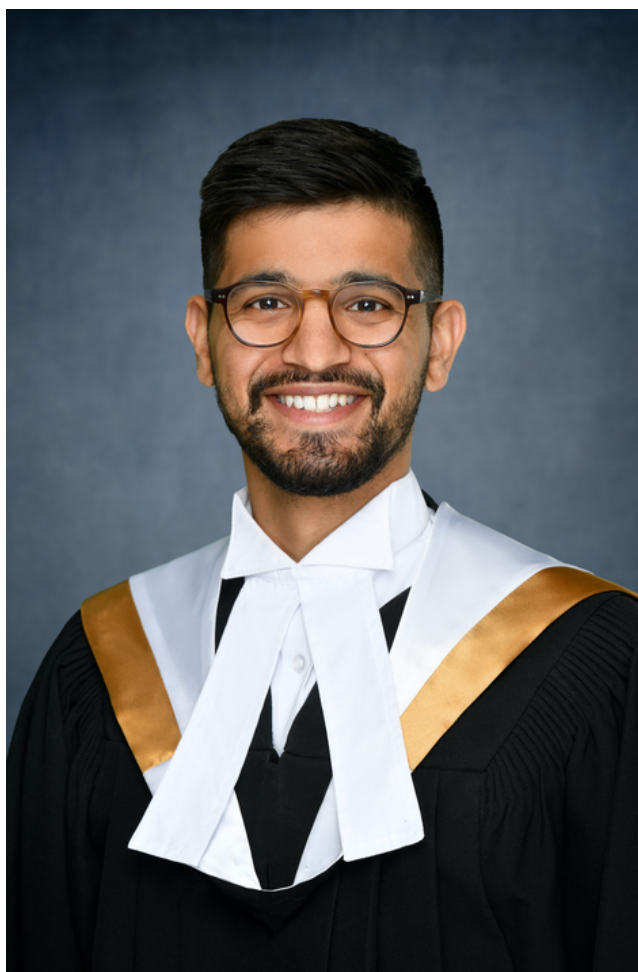


# Interview with Zak Chatur

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## Meet Zak:

Zak graduated from StFX with an Honours degree in Sociology in 2018 and was the recipient of the Reverend Frank J. Miffen prize. Following his undergrad degree, he went to Dalhousie and studied Law. Since graduating he has moved and is working in Alberta.

**Was there anything that initially drew you to pursue Sociology over other disciplines? Do you think there was anything that you would have done differently to prepare you for Law?**

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## Did you come to StFX enrolled in Sociology?

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When I first came to StFX I was enrolled in a Bachelor of Science. I had always dreamed of becoming a physician and thought that a general science degree would help me attain that goal.

I only switched into the Faculty of Arts in second year after taking Deviance and Social Control with Dr. Olstead. I was blown away by Discipline and Punish. I remember going to Dr. Olstead's office in a slight panic because I felt like the course had disrupted my view on what I wanted to do with my life. I almost completely lost interest in my science courses.

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Every faculty has wonderful professors and courses, but I was initially drawn to pursue Sociology during my Introduction to Sociology course with Dr. Cormack in first year. I never felt a personal connection to academics until we discussed Goffman and dramaturgy. I grew up doing musical theatre and improv so it felt like a natural concept to grasp.

If I were to go back to StFX and prepare differently I would take a business minor, or at least some introductory business courses alongside my Sociology degree. In many circumstances being a lawyer is also about running a business – you have to be able to understand how to market your expertise.

**Were there any courses that you feel inspired you to pursue Law, or were there any courses you enrolled in within the Sociology department that prepared you for Law school? If so, what were they?**

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As mentioned previously, Deviance and Social Control was the course that changed the trajectory of my life. It was really my thesis that pushed me to pursue law. I did a thematic analysis of Omar Khadr and Timothy McVeigh in the news. Many of the commentators had legal training and

I thought it would be invaluable to be able to look at the world that way as well.



**How does a sociology background strengthen your experiences and perceptions when working in Law?**

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Having a sociology background has been valuable in my ability to support clients.

During law school I was at Dalhousie Legal Aid Service for a semester. DLAS clients are all from low income backgrounds and often from vulnerable populations. When providing legal services we often see people who are going through some of the most difficult times in their lives – whether it be a child protection matter, youth or adult criminal, divorce, or a housing issue. Being able to apply sociology in practice has made me able to provide a more empathetic and client-centred approach to advocacy.

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**Due to the competitive nature of Law school, do you think there was anything you accomplished throughout your undergrad that supported your CV and admissions to Dalhousie Law? Is there anything you would encourage current and future students to get involved with during their undergrad?**

I only got involved in extra-curricular activities in my third year! It is never too late to start. I was a student advocate with the StFX Students' Union, then I was VP External the following year. I also was part of Model United Nations, the StFX Sociology Society, and a few other societies as well.

The point isn't to stretch yourself thin or try and do everything. The point is to show that you are well rounded and interested in something outside of school. Current and future students should take risks and try new activities. Get out of your comfort zone and you might find something that you enjoy. If nothing peaks your interest try starting a new society that others can join.

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## What was a highlight of your time at StFX while completing your undergraduate degree?

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There is no one experience that was a highlight for me other than going on a date with my meal hall crush. The best part about going to StFX were the relationships that I made. I would not have grown into the person I am today without the people I met at StFX - especially those I met in Lane Hall. It is not surprising, but these relationships will last you a lifetime. I still am as close as ever with the people that I met during orientation week and I wouldn't trade those friendships for the world.

## Can you give current and future StFX sociology students any words of encouragement, or advice for their time at StFX?

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I don't really have any sage advice, but I can give it a shot. Don't take your time at StFX for granted, make as many relationships as you can, take some risks by trying something new, and most importantly have fun.

If you're interested in law, I'd be happy to chat. Dr. Garrod has my contact information.

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## Where are you at currently with Law? What are your next steps?

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Like many East Coasters, I have found my way out West. Currently I am a Student-at-Law at a large corporate firm in Calgary, Alberta.

Hopefully in six months I will be called to the Bar and become an associate at my firm.

**Interview By: Mia Landi**

Sociology Honours Student '23

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