

Law 202-001 | Poverty Law Field Program | Spring 2025 | 4 credits

Professor(s): Vincent L. Smith

Mon. 4:00 – 6:00 pm EST | Final 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 | Vinlsmith4213@gmail.com

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.

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 <http://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](#).

CLASS SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

Dates	Topics	Readings	Assignments
January 20	MLK Day – NO CLASS		
January 27	Updated Case Management Guidelines / Outreach Structure Introduction.		
February 3	Criminalization of Poverty	Expungements / Collateral Consequences Readings.	Contact Expungement Clinic Clients.
February 10	Review Current Outreach Structures / Discuss Current Cases.		Attend / Read up on a Specialty Docket.
February 17	Legal Check-Up - Issue Stopping	Legal Check-Up Documents. Public Benefits Readings.	Review /Create Edits Current Legal Check Up Documents.
February 24	Case Management / Action Plans		
March 3	Health Law	Health Law Readings.	Current Case Status Document. Due 3/7.
March 10	Spring Break – NO CLASS		
March 17	Structure of Case Memoranda		

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March 24	Education Law	Education Readings.	Contact Expungement Clinic Clients.
March 31	Case Review / Evaluation		
April 7	Legal Landscape – Advancements & Setbacks	Current Legal Landscape Readings.	
April 14	Discuss Status of Cases / Create Final Timelines		April 18 th – Wills Clinic, Fairfax Office.
April 21	Poverty Legal Landscape	State of Poverty Legal Issues Readings.	
April 24 – Monday Schedule	Final Thoughts		Finalize Case Transition Memos Management & Final Reflection (due by May 2 nd)