

Law 202-001

Poverty Law Field Program

4 Credits

Professor Vincent L. Smith

MON. 4:00-6:00P

Exam: N/A

Reading(s): [OPTIONAL] Poverty Law, Policy, and Practice by Juliet Brodie, Clare Pastore, Ezra Rosser, & Jeffrey Selbin, ISBN-13: 978-1454812548.

Selected readings to be provided.

Communication(s): VSmith@lsnv.org

Office Hours: Online office hours are flexible and available by appointment through email. Meetings will be held on Microsoft Teams, accessed through a provided Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV) email account.

Class Announcement(s): This is an in-person course, scheduled to meet for two hours per week on Mondays from 4:00pm-6:00pm.

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 assigned cases from Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

GRADING & PARTICIPATION

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. If you believe you must be absent from class for more than the permitted number of classes, you should contact the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible.

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

Computer Policy: Computers are to be used during class for taking notes and no other purpose. They are not to be used to “surf the net” or send email or instant messages.

Violations of this rule may lead to you being prohibited from using a laptop during class.

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

Course Assignments:

Dates (week of)	Topics	Readings	Assignments
August 18	Intro to the Clinic / Case Management & Protocols		Connect to firm technology. Poverty law simulation.
August 25	Client Interviewing & Counseling	Selected Readings: Introduction to Poverty	Reflection Exercise #1: What is Poverty Law?
Wednesday, September 3 – (Monday Schedule)	Professional Responsibility / Wills Presentation	Selected Readings: Wills & POAs	Client Simulation Exercise
September 8	Case Theory / Housing Presentation	Selected Readings: Housing Law	
September 15	Advocacy Tools / Family Law Presentation	Selected Readings: Family Law	
September 22	Closing Statements	Selected Readings: Social Welfare Policy	Reflection #2: Advocacy
September 29	Case Rounds	Closing Statement Exercise	
October 6	Poverty & Technology	Selected Readings: Welfare	
October 13	OFF – Fall Break		
October 20	Case Rounds		Reflection #3: Client Interactions & Case Handling
October 27	Poverty & Prejudice	Selected Readings: Human Rights	
November 3	Case Rounds		
November 10	Poverty Policy Discussion	Selected Readings: Poverty & The Constitution	
November 17	Case Evaluation / Reflection		Case Updates & Final Reflection (due by December 5 th)

Student Resources

[Antonin Scalia Law School Academic Regulations](#)

[GMU Common Course Policies Addendum](#)

[Mason Square Services](#)

[Mason Square Police](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room 110

Emergency - Dial 911

Escort Services - 703-993-8070

Dispatch – 703-993-2810

[Student Support and Advocacy Center \(SSAC\)](#)

Mason Square Sexual Assault Services:

Van Metre Hall, Room 222D

703-993-8186

Notice of Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If a student wishes to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. Students may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

[Mason Square Clinic](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room B102

703-991-2831

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Disability Services](#)

[Student Conduct](#)

[University Life](#)