

University of Florida Levin College of Law
COURSE SYLLABUS
PROSECUTION FIELD CLINIC
LAW 6942 (12513) - 6 credits S/U, 2 credits graded
Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION:

Sarah H. Wolking

Office Location: 126 Bruton-Geer Hall

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Office Hours: Thursdays from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. If this time doesn't work for you, please contact me to arrange a different time for a meeting. Students are encouraged to reach out anytime to discuss legal issues or ask questions about their cases. You can email, text, call, or stop by my office.

MEETING TIMES AND LOCATIONS:

Classroom location: MLAC 209

This course will meet on the following dates and times: Wednesdays, 6:00-8:00 pm

- *Due to clinical exercises with UPD officers, laboratory tours, and various collaborations with the Defense Field Clinic, several special meetings may be held throughout the semester, and the Course Schedule will be adjusted accordingly. Please plan to attend class on the following scheduled dates:*

Clinic Commitment Ceremony: Thursday, January 22nd, 5:30-7:00 pm

Jury Selection Practicum: Friday, February 13th, 9:00 am-5:00 pm

Capstone Class: Thursday, April 23rd, 12:00-1:15 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

In this clinical course, students will develop a practical understanding of the criminal justice system and become familiar with all aspects of the art and craft of prosecution. They will explore the unique responsibilities of prosecutors, who must wield the state's power with compassion and integrity. Through classroom exercises and work at the State Attorney's Office, students will develop essential skills needed to excel as prosecutors, including evaluating legal claims, conducting investigations, interviewing witnesses, listening actively, crafting strategic case plans, recognizing ethical issues, managing case files, collaborating as part of a team, negotiating with opposing counsel, and presenting cases in court. To achieve these goals, students will:

- Demonstrate proficiency in the technical aspects of being a prosecutor, including legal analysis and argument;

- Produce high-quality legal research and writing;
- Examine and adhere to the laws and ethical rules that guide the work of a prosecutor; and
- Examine, reflect on, and critically analyze how the criminal justice system functions.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After finishing this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate mastery of the fundamentals of presenting a case to a judge or jury, including delivering effective opening statements, closing arguments, and presenting well-organized direct and cross-examinations;
- Select a jury with confidence;
- Conduct comprehensive legal research and draft professional legal memoranda.
- Address evidentiary issues during trial and pre-trial stages;
- Explain the role of a prosecutor within our criminal justice system and describe the relationships among prosecutors, police, defense attorneys, and the court;
- Capably interview and counsel witnesses and victims;
- Recognize disparities within the criminal justice system, and learn how to address and challenge them thoughtfully;
- Navigate ethical challenges and develop leadership skills;
- Work with classmates and colleagues to investigate and solve legal issues;
- Make timely and appropriate legal objections;
- Prioritize a busy caseload and meet all deadlines;
- Negotiate with opposing counsel to achieve a fair resolution of cases; and
- Act as a prosecutor to build a professional identity.

REQUIRED READING AND VIEWING MATERIALS:

- Ingrid Eagly, George Fisher, and Ronald Tyler, *Criminal Practice: A Handbook for New Advocates* (2021)
- Richard J. Crawford and Charlotte A. Morris, *The Persuasive Edge* (2nd ed. 2011)
- Jeffrey Bellin, *Mass Incarceration Nation: How the United States Became Addicted to Prisons and Jails and How It Can Recover*, excerpted in Canvas under "Files"
- Jacob Sullum, *Gun Control is Just as Racist as Drug Control* (in Canvas under "Files")
- Ryan McKinnon and Josh Salman, *Wasted Minds: Inmates Languish in Florida Prisons with Little Access to Education*, <http://gatehousenews.com/wastedminds>
- Scott Shackford, *Innocent Until Proven Guilty, But Only if You Can Pay*, <https://reason.com/2018/07/14/innocent-until-proven-guilty-b/>
- Scott Shackford, *Philadelphia Reduced Use of Cash Bail and the Sky Didn't Fall*, <https://reason.com/2019/02/21/philadelphia-showing-successes-in-reduci/>

