

**PUBLIC INTEREST LAW AND POLICY
CERTIFICATE
STUDENT INTRODUCTORY PACKET**



Public Interest Law and Policy Certificate

Introduction

The Public Interest Law and Policy Certificate (“the certificate”) program aims to facilitate the development of the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to serve traditionally underrepresented individuals, communities, and interests. Using public interest law and policy as a vehicle, students will learn to apply foundational legal concepts in a range of settings that further the public interest. Core courses provide the basic skill set and knowledge to prepare students for a career in the public interest or to engage in pro bono practice as part of a different full-time career path.

For additional information, contact the Center for Access to Justice’s Assistant Director, Darcy Meals, at dmeals@gsu.edu or 404-413-9253.

Core competencies

The certificate requirements are designed to foster core competencies in 1) knowledge; 2) lawyering skills; and 3) professional values. A successful certificate student will ideally graduate from the College of Law having learned not just the skills and knowledge a competent lawyer should possess, but how to comport him or herself as a professional in the service of others.

Eligibility

Students in good academic standing after their first full year (31 hours) of law study are eligible to participate in the certificate program. Continued participation is dependent on remaining in good academic standing with the College of Law.

Application Process

To apply, submit the attached declaration of interest form to the Assistant Director of the Center for Access to Justice. Interested students may apply as early as the spring semester of the first year of the full-time program or spring semester of the second year of the part-time program. Students may also apply anytime thereafter, assuming there is enough time to satisfy the certificate requirements before graduation.

The declaration of interest form is not binding. Students may opt out of the program at any time.

Advisement

Once a student has formally declared his or her interest in pursuing the certificate, a faculty advisor will be assigned. Certificate students are encouraged to take advantage of faculty advisement in selecting courses and discussing career prospects. Of course, students are welcome to meet with other College of Law faculty and are not limited to the assigned faculty advisor.

Requirements to earn a certificate in Public Interest Law and Policy

A minimum of 16 hours is required for certificate completion. The total number of credit hours completed will depend on the specific courses the student elects to take to satisfy the course requirements.

Course work

Foundations – TWO courses required:

- Law 7117. Constitutional Law II: Individual Liberties; and
- Law 7010. Administrative Law OR Law 7225. Federal Courts

Underrepresented Communities – choose at least ONE of the following:

- Law 7180. Disability Discrimination
- Law 7245. Immigration Law and Practice
- Law 7251. Law and Social Welfare
- Law 7252. Human Rights and Children
- Law 7283. International Human Rights Seminar: Self-Determination of Indigenous Peoples
- Law 7330. Law and the Elderly
- Law 7433. Race, Ethnicity and the Law
- Law 7434. Racial Justice Seminar
- Law 7471. Sexual Identity and the Law
- Law 7495. Refugee and Asylum Law
- Law 7515. Women and the Law

Experiential – choose ONE of the following:

- Law 6040. Landlord Tenant Mediation Clinic I
- Law 6041. Landlord Tenant Mediation Clinic II
- Law 6050. Capital Defenders Clinic I
- Law 6090. HeLP Legal Services Clinic I
- Law 6091. HeLP Legal Services Clinic II
- Law 6092. Olmstead Disability Rights Clinic I
- Law 6093. Olmstead Disability Rights Clinic II
- Law 7094. Bankruptcy Assistance and Practice Program
- Law 7247. Health Legislation and Advocacy I
- Law 7248. Health Legislation and Advocacy II
- Law 7336. Fundamentals of Law Practice/Transition to Practice
- Law 7600. Philip C. Cook Law-Income Taxpayer Clinic I
- Law 7601. Philip C. Cook Law-Income Taxpayer Clinic II
- Law 7602. Investor Advocacy Clinic I

- Law 7603. Investor Advocacy Clinic II
- Externship with a public interest law and policy organization (to be approved through the externship program)

