

**SOUTHWESTERN**

LAW SCHOOL  
Los Angeles, CA

# FAQs

Legal Clinics

# Legal Clinics

## Q. What is a clinical course?

**A.** A clinic is a graded class taught by full-time and adjunct faculty members. In a clinic, students study law, build foundational lawyering skills, and work under the supervision of their clinical professor. Each clinic is focused on a particular area of law and is designed to prepare students to become excellent lawyers. Students use their knowledge and skills to provide a valuable public service.



## Q. What clinics are offered?

**A.** Southwestern offers nine clinics:

- Appellate Litigation Clinic
- Asylum Law Clinic
- Children's Rights Clinic
- Community Lawyering Clinic
- Entertainment & The Arts Legal Clinic
- Eviction Defense Clinic
- Family Law Clinic
- Immigration Law Clinic
- Street Law Clinic



Southwestern has three in-house clinics in the Westmoreland Building in W408: the Children's Rights Clinic, Immigration Law Clinic, and Community Lawyering Clinic. The Entertainment and the Arts Legal Clinic is in the Bullocks Wilshire Building in BW333.





## **Q. What is the time commitment?**

**A.** Participating in a clinic is a serious time commitment. The clinics are not simulation courses. Students work with real clients or community members and take on significant responsibilities. Students must have some flexibility in their schedules to adjust to client needs. Students are expected to work about 3.5 hours outside of class time for every credit hour. That means, for example, in a 5-credit clinic course, you are expected to work about 17.5 hours per week outside of class.

## **Q. How will a clinic benefit your law school education?**

**A.** Participating in a clinic might be one of your most rewarding experiences in law school. You will learn core legal skills such as interviewing and counseling, fact investigation, case development, research and writing. Depending on the clinic, you might work with clients, draft declarations, write motions, briefs, and other legal documents. Students may have the opportunity to observe and participate in court hearings and administrative hearings. Students participating in the Street Law Clinic teach law-related life skills to youth in high schools in Los Angeles County.

Through your clinical education, you will begin the lifelong process of becoming a reflective lawyer. The skills you learn in all of the clinics will be transferable to your work in the future.

## **Q. How does a clinic differ from an externship?**

- A.** A clinic is a class. All clinical courses include a class seminar and a casework or fieldwork component. Students attend a weekly class session where they learn the relevant substantive areas of the law that supplement the experiential portion of their coursework. In most clinics, students work on real cases under the supervision and guidance of faculty who are practicing attorneys. In some clinics, students provide legal empowerment workshops to community members and Know-Your-Rights presentations to high school students. All clinics strive to create access to justice for underserved communities.

The Externship Program provides students with the opportunity to work in a variety of placements under the supervision of an externship supervisor, such as an attorney or judge. The fieldwork is complemented by an academic component. Students who are enrolled in an externship course and successfully complete the course receive unit credit (but not an alpha grade). Please contact the Externship Program Office for more information at [externoffice@swlaw.edu](mailto:externoffice@swlaw.edu).

## **Q. Can I participate in an externship and a clinic during the same semester?**

- A.** Working in a clinic is challenging and requires you to have blocks of time available for clinic work. We recommend that students do not participate in other experiential programs during the same semester that they participate in a clinic. Please reach out to the specific clinic professor if you have questions.



## **Q. How do I apply to a Legal Clinic?**

- A.** The Legal Clinic application is available on the Southwestern SharePoint Portal Clinics webpage. Applications for the upcoming academic year (fall and spring semesters) open in March and are due in May. Students apply to one or multiple clinics by completing one comprehensive application, ranking their choices, and indicating their preferred options. Students submit one streamlined application for the Appellate Litigation Clinic, Asylum Law Clinic, Children's Rights Clinic, Community Lawyering Clinic, Eviction Defense Clinic, Family Law Clinic, Immigration Law Clinic, and Street Law Clinic using the Legal Clinic application.

Students complete one master application, which captures all relevant information. Students must also submit a resume and statement of purpose. Within the application, there is a list of clinics. You will select all the clinics for which you would like to be considered. You will be asked to assign a numerical rank for each clinic that you have selected, with #1 your most preferred, #2 your second most preferred, and so on. Your rankings serve as an indicator of your interest and are a key component of how your application will be assessed.