- Sarah M. Buel, *Fifty Obstacles to Leaving, aka Why Abuse Victims Stay*, http://www.ncdsv.org/images/50_Obstacles.pdf
- Lara Bazelon, *What It Takes to Be a Trial Lawyer If You're Not a Man*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/09/female-lawyers-sexism-courtroom/565778/>
- Morris Hoffman, *The Injustice of Extreme Prison Sentences*, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-judge-on-the-injustice-of-americas-extreme-prison-sentences-11549557185>
- Nazgol Ghandnoosh, *The Next Step: Ending Excessive Punishment for Violent Crimes*, <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-Next-Step.pdf>
- Kamala Harris and Rand Paul, *To Shrink Jails, Let's Reform Bail*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/20/opinion/kamala-harris-and-rand-paul-lets-reform-bail.html>
- Noam Scheiber and John Eligon, *Elite Law Firm's All-White Partner Class Stirs Debate on Diversity*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/27/us/paul-weiss-partner-diversity-law-firm.html>
- A collection of readings in Canvas titled "Clinic Readings-Race and Justice" found in the Files section under "unfiled"
- Irving Younger, *The 10 Commandments of Cross-Examination at UC Hastings College of Law*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBP2if0l-a8> (43:20)
- Collection of readings in Canvas titled "Clinic Readings-Defense Counsel"
- Collection of readings in Canvas titled "Clinic Readings-Police"
- Collection of readings in Canvas titled "Clinic Readings-Prisons"
- Charlayne Hunter-Gault's interview with Professor Derald Sue, "*How unintentional but insidious bias can be the most harmful*," <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-unintentional-but-insidious-bias-can-be-the-most-harmful>(7:57).

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Cynthia Alkon and Andrea Kupfer Schneider, *Negotiating Crime* (2019)
- Thomas A. Mauet, *Trial Techniques* (8th ed. 2019)
- Paul Butler, *Chokehold* (2017)
- Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure
- ABA Standards for Criminal Justice: Prosecution and Defense Functions
- NDAA National Prosecution Standards, 3rd Ed.
- ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct
- Florida Rules of Professional Conduct

Additional readings will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester, and students are encouraged to bring current events and issues in the criminal justice system to the class's attention.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING EVALUATION:

For this course, you will earn a total of eight (8) credits. Six (6) of these credits are pass/fail (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory), and two (2) credits are graded. The purpose of this section is not to emphasize grades. Grades can distract from learning, and I hope they won't overshadow your clinical experience. However, it is only fair to explain the grading system since clinical grading differs from the grading used in standard examination and paper courses. Clinical students will be assessed in three areas: Clinical Coursework, Clinical Methods, and Clinical Practice.

1. Clinical Coursework (Weekly Reflections, Class Participation and Case Rounds, Law Enforcement Ride-along, Quest, Supervision Meetings): 50% of final grade

Reflection papers, readings, and in-class discussions challenge you to think critically and form opinions about how the criminal justice system works. This kind of deep reflection is essential for any excellent lawyer. Clinical coursework also includes the feedback students give each other, classroom performances, and court appearances. Such feedback doesn't need to be exhaustive but should demonstrate careful attention and thought.

Weekly Reflection Papers: Starting from the second week of the semester, you are required to write a paper reflecting on your experiences in the clinic during the past week or on the criminal justice system more generally. Reflection papers are due each Sunday by 11:59 pm. The preferred method of submission is via Canvas upload, but emailing the paper is also acceptable. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON YOUR REFLECTION PAPER. You may take one free week off during the semester. It is helpful—but not required—to begin each paper with a brief description of what you did or observed during the previous week. Please do not simply recount events. The goal of these papers is to encourage you to comment on the justice system as you perceive it. Consider whether the system is functioning effectively, if the various players are fulfilling their roles, and whether defendants are receiving fair treatment. How could the system improve? Do you like your role?

If it's been a slow week at the office, or if something else in the news, your class readings, or your life experience related to the criminal justice system has caught your attention, please feel free to discuss these other topics. Again, the goal is to reflect on the justice system. Within that scope, you are free to explore broadly. These papers can also serve as a platform to share suggestions about the Clinic. You might mention that

you prefer a different classroom focus, want to see different types of cases, or are facing challenges and need additional guidance. There is no page limit on these papers, but it's unlikely you can adequately reflect on a week's work in less than three double-spaced pages. Please include your name and specify the dates covered in your report.

