The Greenberg Seminars encourage a rigorous yet informal exploration of ethical questions, professional responsibilities, and current ideas or disputes. Small groups of students meet in their professors’ homes for the wide-ranging discussions. Susan Steinhauser and Dan Greenberg, ’65, provided the seed money for this important and popular intellectual program, which was launched last year.

Attempts to acquaint themselves personally with members of the Law School faculty met with unexpected results for law students: several were confronted by a four-foot-tall anti-globalization protester and his three-foot penguin sidekick; others were surprised to discover a professorial passion for graphic novels, which to the uninitiated appear to be bound comic books.

Starting in the 2002–2003 academic year, the Law School offered a new opportunity for students, one that many consider a significant improvement to academic life. Six to fifteen participants meet in professors’ homes to talk about topics ranging from economic constitutionalism to comic books. Participants are selected by lot, and while students must attend each of the five evening sessions, the Law School provides one credit toward fulfilling Law School graduation requirements. These “informal seminars” also give students the opportunity to get to know their professors on a more individual basis.

The topics, selected by professors themselves and often presented by a pair of faculty members, reveal a remarkable range of interests. Dean Levmore and Professor Julie Roin join with visiting faculty to engage students in ethical quandaries that loosely surround the themes of “Sharing and Disclosure.” Professor Eric Posner and Visiting Professor John Yoo discuss American foreign policy. This year, Professor Martha Nussbaum and Judge Richard Posner switched from Shakespeare’s plays to those of George Bernard Shaw. Professors Cass Sunstein and Douglas Lichtman lead one group called Graphic Novels. Students have welcomed the new offerings. “It’s nice to have interaction on an equal level,” said Marcus Fruchter, ’04. “It’s good to be able to talk to professors and other students in an environment where you’re not talking strictly about the law.” Second- and third-year law students have embraced both the free-ranging discussion, and the opportunity to get to know classmates and teachers in professors’ living rooms (a requirement).

The substance of the discussion groups gives participants the chance to read and discuss material far beyond casebooks and study aids. The Sharing and Disclosure group focused...
on short hypothetical ethical quandaries. Later the group branched into dilemmas presented in Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam*, J.M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello*, and T.C. Boyle's *Drop City*. Last year, the Shakespeare group read staples like *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, as well as *Measure for Measure* and *Julius Caesar*. Members of the Sunstein-Lichtman group on graphic novels explored a medium where, according to the course description, "talented writers are drawn to an expressive form that combines art with dialogue, captions and narration." Said Melanie Rowen, '04, "I was reading graphic novels before I joined the group. I was floored that Sunstein and Lichtman were reading them, too."

While some seminar topics are obvious from their titles, like Professors Richard Helmholz and Albert Alschuler's Natural Law seminar, others are less obvious. Professor Bernard Harcourt, along with a University sociology professor, led a seminar titled "The Law and the Past Self."

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The popular group examines how the law shapes one's identity, and whether individuals can still control that identity in an era of permanent government electronic records and Google searches. Students discussed topics and materials from the witness protection program to the *Return of Martin Guerre*.

The seminar on Sharing and Disclosure grew out of a similar group last year that began with "The Ethicist" columns in the Sunday *New York Times*. The participants' best efforts couldn't keep Levmore's wit submerged for long. (For those unfamiliar, the dean's sarcastic style often resembles the abuse dished out by Dr. Romano from the Chicago television drama *ER*.) During a talk on the theme of disclosure, the dean drolly responded to one student's personal revelation that in high school she had publicly exposed a higher-up's ethical improprieties. "Let me guess—and I mean this in the nicest possible way—you then wrote your college admission essay about it, right?"

Levmore and Roin also kept discussion lively by inviting various visiting professors to join in the discussions, including Yoo, Derek Jinks, Todd Henderson, and Robin Lenhardt. But by far the most popular and reliable cameos were turned in by Levmore and Roin's charming and precocious children, who amused students by literally parading around one evening and distributing candy in their Halloween costumes: the younger son wore a Roin-created penguin suit, and the other dressed as an anti-globalization protester, complete with a "More Grants for Iraq" placard.

Since the discussion groups' inaugural year, the variety of topics offered this year has doubled to eight, and the number of students participating has tripled to nearly seventy. Even students who criticize course offerings and student life praise the discussion groups. One calls the seminars an "obviously great thing Levmore has done" for the school. The student added that the reading groups enhance the Law School's "reputation for professors' accessibility and takes the open door office hours policy several steps farther than any law school I know of."