**Social Justice Lawyering Practicum**

LAW6930, 23727

2 credits

Fall 2019

Time and location TBD

# Joan Flocks

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***Office Hours: MTW 2:00-3:00 or by appointment***

***Available anytime via email.***

**COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OUTCOME**

The Social Justice Lawyering Practicum explores how legal professionals can advance social justice, encourages students to engage with broader social justice communities, and teaches how to be pursue paid or pro bono work that focuses on social justice after graduation. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to selected causes. Practicum outcomes will be the development and performance of individual and group strategies to address specific social justice issues under the supervision of a licensed attorney.

**MATERIALS**

Required readings for each practicum are posted on TWEN. Students must complete readings before their first meeting with their supervisors. In addition to the required readings, students are responsible for seeking out relevant information if needed to ensure they have the necessary skills to complete the assigned deliverable work product. This may include asking their supervisors for additional background material.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES**

***Practicum Process:***

Social Justice Lawyering Practicums are experiential learning processes. Students will work for a legal organization or a community group to complete practicums under the supervision of attorneys and consistent with the rules of professional responsibility. Each practicum requires deliverable work products and a presentation, as outlined below.

1. Students will select a practicum listed on the course TWEN under “Sign-Up Sheets.” The 2019 projects require students to work in teams of no more than three.
2. Also posted on TWEN under “Practicum Readings” are introductory readings for each practicum to assist students in making project selections. Students are required to read the introductory readings for their projects before their first meeting with the client organization or supervising attorney.
3. In addition to the introductory readings, students are responsible for ensuring they seek out relevant information (including by asking their supervising attorneys) to ensure they have the necessary skills to complete the assigned deliverable work product.
4. After signing up for a practicum, students must meet as a group, and arrange to meet their supervising attorney or community organization.
5. There are **six** components that must be submitted on TWEN for each practicum, as described in the sections that follow. Group components can be submitted once under one team member’s name. Individual reports must be submitted by each student. Please note that deadlines are firm. Failure to comply with these deadlines may result in the lowering of the course grade.
6. **Practicum Contracts:** Students must meet with their supervisors before the deadline for Practicum Contracts and Work Plans. Objectives for this first meeting include:
   1. Students will read background material for their project prior to the meeting and be prepared to discuss.
   2. Supervisors will provide additional background information about the project and their organization’s goals. Students should ask thoughtful questions.
   3. Together, students and supervisors will decide the expected requirements of the final deliverable project, including: (1) research required (factual and/or legal); (2) description of work product; and (3) whether there are professional obligations related to the duty of confidentiality that apply to all or some of the project. Students will draft these sections of the Practicum Contract and provide to the supervising attorney for their review prior to the contract submission deadline.
   4. Supervisors and students will also discuss any other requirements of the project and students will add these to the section of the Practicum Contract titled “Social Justice Student Lawyering Team Responsibilities.” For example, the supervising attorney may require students to orally present the final project at a meeting. A date and time for that presentation should be selected in advance.
   5. Supervisors and students should establish a framework and schedule for communication. Practicums generally require additional phone calls or emails to check in about progress and have questions answered by the supervisors. The timeframe for periodic check-ins should be discussed at this initial meeting and put into the Practicum Contact under the section titled “Social Justice Lawyering Team Responsibilities.”
   6. Students should ask questions to ensure that they have enough information about the project to develop a work plan (including additional reading materials or suggested avenues of research).
7. **Work Plans:** Students must divide work responsibilities among team members. It is up to the team to decide how the best divide the project responsibilities according to the skills and personalities of each team member. For example, some people are extroverted and like to talk to other people while some prefer to do research. *It is not mandatory that every team member be involved in every task, unless that is how students decide to divide responsibilities.* Everyone on the team, however, must be familiar with the background of the issue. The Work Plan must demonstrate a reasonable division of labor among team members, diligence, and a realistic timeframe for completion of project objectives.

Students will prepare Practicum Contracts and Work Plans after meeting with their supervisors. Students must submit these documents for review by the supervisors (and signature on the contract) prior to submission on TWEN.

1. **Practicum Progress Reports:**Students will prepare a brief progress reports (no more than 2 pages) answering the following questions: (1) What impact do you think your project will have? (2) Is there a person or activity you find interesting or challenging in your project? Discuss. (3) Describe any concerns you have about the project.
2. **Rough Drafts:**  Students MUST submit rough drafts of deliverables to the supervisors by the deadline and request feedback or required revisions.
3. **Final Products:**Final products must incorporate edits and revisions suggested by supervisors and instructors. Students must also submit final products to their supervisors.
4. **Individual Reports:** Please submit answers to the following questions in a report no more than 3 pages: (1) How is your practicum relevant to what you have learned in class? (2) What was your most valuable contribution to the practicum? (3) Did your group function effectively as a team? Why/why not?
5. **Presentations.** In addition to the work products described above, student teams will make presentations of their practicums during the last two scheduled class period of Social Justice Lawyering. The entire law school community will be invited to attend the practicum presentations. Supervisors will also be invited to attend.
6. **Time Sheets**: Students should expect to spend an average of approximately 7 hours/week on their practicums. To ensure adequate time management, students will be instructed on how to complete time sheets, which should be submitted on TWEN every two weeks.

***Practicum Timeline:***

The deadlines for the above assignments are as follows:

1. Practicum sign-up open – **Monday 9/2/19, 5 pm**.
2. Practicum sign-up closed, teams finalized, and notified by email – **Wednesday, 9/4/19, 5 pm.**
3. Practicum Contract/Work Plan due – **Wednesday, 9/18/19, submit on TWEN by 5pm.**
4. Practicum Progress Reports due – **Wednesday, 10/9/19, submit on TWEN by 5 pm.**
5. Practicum Rough Drafts due – **Wednesday, 11/13/19, submit on TWEN by 5 pm.**
6. Practicum Presentations: Part I – **Monday, 11/25/19, 1:00-1:55 pm.**
7. Practicum Presentations: Part II – **Monday, 12/2/19, 1:00-1:55 pm**.
8. Final work products and individual reports due – **Monday, 12/2/19, submit on TWEN by 5 pm.**

***Grading Process:***

The Social Justice Lawyering Practicum is a two-credit, pass/fail course. All components of the course will be considered when evaluating students’ performances. Supervisors will also provide their feedback on student performance. A copy of the form that they will use is posted on TWEN so students understand in advance the criteria that will be used to evaluate their work. Other elements considered when evaluating student performance may include:

*Fulfillment of Ethical Obligations to “Client”*

* Successful completion of agreed-upon scope of work to “client”
* Reflects high level of professional responsibility including diligence and competence
* Sense of responsibility
* Ability to work with minimal levels of supervision

*Quality of Legal Research and Analysis (if applicable)*

* Accuracy & understanding of legal rules
* Relevance of selected legal authorities
* Describes reasonable basis for conclusion
* Explains the context

*Writing and Presentation Style*

* Organization
* Clarity of presentation
* Language is clear and concise
* Content is appropriate for the audience

*Reflection*

* Critical thinking about the link between what students learned in the classroom and what they learned in the community
* Understanding of broader social justice issues and the political, social, legal, and economic factors that impede or contribute to solving these issues
* Fair evaluation of self and team members

**UF POLICIES**

**Accommodating Students with Disabilities:**

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Dean Mitchell) when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Academic Misconduct:**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

**Online course evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>.  Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.  Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.