

COURSE SYLLABUS

WILLIAM S. BOYD SCHOOL OF LAW

EDUCATION ADVOCACY CLINIC

Prefix & Number: LAW 769-1001
Title: Education Advocacy Clinic
Credit: 6 hours
Semester: Spring 2016
Class Hours/Location: Thursday, 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m./ BSL Clinic Library
Office Hours: Wednesday & Thursday 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. & by appointment

Course Description:

The Education Advocacy Clinic is a law clinic in which we advocate for children and their adult educational decision makers in educational issues, including special education and disciplinary issues. For the most part we will be advocating for clients in administrative fora including in informal and formal hearings within the Clark County School District.

Learning Outcomes:

Through an experiential and collaborative process advocating for real clients, students will learn education law, advocacy and professionalism. They will experience all stages of client advocacy under intensive supervision and will strengthen their analytic and advocacy skills. Students will develop habits of professionalism and life-long learning through disciplined self- reflection. In the classroom component, students will enrich their understanding of doctrinal, theoretical, social and policy issues in this complex area of law. Students will also learn to work with professionals in different disciplines. Students will learn how to utilize these professionals in both advisory and advocacy positions.

Texts, Readings, and Instructional Resources:

Colker, R. & Waterstone, J.K. (2011). *Special Education Advocacy*. Danvers, Mass.: Matthew Bender and Company.

Clinic Materials

Additional materials to be distributed throughout the semester.

For clinic materials and other clinic resources you will be using during the course of the semester, there will be a \$30.00 charge. Please pay with a check made out to UNLV/BOR or with cash.

Assignments, Evaluation Procedures, and Grading Policy:

Evaluation is based upon attendance and participation in the clinic seminar; the quantity and quality of completed casework; and your overall contribution to the clinic.

Clinic Seminar. Attendance and participation in the clinic seminar is required. We will be meeting on Thursdays from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. for classes that focus on issues surrounding educational law and other legal issues arising for our clients and policy. There will be weekly readings which you should prepare in advance of the sessions for which they are assigned. We will also have case rounds, skills classes, and other sessions. You are expected to prepare for and participate in class.

Casework. Students are members of the Thomas & Mack Legal Clinic. Under the direction and supervision of Professor Nathanson and Dr. Murdock, students are required to address and advocate for the educational needs of their clients. Responsibilities include contacting schools to obtain clients' educational information; assessing the adequacy of clients' educational plans, including behavioral plans; writing legal memos for case files, the courts, etc. regarding clients' educational status; and attending and participating in client interviews, legal team meetings, and IEP meetings. You are expected to treat clients and your work responsibly, professionally, and to complete work in a timely fashion. Students are required to work in the clinic 18 hours per week.

Timekeeping. You are expected to keep records of the time you spend on clinic work. Time sheets are due weekly at the clinic seminar.

Documentation. You must document in memorandum to the file all information gathered during the course of your work on all cases, including summaries of interviews, client meetings, school meetings, and telephone conversations. These memoranda need to be cc: to Professor Nathanson and Dr. Murdock, the law professor who is directing the clinic in which you are working, all team members, and the legal secretary for the clinic in which your client is. All memoranda must be read and approved by Professor Nathanson or Dr. Murdock **prior** to dissemination.

Weekly Case Summaries. Students are expected to write weekly summaries of the casework they were involved in. A very brief summary of the case, along with a description of the actual work completed are required. Weekly summaries are due weekly in the clinic seminar.

Educational Opening Memoranda. Educational Opening Memoranda are required for all clients. If more than one student works on a case, the summation is written as a team. The Opening Summation includes the client's educational history; current educational information (i.e. special education eligibility, school information, etc.); and a description of educational concerns.

Educational Transition Memoranda. Educational Transition Memoranda are required for all clients. If more than one student works on a case, the summation is written as a team. The Transition Summation includes a brief summary of the client's educational history; a summary of the work completed on the case; and a summary of the concerns still needed to be addressed.

