

Boston College Law School

Externships

Attorney General Program (LL856; LL858)

Professors Thomas Barnico and James Sweeney

Full-year course, 13 credits (7 credits Fall; 6 credits Spring, Pass/Fail), 3L's only

Co-requisites: Students register for two components at a time - LL856 and LL858 in the fall and the same again in the spring.

Satisfies Lawyering Skills and Upper Level Writing requirements

The Attorney General Clinical Program provides an intensive full-year clinical experience in civil litigation in the Government Bureau of the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General. Students practice under the supervision of one of two faculty members who are assistant or special assistant attorneys general in that Bureau. Students work directly with Bureau attorneys in the representation of state agencies and officials in state and federal courts. The clinic teaches litigation skills and strategy and includes the following types of legal work: (1) the drafting of pleadings, motions, discovery requests and responses, and other litigation documents; (2) legal research and writing of briefs in the trial and appellate courts; (3) oral argument in the state courts; and (4) other litigation tasks, including the taking of depositions. Students will be expected to do a significant amount of legal writing. Pursuant to Rule 3:03 of the Supreme Judicial Court, students may argue orally in Superior Court on behalf of state agencies. Students will be assigned to one of two Divisions in the Government Bureau, either the Administrative Law Division or the Trial Division. Students assigned to the Administrative Law Division will work on a variety of court cases involving administrative and constitutional law, federal courts, and statutory construction. Students assigned to the Trial Division will work on a variety of cases involving employment, tort, contracts and eminent domain/land use law. Students receive written and oral comments on their memoranda and written evaluations of their performance. The overall goal of the program is to provide an in-depth exposure to various areas of law in the context of a high-level practice that deals with these issues on a daily basis.

The clinical program includes a weekly two-hour seminar on litigation skills, substantive law topics, and the discussion of student work. Some of the seminars will be conducted jointly with the students assigned to both divisions; other seminars will be specific to each division. Topics include state and federal jurisdiction, the substantive law practiced in each division, drafting litigation documents, motion practice, discovery, trial preparation, appellate practice, and the role of state attorneys general. The seminar for the fall and spring semesters will be held on Wednesday afternoon from 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Attorney General's Office.

The program will select 12 third-year students. Students must commit 20 hours per week (including the two-hour seminar but excluding commuting time) to the program at the Attorney General's Office. This often requires two full days and one half-day at the Attorney General's office at One Ashburton Place in Boston, though the students will be free to select their usual hours (other than the seminar time). Students will receive 13 credits for the full year (7 in the Fall semester and 6 credits in the Spring semester). The course satisfies the lawyering skills and upper-level writing requirements. The course is graded on a pass-fail basis.