The Entertainment & The Arts Legal Clinic Director sends an email announcement with application information for eligible upper-division students during the semester.

## **Q. Are Legal Clinics yearlong commitments?**

- A.** Most clinics are one-semester courses offered during the fall and spring semesters. The Appellate Litigation Clinic is a yearlong course.

## **Q. Can I participate in more than one clinic?**

- A.** Students can participate in one clinic per semester. We have more students who want to participate in clinics than slots available. Clinic professors do their best to ensure students have the opportunity to participate in at least one clinic during law school and prioritize students who have not yet participated in a clinic. Students may apply to participate in a second clinic during another semester.

## **Q. Are there any prerequisites to participate in a Clinic?**

- A.** Some clinics have prerequisites or co-requisites. Please carefully review the course catalog to review the requirements for each clinic.

**Q. I am an online student. Am I able to participate in a Clinic?**

**A.** Students in the Online J.D. program are eligible to participate in all residential clinical programs if they are able to attend in-person classes and participate in required in-person components.

Online students may apply to participate in the Community Lawyering Clinic, which will be offered entirely online, one semester per academic year. It will be offered as an asynchronous class with some synchronous components. Please contact Professor Julia Vazquez with questions.

**Q. I am a part-time student working during the day. Am I able to participate in a Clinic?**

**A.** Students must be available to attend class (often held during the day), and some clinics require students to be available Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Please check the course catalog for the course time offerings and contact the Clinic Professor(s) in charge of the particular clinic with questions.

**Q. I am a SCALE student. Am I able to participate in a Clinic?**

**A.** Yes, SCALE students may participate in the clinical program. Due to SCALE scheduling requirements, SCALE students should consult with the SCALE Department before applying to a clinic.



# Contact Information

## Reach out to us with questions.

Legal Clinic (W408)

Main Office Line: (213) 738-5710

Email: [legalclinic@swlaw.edu](mailto:legalclinic@swlaw.edu)

Andrea Ramos: [aramos@swlaw.edu](mailto:aramos@swlaw.edu); Room W408

Clinical Professor of Law, Director of Clinical Programs, Director of Immigration Law Clinic

Jenny Rodriguez-Fee: [jrfree@swlaw.edu](mailto:jrfree@swlaw.edu); Room W408

Clinical Professor of Law, Director of Children's Rights Clinic

Julia Vázquez: [jvazquez@swlaw.edu](mailto:jvazquez@swlaw.edu); Room W408

Clinical Professor of Law, Director of Community Lawyering Clinic,

Director of Public Interest Law Concentration

Tess Feldman: [tfeldman@swlaw.edu](mailto:tfeldman@swlaw.edu)

Adjunct Professor of Law,

Staff Attorney & Immigration Law Project Manager, Legal Services, Los Angeles LGBT Center

Rebecca Fischer: [rfischer@swlaw.edu](mailto:rfischer@swlaw.edu)

Adjunct Professor of Law,

Director of Legal Services, Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law

Andrew Knapp: [aknapp@swlaw.edu](mailto:aknapp@swlaw.edu)

Adjunct Professor of Law

Matthew Nussbaum: [mnussbaum@swlaw.edu](mailto:mnussbaum@swlaw.edu)

Attorney, Tenant Defense Project, Inner City Law Center

Orly Ravid: [oravid@swlaw.edu](mailto:oravid@swlaw.edu)

Associate Professor of Law,

Associate Dean, Donald E. Biederman Entertainment, Media, and Sports Law Institute

Kaimipono (Kaimi) Wenger: [kwenger@swlaw.edu](mailto:kwenger@swlaw.edu)

Adjunct Associate Professor of Law,

Supervising Attorney, Tenant Defense Project, Inner City Law Center

Laura Wesley: [lwesley@swlaw.edu](mailto:lwesley@swlaw.edu)

Adjunct Associate Professor of Law,

Director of Programs, Teach Democracy

Heidy Cáceres: [hcaceres@swlaw.edu](mailto:hcaceres@swlaw.edu)

Assistant Director of Clinical Operations & Director of Community Outreach

Angel Morales: [amorales@swlaw.edu](mailto:amorales@swlaw.edu)

Legal Clinic Manager