Supervision Meetings: You should meet with the professor regularly to review previous work and plan upcoming tasks. These meetings will last approximately thirty minutes and will be scheduled individually. Please come prepared to provide a progress update on past cases and to outline a plan of action for new ones. Try to familiarize yourself with the facts of your cases and review the relevant laws beforehand. If you don't have any urgent cases, you can use this time as you see fit. You might find it helpful to practice direct or cross-examinations, work on other trial skills, or discuss issues that have come up in the Clinic. Please arrive at the meetings ready to share your ideas on how best to utilize the time.

Law Enforcement Ride-Along: Please arrange a ride-along with a local police agency during this course. Spending time with a law enforcement officer actively engaged in police work is a valuable experience and will enhance your skills as a prosecutor. Former Clinic students say this is one of the most rewarding parts of their Clinic experience. *Note: Gainesville PD (GPD) and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) can be slow to respond for a ride-along. Be persistent and schedule this EARLY in the semester!*

Case Rounds: In addition to completing the reading or viewing for each class, you should be prepared to discuss your cases during class. In some classes, I will assign students ahead of time to address specific issues in their cases or give opening statements or closing arguments, so students should stay current on their cases. These case rounds will help you quickly understand the legal, practical, and ethical aspects of being a prosecutor.

Quest: During the semester, each student must complete a Quest designed to familiarize you with all aspects of work at the State Attorney's office. Additional instructions and a blank template are posted on Canvas. Students can work in groups of 2-4 to conduct the required interviews.

2. Clinical Methods (Case Preparation at SAO and in-class exercises): 25% of final grade

Part of this clinic involves working at least 21 hours per week as a Certified Legal Intern (CLI) in the designated State Attorney's Office (SAO). This totals 270 hours over the semester. While working at the SAO, the CLI must adhere to all ethics and disciplinary

rules of the Florida Bar and meet all performance standards set by the supervising Assistant State Attorney(s). Your professor and supervisors at the SAO will assess both the effort you put into preparing your cases and the initiative you demonstrate in setting and completing tasks. These tasks include researching the law, contacting and preparing witnesses, reaching out to opposing counsel when appropriate, submitting written materials, reviewing in-car and body-worn camera footage, listening to jail calls, and identifying and analyzing ethical issues in your cases. We understand that you are just beginning and may not always know what needs to be done, and we do not expect you to work without guidance. However, it is essential that you read the materials, review the law, and attempt to determine the necessary actions. You should also have the energy and determination to complete your tasks.

3. Clinical Practice (Performance on your feet): 25% of final grade

This category covers your court appearances and class performances, including our live jury selection and negotiation practicums in collaboration with the Defense Clinic and in-class exercises with local law enforcement agencies. Sometimes, preparation and on-your-feet performance blend because good preparation almost always enhances performance in both court and class. However, it's true that by recognizing good performance, we also reward natural talent. Some people find it easier to work on their feet than others. Perhaps it's not entirely fair to reward people based on innate skills. Like all professors, I hope my grades reflect effort more than raw talent. But talent remains important: we regularly reward test-taking ability, and talent is one thing prospective employers look for in your grades.

A Note on the Process: After reviewing all your work, I will consult with your supervisors in the State Attorney's Office. Your final grades will reflect your performance in class, in the office, and in court. It's unfortunate that classes must end with grades. Please remember that grades are an imperfect and blunt instrument for assessing things that are difficult to measure.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING WEEKLY TIMESHEETS:

Please complete weekly time sheets that accurately and meaningfully describe the work performed. Please do not record time with a single, recurring description: "Work on a motion to suppress evidence." Instead, break down the tasks involved:

"research law on standing—2 hours"

"research law on stop and frisk—three hours"

"begin draft memorandum for attorney—2 hours"

Also, think carefully about the words you use to describe your work. Use persuasive verbs. "Motion to suppress brief" is not compelling; "Researched, wrote, and revised motion to suppress brief" is persuasive. No matter what area of law practice you enter, being able to accurately and persuasively describe your work has tremendous value, and this semester is a great time to hone these skills!

