

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CLINIC
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW
SPRING 2026 SYLLABUS—LAW 6465—3 CREDITS**

Instructor

Thomas Hawkins, JD
Bruton-Greer Hall, Room 220A
(352) 377-3141
hawkins@law.ufl.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Course

Meeting time: Monday, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Meeting location: Bruton-Greer Hall, Room 220 D

Course description and objectives

Under the supervision of the clinic director, students in the Environmental and Community Development Clinic work on contemporary legal problems in the fields of land use, local government, community economic development, and environmental law. Completing clinic projects will challenge students' problem-solving, legal research and writing, and public presentation skills.

Student learning outcomes

As a law clinic, the Environmental and Community Development Clinic does not have consistent assessments across semesters. I will not even assess all students identically in the same semester. Nonetheless, I will strive to teach you and to assess your proficiency in certain skills. At the end of the course, you should be able to—

- account for time spent working on clinic projects;
- compose professional correspondence;
- create legal memoranda;
- draft legislation;
- track a bill during a legislative session;
- research case law and legislation;
- research non-law subjects related to the policy of clinic projects;
- solve problems using knowledge of public policy and the law;
- speak to a decision-making body or professional audience; and
- write professional memoranda for a lay audience.

Required reading materials

I do not require you to have access to any specific text for this course. I will assign you readings throughout the semester and I will use Canvas to provide those materials to you.

Please be sure to register for the course Canvas page and have any required materials accessible during class. You are responsible for checking the Canvas page on a regular basis for any class announcements or adjustments.

Course expectations and grading evaluation

I will assign you a grade of “S” (satisfactory) or “U” (unsatisfactory) based your performance in this class. The college will not consider this grade when it calculates your grade point average. I will assess your performance on three criteria: participation in clinic meetings, working the required minimum number of hours, and performance on assigned tasks.

Criterion	Characteristics of satisfactory performance	Characteristics of unsatisfactory performance
Participation in clinic meetings	You attend scheduled class meetings, including one-on-one or small-group meetings with instructor. You are prepared for scheduled meetings and participate in discussions.	Without first communicating that your schedule has changed, you do not show up for a scheduled meeting. You attend a scheduled meeting but are unprepared or not attentive.
Working the required minimum number of hours	You timely submit weekly timesheets. You work 127.5 or more hours in semester. You work at least 85 hours for clients other than Levin College of Law.	You do not timely submit timesheets. You do not work the required minimum amount of time over the semester.
Performance on assigned tasks	You diligently complete tasks I assign. You incorporate my feedback into your work. Your work is professional and meets other standards I set.	You do not make consistent progress on tasks I have assigned you over the semester. You do not respond to feedback I provide.

Class attendance policy

The American Bar Association, the College of Law, and I require you to attend class. If you are unable to attend class for any reason, please inform me of your anticipated absence before class and retain documentation of the reason for your absence (such as records of a job interview or a medical appointment).

You should not seek pre-approval for an absence or preemptively provide me documentation of a reason you are absent. However, if you fail to attend 90% of the scheduled course meetings over a semester, I may request the college drop you from the course. In that circumstance, I may evaluate the reasons for your absence and you may provide me relevant documents.

University of Florida Levin College of Law standard syllabus policies

You can find other important information about University of Florida Levin College of Law policies—including compliance with the University of Florida Honor Code, grading, accommodations, class recordings, and course evaluations—at this link: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635/files?preview=98226140>.

University of Florida academic policies and resources

Other information about university academic policies and resources can be found at this link: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

American Bar Association Standard 310 “Determination of Credit Hours for Coursework”

American Bar Association Standard 310 requires that you prepare out-of-class for 120 minutes for every hour of in-class instruction. I determined the hours I require you to work for this clinic to meet this standard.

American Bar Association Standard 303 “Curriculum”

American Bar Association Standard 303(c) requires the law school to educate you on bias, cross-cultural competency, and racism as part of your enrollment in this clinical course. I have selected readings and planned for class discussions on these topics.

Course schedule of topics and assignments

This course schedule is a guide to the direction of the clinic. Our pace will depend in part on the level of interest and the level of difficulty of each section and is subject to change.

Week 1	In-class topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professor and student introductions• Timesheet and work expectations• Introduction to clients and projects Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None assigned Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Client project work• Submit timesheet (target hours 9)
Week 2	In-class topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project rounds• The planning process as a model problem-solving framework Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course supplement Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Client project work• Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 18)
Week 3	In-class topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project rounds• Tools for clear writing Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal Plain Language Guidelines Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Client project work• Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 27)

Week 4	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project rounds • Local government powers with focus on environment and community development (Dillon's Rule, home rule, preemption) • Drafting rules (best practices) <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course supplement <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 36)
Week 5	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project rounds • History of local government environmental and land use regulation <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course supplement <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 45)
Week 6	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project rounds • Race and environmentalism <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course supplement <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 54)
Week 7	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project rounds • Urban design, the environment, and community development <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course supplement <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 54)

Week 8	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other governmental entities (beyond state, federal, and local government) <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course supplement <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 63)
Week 9	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project rounds • Serving the public <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course supplement <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 81)
Week 10	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project rounds <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 90)
Week 11	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project rounds <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 99)
Week 12	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project rounds <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 108)
Week 13	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-of-semester student presentations <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 117)
Week 14	<p>In-class topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-of-semester student presentations <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client project work • Submit timesheet (cumulative target hours 126)

Week 15	In-class topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (reading period) Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit timesheet if needed (cumulative target hours 127.5)
Week 16	In-class topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (exam period) Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit timesheet if needed (cumulative target hours 127.5)
Week 17	In-class topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (exam period) Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit timesheet if needed (cumulative target hours 127.5)