internship I will sit the final training exam, before officially taking the oath and becoming a lawyer in November this year.

Any advice for those who would like to join Sciences Po Law School?

From my experience, I would advise to remain as open-minded as possible, and to not be afraid of questioning oneself constantly. Sciences Po opens a lot of doors and it can sometimes be daunting to find a path that suits you, amongst all the opportunities the School puts forward to its students. You must never forget that law is a tool, which we learn to use at Sciences Po, and that it is then up to you to decide what you want to do with it. More importantly, you will rarely have as much intellectual freedom as during your studies, so don't forget to make the most out of your fabulous years at the Sciences Po, and its Law School.

Laure Barbé, Graduate of the Sciences Po Law School, Master in Economic Law, Programme Global Governance Studies (GGS), 2019.