

POVERTY LAW CLINIC

FALL 2023 / Course #202

(4 credit hours)

Instructor: Vincent L. Smith

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Course Schedule: This is an in-person course.

Office Hours: Online office hours are flexible and available by appointment through Microsoft Bookings from 11:00am to 3:30pm Tuesday through Thursday. The calendar is available here: <https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/PovertyLawClinic@lsnv.org/bookings/>

Course Description: The Poverty Law Clinic provides students with a first-hand experience practicing poverty law, laws that apply particularly to the poor and disadvantaged members of our community. The Clinic will be a comprehensive course providing classroom instruction on poverty law and simultaneous real-world experience through assignment of cases from Legal Services of Northern Virginia.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course students should have be able to:

- Proficiency in problem solving
- Development of interviewing and client counseling practice
- An understanding of how to case strategy and legal analysis
- Learn substantive law on various subjects related to legal aid clients

Assessments:

Assessment will be based primarily on an evaluation of client case work. Class participation and discussion of the readings, simulated exercises, and reflective writings will factor in a grade adjustment.

Attendance:

Attendance is required weekly class meeting will be held on Monday afternoons. There will also be a weekly individual meeting over Zoom to discuss case developments and evaluation of legal developments and substantive law.

Class Recordings Prohibited: Pursuant to Academic Regulation 4-2.2, no portion of a class session or an examination may be preserved by means of a recording device such as an audio recording device or camera. Any exceptions to this policy must be expressly permitted in writing by me.

Classroom Accommodations: Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please visit <https://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disabilities Registration Process. Faculty may not receive or respond to requests for an accommodation. All requests must be handled by the office of Disability Services. You may contact Disability Services directly via email at ods@gmu.edu or phone at (703) 993-2474. If you have any questions about how in-class or testing accommodations are implemented at the law school, please contact the Assistant Dean, Student Academic Affairs for more information.

COVID Health & Safety Requirements: It is important to note that under current University health and safety protocols, face coverings and social distancing are required for all persons on campus. Any student or instructor who anticipates being on campus for any reason should refer to the most up-to-date University policies [here](#).

Course Assignments:

Dates (week of)	Topics	Readings	Assignments
August 21	Intro to the Clinic / Case Management & Protocols		Connect to firm technology.
August 28	Professional Responsibility / Client Interviewing	Selected Readings: Introduction to Poverty	
September 5	OFF		Reflection Exercise #1: What is Poverty Law?
September 11	Case Theory / Client Counseling / Wills Presentation	Selected Readings: Wills & POAs	
September 18	Advocacy Tools / Veterans & Housing Presentation	Selected Readings: Veterans & Housing	Client Simulation Exercise
September 25	Closing Statements	Selected Readings: Social Welfare Policy	
October 2	Case Rounds	Closing Statement Exercise	Reflection #2: Advocacy
October 10 – Monday Schedule	Poverty & Technology	Selected Readings: Welfare	
October 16	Case Rounds		Reflection #3: Client Interactions & Case Handling
October 23	Poverty & Prejudice	Selected Readings: Human Rights	
October 30	Case Rounds		Draft Case Progression Memos
November 6	Poverty Policy Discussion	Selected Readings: Poverty & The Constitution	
November 13	Case Rounds		
November 20	Case Evaluation / Reflection		Case Updates & Final Reflection (due by December 2 nd)