

**Asylum and Human Rights Clinic (Text from Audio on PowerPoint Slide)
March 2021**

Hi, this is Valeria Gomez. Together with Jon Bauer, I co-teach the Asylum and Human Rights Clinic. The Asylum and Human Rights Clinic is an intensive, one-semester Clinic in which students represent asylum-seekers—people who have fled their home countries because of violence or persecution, and are seeking refuge in the United States.

This Clinic is being offered next year in the Fall semester. (Whether it will be offered in the Spring is still unclear, as we may be offering a different immigration-related Clinic in its place).

Students in the Asylum and Human Rights Clinic, working in teams of two, handle all aspects of the case, from the initial client interview, to the hearing that decides the outcome. This involves intensive interviewing of the client to learn the client's story, doing factual investigation and legal research to develop the evidence and legal arguments, working with expert witnesses, such as country and medical experts, preparing a detailed client affidavit and a package of supporting documentary evidence, writing a legal brief, preparing the client and witnesses to testify, and ultimately, representing the client in a hearing before an immigration judge or asylum officer.

This is all *a lot* of work—and that is reflected in the number of credits. Students receive a total of 9 credits for this Clinic. Technically, it's listed as two separate courses – if you enroll in the 4 credit seminar component, you will automatically be enrolled in the 5-credit field work component as well. The credits are all graded.

Student teams meet regularly—at least once a week—with their faculty supervisor to discuss and reflect on the work they are doing. There is also a seminar that meets for three hours once a week on Tuesdays, from 2:00 to 5:00, though in the early weeks of the semester, we add some extra class sessions. The classes are used to teach relevant subjects of law and develop the lawyering skills needed for the casework. Many of the classes take the form of case rounds discussions in which students discuss and brainstorm approaches to different problems that fellow students are encountering in their cases.

We strongly encourage you to speak with students who have taken the Asylum Clinic and to look over the case descriptions that appear on the Clinic's law school webpage. Just to give you a flavor, cases recently handled by students in the Clinic have included:

- A young man from Nicaragua, who was beaten and threatened at rifle-point by government affiliates for protesting the government and for his family's longstanding affiliation and support of an opposition party
- A woman from Central America who was raped for over a decade by a politically powerful relative to punish her for her vocal support of a women's right to safety and dignity
- A bisexual woman from a Western African country whose partner was murdered after their same-sex relationship was exposed and who feared similar persecution if she returned

We'd like to emphasize that this Clinic involves a lot of hard work and great responsibility. On average, you can expect to spend about 30 hours a week working on your client's case. This is in addition to class time and the significant amount of time you'll need to spend preparing for class. Some weeks, the time demands of your case will be even more. You will be spending a lot of time working together with your partner and will need to arrange meetings with your client, witnesses, and others, so you will need both availability and flexibility in your scheduling. It is not uncommon for the work to spill over into the early part of the next semester. If you take the Clinic during the Fall, there's a chance that your hearing will not take place until January or February.

So please consider carefully whether you will be able to devote the necessary time. If you can, we think you will find it to be a very rewarding experience. Students in the Clinic have a unique opportunity to perform a valuable service, learn about another country and culture, and develop a wide range of lawyering skills that will be useful in any area of practice. You'll also experience the satisfaction that comes with knowing that your hard work and effective advocacy have given your client a chance to find safety and freedom.