

## **Thurgood Marshall School of Law Summer Judicial Externship**

**COURSE TITLE:** SUMMER LEGISLATIVE EXTERNSHIP - LAW 909

**SEMESTER:** Summer 2011

**TIME:**

**ROOM:**

**JUDICIAL EXTERNSHIP PROFESSOR:** Professor James M. Douglas

### **Educational Objectives**

Students will learn about the process of judicial decision making by observing the function of a particular court while thinking about the management and administration of the court system. By evaluating the role of judges and courts in administering justice and resolving disputes, students learn the litigation process from the perspective of the judiciary. During the practicum students will learn about professional responsibility by understanding the Code of Judicial Conduct and its application within the judiciary. Students will learn the Rules of Professional Conduct and their application to the legal work the students observe in the context of the complexity of the application of ethical rules in a real-world setting.

Another objective of the judicial externship is the development of legal skills such as writing, research, and analytical skills. By thinking critically about law from the perspective of the judiciary, students develop the ability to communicate legal theories effectively and perform the role of decision maker. As students engage in self-directed learning, they set learning goals for the work experience with an externship learning plan. This includes keeping a journal, deciding with the supervising judge how best to achieve goals, and engaging in self-evaluation, critique and reflection.

### **Course Requirements**

**Activity Journals:** Externs must prepare and submit regular activity journals and time sheets on established due dates. The journal must be typewritten. Journal entries must be organized on a daily basis. Each entry must contain a description of the legal work performed that day, broken down into discrete tasks or events, such as memorandum drafting, legal research, observation of courtroom proceedings, etc. Journals must also include events such as meetings with supervising attorneys and other matters related to the operation of the workplace. Journals should include reflections on the quality of lawyering observed and how ethical issues are handled. The Faculty Externship Director reviews each journal for the purpose of ensuring that the work performed meets the educational goals and objectives for externships adopted by TMSL.

**Judicial Externship Paper:** Externs will maintain regular communications with the professor via e-mail or as designated by the professor. He/she will work individually with the professor to discuss problems, progress, suggestions, skills and knowledge development, and related matters throughout the semester.

The student will develop five (5) to ten (10) objectives for his/her Legislative Externship Program. These objectives must be well thought out, concise, specific and measurable. They should be objectives that will further develop the student's legal skills, and knowledge. The objectives should be typed and should be used as a guide for the journal. A typed fifteen (minimum) page law review quality paper is required. This paper will count toward the student's writing requirement and should be pertaining to a legal issue or question that the student worked on during the externship. Draft copies of the paper may be emailed to the director, but it is not a requirement.

**Written work:** Externs must submit samples of written work generated during the externship term. Written work must demonstrate legal research, legal writing and analysis, and the application of legal principles. Written work must be critiqued by the supervising attorney or judge. Externs must redact work prior to submission to comply with confidentiality rules of the workplace. Externs must keep copies of all written work submitted.

**Evaluations:** At the conclusion of the semester, externs must evaluate the placement and the supervising attorney must evaluate the extern. Externs must provide supervisors with the evaluation form and the relevant due date.

**Late Penalty:** Late journals are subject to a penalty. If a supervisor is unavailable to sign the time sheet, the document is still due on the due date, and it is the responsibility of the extern to provide a subsequent signed copy.

**Withdrawal:** No student may withdraw from an externship until adequate safeguards for the handling of cases and/or client problems assigned to the student have been arranged in advance with the Faculty Externship Director and the extern's supervising attorney.

### **Responsibilities of Supervising Attorneys**

**Workplace Confidentiality:** Supervisors must ensure that externs are aware of the confidentiality policies of the workplace.

**Designated Supervisor:** Each placement shall designate an attorney as the supervisor of externs. This supervisor is responsible for the overall supervision of the extern's experience, and must be available to the extern and the Law school for consultation about the externship. This does not preclude externs from working for attorneys other than the designated supervisor.

**Required Signatures:** Extern time sheets must be signed by the supervising attorney. Externs will not receive course credit for hours worked absent a signature.

**Range of Activities:** TMSL Externships require student involvement in as many aspects of a placement's practice as possible. Direct client contact, opportunity for development of practical skills, including courtroom-type experiences, the amount and quality of supervision and individual responsibility are the primary criteria used by TMSL faculty in evaluating continuing and new externship placement agencies. Research and bench memos may be the primary tasks for judicial externs, however it is expected that externs will frequently engage in interaction with bench officers. This interaction might involve discussion of the extern's work, the judicial decision-making process (including the performance of the attorneys), and attendance at oral arguments, etc.

**Critique of Written Work:** Supervisors must provide a written critique of two samples of written work prepared during the externship. Written work must demonstrate legal research, legal writing and analysis, and application of legal principles. There is no required format for the critique. Supervisors are encouraged to focus on such issues as the difficulty of the assignment, the persuasiveness and clarity of the work product, areas of needed improvement and areas where the extern excelled.

**Evaluation:** Supervisors must evaluate the performance of the extern at the end of the academic term on forms provided by the extern.

**Work Schedule:** Externs may establish a work schedule consistent with the needs of supervisors and the workplace, including work off-site if approved in advance by the supervisor.

**Termination:** Termination of an extern requires advance warning to the extern by the supervisor of inadequate performance, coupled with sufficient time for correction of inadequacies. Upon a decision to terminate an extern, a supervisor must provide oral or written notice of the termination to the student which details inadequate performance, and concurrently provide written notice of the termination to the Faculty Externship Director.