Reflective Papers. Students are required to write two short (three to four pages) reflective papers, which are due at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. In these papers, you are expected to reflect upon your work in the clinic on behalf of clients, either directly or indirectly. The purpose of these assignments is to provide you, as students, with an opportunity to clarify, in writing, your sense of your clients and your reactions to your lawyering experience and provide us with additional information about how you are grappling with your advocacy and course responsibilities. It could also be a comment of how the educational issue or school system practice does or does not work for you and your client. This should not be an account of your work on a case. Instead the paper should provide you with an opportunity to work through in writing what you find most interesting, educational or troubling about a case, course issue, event, relationships, reading, policy or practice.

Evaluation Criteria:

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>% of grade</u>
Attendance & participation in seminars	20
Casework	50
Weekly Case Summaries	10
Educational Opening Memoranda	05
Educational Transition Memoranda	05
Reflective Papers	10

STUDENT HOURS

As with any advocacy work, you can expect that your clinic workload will fluctuate over the term. The general formula for expected hours outside of class is three hours per week per credit hour for the semester. Thus, you will average about 18 hours per week if you are taking the clinic for six credits. In the case of the clinic, this formula should be viewed as an average over the course of the term, and not as a requirement that must be met every week. In other words, some weeks you may work much more than 18 hours and other weeks will be less than 18 hours. It is important that your schedule, including work and other commitments, affords you the flexibility to meet your professional responsibilities to your clinic clients.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

Remember that we are operating a law office. That means that the cloak of confidentiality and attorney/client and work product privilege must surround everything we do with regard to clients and their cases. DO NOT remove client or case materials from the clinic. All files should be kept in the clinic, except with specific authorization to move the file. This will also make it possible for me or the other professionals on your case to answer questions that arise about a case in the event you are not around. DO NOT place clinic work on computers or disks to which others have access. DO NOT talk about your cases with people who are not in the clinic; and when you do discuss cases with appropriate people, DO SO in a manner in which you CAN NOT be overheard.

UNLV-required Disclosures:

Academic Misconduct—Acceptance to the William S. Boyd School of Law (the Law School) represents much more than admission to the study of an intellectual discipline. The privilege of admission comes with a unique set of responsibilities, not only to fellow students, but to the Law School, to the legal profession, and to the public. The legal profession demands the highest degree of trustworthiness, honesty and public integrity. As future members of that profession, students of the Law School are bound to observe principles that reflect the same high standards that govern the practice of law. This Student Honor Code (the Honor Code) sets forth conduct that is prohibited, and it establishes minimum standards for student professional responsibility. The standards of conduct in the Honor Code are in addition to the standards set forth in the UNLV Student Conduct Code and the Law School Student Policy Handbook. Violations of the Honor Code will be subject to the procedures and sanctions of the Honor Code, as set forth below. <https://portal.law.unlv.edu/files/portal/Student%20Handbook.12-13.Honor%20Code.pdf>

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

Academic Success Program/CASE—The Boyd Academic Success Program assists students in removing barriers to academic success. This includes

reviewing past exams, giving sample exams or hypotheticals, evaluating study habits, and assisting with time and stress management issues.

The Academic Success Program also provides a series of pre-bar exam lectures to assist in preparing to take the bar, as well as opportunities for thoughtful feedback and individualized assistance in bar preparation through the bar prep period. More information can be found here: <https://law.unlv.edu/academics/asp/current-students>

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the law school Registrar's office to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

Law Library—The Wiener-Rogers Law Library provides resources to support students' access to information. Reference librarians are available for consultation in person or by phone or email. For library services and resources, see <https://law.unlv.edu/law-library> and <https://law.unlv.edu/academics/law-library/student>.

Religious Holidays Policy—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting intersession courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Rebelmail—Rebelmail is UNLV's official email system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as

information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' email prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. The law school has two general email lists for students: INFO and ADMIN-MSGs. Some faculty will use TWEN or personal gmail groups to send specific class messages.