SYLLABUS
Practice Clinic
GATOR TEAMCHILD JUVENILE LAW CLINIC
6 CREDIT HOURS
FALL 2016

Professor Meshon Rawls
105K Bruton-Geer Hall
(352) 273-0813 (office)
(352) 392-0414 (fax)
rawls@law.ufl.edu

Tiffany Castellanos, LCSW
105G Bruton-Geer Hall
(352) 273-0822 (office)
(352) 392-0414 (fax)
castellanos.t@uflawclinics.org

OFFICE HOURS:
In the Gator TeamChild Juvenile Law Clinic, we have an open door policy. We enjoy teaching, supervising, and talking to interns. If you have questions please do not hesitate to stop by. We will also be meeting with each of your teams on a regular basis. We will schedule a time for your team meeting shortly after the semester begins.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The objective of this course is to prepare students for the practice of law. Students will learn and apply essential lawyering skills through the representation of children in various legal proceedings.

COURSE MATERIALS:

FLORIDA RULES OF JUVENILE PROCEDURE, 2016 Edition (required)

FLORIDA JUVENILE LAW AND PRACTICE, Forteenth Edition (recommended)

UF GRADING POLICY:
The course is graded S+, S, U. For Further information on current UF grading policies, see:

https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:
The clinic requires a fair amount of writing (even without taking client work into account). The primary goal of your written assignments is to inspire you to think about and learn from what you have done and seen. Reflecting critically on theory and behavior is a central component of the Clinic experience. The old saying “learn by doing” is popular and seems true on its face, but it is only partially true. The “doing” is important, but the digestion of the experience, the extraction of every ounce of learning, is where lawyering skills develop.
1. **Motions.** At the beginning of the semester you will be required to complete 7 drafting assignments for Ashley Boyle. These assignments will consist of drafting motions, orders, and notices. The purpose of the assignment is to expose you to the following: (1) office practice when drafting documents, (2) documents that you may be required to draft for your real clients and (3) the process and procedures for filing documents with the court.

2. **Billable Hours.** Beginning the third week of classes, I expect to receive your hours each **Monday by noon.** You **must** submit your hours, in a form similar to the way you would bill a client. That includes date, activity (in detail), and time spent on the activity. For example, a notation that says, “Research, one hour” is not acceptable. “Date, Case Name, Research on the issue of right of child to child support in guardianship case; 1 hour” is acceptable. Please check your Gator TeamChild Guide for a detailed explanation for billing your hours.

3. **First Case Analysis.** I will assign each student a case to review and analyze. I will provide you with guidelines by which you are to analyze the assigned case. You will be required to prepare a written summary of your findings. This summary will be the outline that you will use to present your case during the Case Rounds.

4. **Mid-Term Evaluation.** Each student will submit a mid-term evaluation, approximately two double-spaced typed pages, which outline:
   (a) what skills you need to improve,
   (b) which areas need more explanation by the instructor, and
   (c) what goals you have set for the rest of the semester.

5. **Looking Back Paper.** Each student will also submit a final paper. Your paper will include a review of your performance, areas in which you hope to improve, and your impressions of the clinical experience and how it can be improved. There is no page length requirement; we are looking for quality, not quantity. The questions that should be used as a guide when developing your paper are attached to the syllabus.

6. **Transfer Memos.** Prior to the end of the semester you will be required to write a transfer memo for the cases assigned to your team. The guidelines for writing the transfer memo are located in the GTC Office Guide. Transfer memos MUST be completed for you to receive a passing grade in the course.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Time requirements.** We are scheduled to meet on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 1:00 pm – 2:50 pm for class, also referred to as Firm Meetings. These meeting times will be primarily used for conducting case rounds. During case rounds, you will be asked to present your cases for discussion by the entire Firm. We will also utilize this time for additional skills training, special presentations by invited guests, discussion of hot topics and court house and jail visits.

You will meet weekly with your team. Your professor, our social worker and your clinic partner(s) will also participate in bi-weekly Team Meetings. At each team meeting, we will discuss the details of
your cases, problems and concerns you may have, how to divide up your work and other matters that we need to discuss to keep you and your case on track.

