

**Education Law Clinic
Spring Semester 2009
Course Overview**

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Course Description:

This clinic offers students the opportunity to both study education law and represent low-income clients at the Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services office in St. Paul.

Course Time and Location:

We will meet on Tuesdays from 2:00-4:00 PM. Classes will take place at the offices of the Education Law Advocacy Project. The office is located approximately 1 mile from Hamline University, at 450 N. Syndicate Street, Suite 285. This is in the Bigelow building, off University, between Snelling and Lexington (next to Super Target).

Course Objectives:

Clinic students will:

1. Gain substantive knowledge of education law relevant to low-income families;
2. Practice legal skills, including client interviewing, fact investigation, and case management; and
3. Engage in identifying and using legal and practical problem-solving strategies.

Readings:

A detailed syllabus with additional reading assignments will be distributed during class. Reading materials and suggested internet based resources will be posted on the Education Law Clinic TWEN web site. A password will be provided on enrollment.

Required Text: Pollock, Mica. Because of Race: How Americans Debate Harm and Opportunity in Schools (2008)

Attendance Policy:

This is a small class, and attendance is critical. More than one absence without a significant reason, discussed in advance, will negatively impact your grade. In addition to classroom attendance, students are expected to attend scheduled meetings with clients either at the office or at clients' schools.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Students will be expected to complete 70 hours of clinical work on behalf of clients. This could include research, interviewing, investigation, outreach, community education, and direct advocacy on behalf of students and their families.

Students will be graded based upon 1) weekly classroom attendance and participation, including weekly assignments; and (2) satisfactory completion of the clinical hours. There will be no exam.

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Week 1 (January 20)

Course Introduction: Course requirements, SMRLS policies, and an introduction to education issues in Minnesota and the "achievement gap".

Before class:

- Read documents posted on TWEN (SMRLS Policies and Practice Standards)
- Complete Clinic Student Information Form on TWEN

Week 2 (January 27)

Representing Children and Families: Professional Responsibility, Client Interviewing/Counseling

Before class:

- Read documents posted on TWEN (Interviewing skills, working with children)
- Read "Conflicts of Interest in the Representation of Children", *64 Fordham L. Rev. 1819*

Week 3 (February 3)

*Student Discipline: Suspensions and Expulsions
Because of Race, part 1 (read pp. 1-63)*

Optional Event #1 (February 6)

SMRLS and William McGhee Moot Court Education Law CLE, University of Minnesota Law School, 8:30 – 4:30.

Week 4 (February 10)

Student Discipline: Mock Expulsion Exercises

Week 5 (February 17)

Special Education: Overview of IDEA, Procedural Safeguards, and Dispute Resolution

Week 6 (February 24)

Special Education: Assessment and, Eligibility

Guest Speaker: Dr. Chris Boys, Pediatric Neuropsychologist, University of Minnesota

Week 7 (March 3)

Special Education: Individualized Education Program and Substantive Requirements (Free Appropriate Public Education, Related Services, and Transition Planning)

Week 8 (March 10)

Special Education: Least Restrictive Environment and Discipline

Optional Event #2 (March 12)

Barriers to Justice Symposium, Hamline University Law School 8:30 – 5:00

Week 9 (March 17)

*Resegregation and Ability Grouping: Title VI and the 14th Amendment
Because of Race, part 2 (read pp. 64-135)*

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Week 10 (March 31)

Rights of English Language Learners: Title VI and the Equal Educational Opportunity Act

Week 11 (April 7)

Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying: Title VI, Title IX, the Minnesota Human Rights Act, and tort liability in schools.

Week 12 (April 14)

*No Child Left Behind and Graduation Requirements
Because of Race, part 3 (read pp. 136-185)*

Week 13 (April 21)

Additional Topics in Education Law (student presentations)

Week 14 (April 28)

Wrap Up, Case Closing and Transfer