

HAMLIN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
CHILD ADVOCACY CLINIC
Fall 2009

Policies
Clinical Professor and Child Advocacy Clinic Director
Mary Jo Hunter

I. Required, Recommended and Supplemental Readings.

Required:

- A. TWEN – course website.
Students must enroll and provide an e-mail address. The address is:
<http://lawschool.westlaw.com/twen/default.asp>
- B. Supplemental materials to be made available on a periodic basis.

II. Office Hours and Contact Information.

I will set weekly appointments for each team to review your casework. These meeting times will depend upon your schedule. In addition, you may contact me at my office at (651) 523-2077 or by e-mail at MHunter@hamline.edu to set additional appointments and/or to ask questions or consult about a case. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

III. Attendance and Participation.

Regular attendance is critical in the Child Advocacy Clinic. We are operating as a small law firm and you will benefit from the opportunity to discuss your case theories and strategies and to ask questions in addition to the substantive class material provided that period. Attendance will be taken in each class. Due to the importance of class attendance in case development, two (2) absences will be considered excessive. Class participation is taken into account in grading.

IV. Testing and Grading

The Child Advocacy Clinic is a three-credit course with no final examination. Students will be expected to spend a minimum of seventy (70) hours working on client cases in addition to class time and class preparation time. Although students work in teams, they are graded individually based upon their individual efforts and contributions to the client representation. Grading is discussed in more detail in section V below.

V. Statement of Goals and Objectives.

- A. Central Objective: The Child Advocacy Clinic combines the experience of representing clients under close supervision with the opportunity for careful reflection characteristic of an academic setting. The clinic is intended to provide a foundation for the continuing acquisition and honing of the skills necessary to be a

competent practicing attorney. The cases on which you will be working all relate to children including, but not limited to, CHIPS (Child In Need of Protection or Services) cases and Family Court cases, which provide students with litigation experience.

- B. Sub-objectives. The Child Advocacy Clinic has four major sub-objectives. They are as follows:
1. Students will learn and use a systematic approach to lawyering. There are many approaches to effective lawyering and this clinic will expose students to one such system. In this system, students will be expected to:
 - a. Maintain their case files in an organized fashion, in accordance with the case file organizational plan of the clinic.
 - b. Keep accurate and complete narrative and time records of all activities undertaken in the case.
 - c. Make regular use of the clinic “tickler” system.
 - d. Be punctual and reliable in their dealings with clients, other attorneys, supervisors, courts and administrative agencies. (Telephone messages should be returned promptly. Clients should be kept informed on a regular basis of the progress or lack thereof on their cases. Deadlines and promises should be strictly adhered to.)
 - e. Prepare the following case management documents for each of their cases:
 - i. For all new cases, case opening memorandum which describes the problem or problems presented by the client briefly and succinctly, advice given or action taken at the initial interview, and a preliminary case plan setting out the immediate and long term goals of the representation.
 - ii. A written interview summary describing each meeting with the client or potential witness.
 - iii. A case-plan memorandum, which will be submitted at a date determined by the student supervisor, which translates the problem presented by the client into manageable legal problems, analyzes the law applicable to the problem, and, integrating the law and the facts, sets out the student’s “theory” of the case and the plan for achieving the client’s goals.

- iv. A proposed weekly tickler for each case which will be discussed at the weekly meeting with the supervisor.
 - v. A closing or transfer memorandum, to be submitted when the case is closed, or when the student ceases having responsibility for the case. This memorandum should describe the problem presented by the client, a summary of the action taken, and the outcome obtained or the current status of the case.
 - vi. A closing or transfer letter to the client. The purpose of this letter is to say goodbye to the client and summarize the student's actions over the past semester.
2. Students will learn to use critical observation of self and others as a tool for continuing learning and skill development. Most of a lawyer's learning—particularly in the area of practical skills—takes place after the student has left law school. In order to decrease one's own ineffective practices and to replicate effective techniques, it is important for the student to develop both the habit and the ability to observe him or herself and other attorneys in a careful manner.
3. Students will learn to make productive use of supportive resources available to them, in particular, suggestions by teammates and other class members and advice and supervision from their supervising attorney.
4. Students will represent their clients competently, effectively, zealously and ethically.
- a. Students will attempt energetically and tenaciously to achieve their client's objectives.
 - b. Students will learn to translate the real problems of their clients into manageable legal categories, and perform efficient and thorough legal research on those problems.
 - c. Students will improve their pre-trial and trial skills (e.g., interviewing clients and witnesses, preparing and responding to discovery, marshaling evidence, preparing witnesses, delivering opening and closing oral arguments, examining and cross-examining witnesses, making and responding to objections, etc.).
 - d. Students will learn to develop a coherent theory of the case, which combines the facts and applicable law into a coordinated approach to the case designed to persuade the decision-maker.

- e. Students will analyze their obligations under the Code of Professional Responsibility and their own systems of values.
- f. Students will learn to communicate cross-culturally in an accurate and sensitive manner. Students will learn how to interview through an interpreter.

C. Evaluation of students in the clinic will take five forms:

- 1. Informal, oral evaluation by the supervisor of the student's performance contemporaneously with, or immediately after the performance;
- 2. Some written critiques of the student's performance and written work;
- 3. Completion by student of formal self-evaluation forms at the mid-point and semester's end;
- 4. Completion by supervisor of an evaluation form at semester's end; and
- 5. Assignment of a letter grade. The letter grade will be determined based on the student's performance in each of the four major sub-objectives described above in Section B, using the attached evaluation form. Class participation is taken into account in grading.

VI. Computer/Internet Policy:

- A. Computers are allowed to be used by students in the CHAD Clinic Class to access information on TWEN for class use.
- B. Internet use for personal use, such as checking emails and/or reading or sending IMs during class is not allowed.

**CHILD ADVOCACY CLINIC
COURSE SYLLABUS
Fall 2009
LAW LIBRARY 303
Mondays, 1:00 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.**

August 24	Course introduction: clinic goals and evaluation methods, office procedures.
August 31	Professional Responsibility / Ethics.
September 7	Holiday – NO CLASS
September 14	Juvenile Court – Procedural overview, Rules, Statutes, Parties, and Participants. Handout Outline in Class.
September 21	Juvenile Court continued. Client Interviewing.
September 28	Preparing for hearings, court reviews, in-chambers meetings, and trials.
October 5	Family Issues – Effect on Child Development, Sibling Contact.
October 12	Exploring how cultural, race, and gender differences affect the attorney-client relationship. Confronting race and gender bias in Court. The effects of poverty.
October 19	The role and responsibility of Human Services. Midterm self-evaluations are due!
October 26	Indian Child Welfare Act and Minnesota Indian Families Preservation Act.
November 2	Family Court – Procedural overview, Rules, Statutes, Parties. Third Party Custody
November 9	Guardians ad Litem. Guest speakers.
November 16	Negotiations and Adoptions.
November 23	Children’s mental health. Guest speakers.
November 30	Pro Bono services, case wrap-up, class summary.