You can expect to spend about 20 hours a week working on clinic cases. **YOU MUST SET ASIDE AT LEAST TEN HOURS PER WEEK TO BE IN THE OFFICE. DECIDE WHICH TEN HOURS PER WEEK YOU PLAN TO BE IN THE OFFICE AND GIVE A COPY OF YOUR SCHEDULE TO YOUR SUPERVISOR. YOUR OFFICE HOURS MUST BE DISTRIBUTED OVER AT LEAST FOUR DAYS.** Time spent in Team Meetings should be included in your office hours. Our cases are somewhat unpredictable, and we have busy times and slow times. If your team does not have enough work for the two of you, see me because something is wrong. We will make sure you have work to do.

Court hearings, staffings, educational meetings, and some client appointments are often scheduled at odd and unpredictable times. If you have a conflict with another College of Law class, see me as soon as you determine that you have a problem so we can work it out. As an attorney, it is your responsibility to set your own schedule to minimize conflicts.

2. **Attendance.** Attendance is mandatory. You will be representing real people, and appearing in court. We need to know where you are when you are not here. Unavoidable incidents (such as the loss of a major vital organ) will be excused, but we need to know even then how to contact you. You will be allowed to miss two classes. Pay close attention to the Syllabus and Case Related events to make sure you are not missing classes when you are responsible for presenting information or issues in your cases are being specifically addressed. If possible, give me advance notice of your absence.

3. **Preparation.** Adequate preparation includes identifying and researching issues in your case. We assume that you have read, understood, and digested any assigned material before class. Bring your files (in up to date, working order) to all Team Meetings. Complete all written assignments **ON TIME.** Extensions for completion of work will be assessed on a case by case basis. Late assignments will be considered when determining the end of the semester grade.

4. **Participation.** Agreement, disagreement, intelligent debate, and thoughtful argument are encouraged. We will brainstorm on every case. Bring your ideas and share them. We believe this is the way to give our clients our best. Students often disagree with each other, and with their supervisors, on how a case should be handled. Our cases often have an emotional aspect. **We must always treat each other with respect, consideration and professionalism.** We will allow you to make the final decisions on your cases to the greatest extent that we can and still avoid disbarment.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Resources. The UF Office of Disability Resources will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Law School Office of Student Affairs when requesting accommodation.
STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students can provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will receive notice of the specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/.
LOOKING BACK PAPER: ISSUES TO ADDRESS

1. Describe the toughest decision you made in your clinic work, and explain why it was the most difficult. Analyze this decision, considering who made the decision; what was your input; what was your client’s input; what was your supervising attorney’s input; and how, if at all, did your relationship with your supervising attorney affect this decision?

2. Critically evaluate this course by identifying: what was most valuable and why; what was the least valuable and why; and what specific suggestions you have for improving the experience.

3. Reflect on your professional and personal growth this semester. Have you changed as a lawyer? As a person? How?

4. Evaluate your performance this semester. What were your goals? Did you achieve your goals?

**In addition to answering questions 1-4, respond to TWO of the questions that are listed below.**

5. What have you observed with respect to your clients that is different from your expectations?

6. What have you learned by observing our local judges that will help you in your practice of law?

7. How is the legal system you worked in this semester addressing the needs of children, particularly those who have multiple cases? Have you noticed any differences in the way our legal system treats children versus adults?

8. What is your opinion about the Partnership for Strong Families or Children’s Home Society? Are the workers complying with their responsibilities as outlined in the Florida Statutes? What issue, if any, causes you the most concern and why?

9. What is your opinion about the Department of Juvenile Justice? Are the probation officers fulfilling their responsibilities? Do you see probation officers working for or against the clients? What issue, if any, causes you the most concern and why?

10. Will you do pro bono work after you graduate? Has being in the Clinic affected this decision? Have you changed any of your personal feelings about children who have disabilities, have committed delinquent acts, or are in the foster system?