You will use electronic timesheets created by UF Law's IT Team, which will be emailed to your supervisor for approval. You should submit the completed timesheet to your supervisor each week. Remember, you do not receive credit for hours worked during a lunch break, but if you participate in a working lunch, please log those hours.

To set up your weekly time recording, just log in here and follow the prompts:

[TIMESHEET LINK](#)

You will need to enter your supervisor's email address so your hours can be approved.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance in class is required by both the ABA and the law school. Attending each session of this course is mandatory. Missing a session will result in a 5-point deduction from a student's final grade (on the 100-point scale) for each absence. If you have a valid reason for missing class, you should contact the instructor before or shortly after class ends so your absence can be excused.

This class aims to provide a unique experience for each student. It is not a lecture-based course. Instead, I expect students to actively participate in exercises, readings, and discussions to reflect on their field clinic placements, career paths, professional identity, and professionalism. Please ensure you actively engage in class. Our experience will be more enriching if everyone is mindful of their involvement. The law school's attendance policy is available at this link: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/uf-law-student-handbook-and-academic-policies#>

UF LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW STANDARD SYLLABUS POLICIES:

Additional information about UF Levin College of Law policies, including compliance with the UF Honor Code, Grading, Accommodations, Class Recordings, and Course Evaluations, can be found at this link:

<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635/files?preview=98226140>

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

You can find more information about UF academic policies and resources at [this link](#).

ABA OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS REQUIREMENTS:

ABA Standard 310 requires students to spend 120 minutes on out-of-class preparation for each "classroom hour" of in-class instruction. Since our class lasts two hours, you should plan for at least four hours of preparation outside of class. This includes reading assigned materials, completing written assignments, and submitting your weekly reflections. Throughout the semester, articles and viewing materials related to current events will be added to your assignments periodically.

COMMUNICATION COURTESY AND CIVILITY:

Please observe common courtesy in all email messages and class discussions. Turn off your cell phone during class. I reserve the right to lower your final grade if you engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for your classmates.

INTERNET USE DURING CLASS:

Using the Internet during class is not allowed unless I give permission. Do not check social media, email (including Clinic- or career-related emails), or news websites. Treat class as an essential witness or victim meeting and plan your emailing accordingly. Even for a noble purpose, using the Internet violates professionalism standards. If you have any concerns about this policy, please don't hesitate to talk to me.

COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

This syllabus acts as a guide to the course's direction. Our pace will partly depend on the interest level and difficulty of each section and may change. Reading and supplemental assignments will be posted on Canvas and might be updated periodically throughout the semester. Besides completing the assigned reading/viewing, please be ready to discuss your cases during each class. These "case rounds" help students connect with each other and analyze legal, ethical, and practical issues more effectively than working alone. Learning through rounds is one of the best parts of clinical legal education!

Due by 6 pm on Wednesday, January 21, 2026:

Please read and be prepared to discuss the following: Criminal Practice: A Handbook for New Advocates, Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-52) *and* Chapter 14 (pp. 259-269)

Due by 11:59 pm Sunday, January 25, 2026:

Prepare a goal statement and upload it in Canvas. This statement should be for the fall semester Prosecution Clinic. See "Developing a Good Goal Statement" in Canvas, and please follow the template outlined in "Prosecution Clinic Spring PDP" in Canvas.

Due by 6 pm Wednesday, January 28, 2026:

Please read and be prepared to discuss the following: Criminal Practice: A Handbook for New Advocates, Chapters 6-9 (pp. 71-160)
The Persuasive Edge, Chapter 1, "Developing a Practical Approach to Persuasion," and Chapter 2, "Building an Honest Relationship with the Jury"

Due by 6 pm Wednesday, February 4, 2026:

Please read and be prepared to discuss the following: Criminal Practice: A Handbook for New Advocates, Chapters 10-13 (pp. 161-257)
The Persuasive Edge, Chapters 3-4

Due by 6 pm Wednesday, February 11, 2026:

Please read and be prepared to discuss the following: *Mass Incarceration Nation: How the United States Became Addicted to Prisons and Jails and How It Can Recover* by Jeffrey Bellin, excerpted in Canvas under "Files," and Jacob Sullum, "*Gun Control is Just as Racist as Drug Control*," in Canvas under "Files."