Electives – choose TWO of the following (this may include a course listed under “Experiential” not already used to fulfill that requirement):

- Law 7006. Access to Justice: Law Reform I
- Law 7007. Access to Justice: Law Reform II
- Law 7025. Wrongful Convictions
- Law 7031. Advanced Criminal Litigation
- Law 7113. Capital Punishment Law
- Law 7116. Constitutional Tort Litigation
- Law 7145. Constitutional Law: Survey of First Amendment
- Law 7151. Constitutional Law Seminar
- Law 7155. Consumer Protection
- Law 7165. Criminal Procedure: Investigations
- Law 7167. Criminal Procedure: Adjudication
- Law 7169. Criminal Appellate Practicum
- Law 7172. Philosophy of Criminal Law
- Law 7173. Criminal Law in the Supreme Court
- Law 7174. Criminal Regulation of Vice
- Law 7180. Disability Discrimination
- Law 7183. Domestic Litigation
- Law 7184. Domestic Violence Law
- Law 7186. Education Law
- Law 7190. Seminar in Education Law
- Law 7193. General Employment Law
- Law 7195. Employment Discrimination Law
- Law 7199. Law of Democracy
- Law 7200. Environmental Law
- Law 7201. International Environmental Law
- Law 7203. Natural Resources and Water Law
- Law 7204. Urban Environmental Law Seminar
- Law 7216. Family Law
- Law 7220. Family Law Seminar
- Law 7243. HIV/AIDS and the Law
- Law 7244. Public Health Law
- Law 7256. Independent Research [on a relevant topic, by petition]
- Law 7261. Global Perspectives on Children and the Law

- Law 7274. International Criminal Law
- Law 7277. International Human Rights
- Law 7278. International Human Rights Seminar – Immigration
- Law 7282. International Human Rights: Practical Applications Seminar
- Law 7289. International Law and U.S. Foreign Relations
- Law 7293. Seminar on Judicial Power
- Law 7300. Juvenile Justice
- Law 7306. Juvenile Law
- Law 7315. Labor Law
- Law 7328. The Law and Business of Immigration
- Law 7331. Law and Health Equity
- Law 7341. Law and Mental Health
- Law 7357. The Law of Social Enterprise
- Law 7375. Legislation
- Law 7380. Legislative Drafting Seminar
- Law 7385. State and Local Government Law
- Law 7411. Nonprofit Organizations
- Law 7468. Sentencing
- Law 7521. Workers Compensation
- Law 7664. International and Comparative Equality Law Seminar
- Other College of Law courses or courses in other GSU departments, subject to approval by your faculty advisor and the Faculty Director and Assistant Director of the Center for Access to Justice.

Writing requirement

Students must complete a substantial writing project on a public interest law and policy topic, which may also be used to satisfy the College of Law's writing requirement. Written projects for Moot Court or writing competitions DO NOT satisfy the certificate writing requirement unless they otherwise meet the College of Law writing requirement. The writing project must be pre-approved by your faculty advisor and the faculty member who will supervise the project (if different). For courses and independent research for faculty members teaching courses not listed above, you should coordinate in advance with your certificate faculty advisor to ensure that the project will meet the writing requirement for this program.

Extracurricular activities

Students must participate in 40 hours of approved pro bono work through the student-run Pro Bono Program and report these activities on the report form. Pro bono *legal* work done outside the student-run Pro Bono Program is eligible for credit, subject to approval.

Coursework (including externships) and summer internship hours may not be counted. Donating money to a cause or organization will NOT be counted as an approved extracurricular activity.

Grades and honors

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for all courses taken in satisfaction of the certificate requirements. A minimum grade of 3.0 is required for the writing requirement. If you take more than the minimum number of courses needed to fulfill certificate requirements, the Assistant Director will use the highest grades in courses that fulfill the certificate requirements when calculating GPA for the certificate. If a course includes both a pass/fail and graded component, the graded component will be counted. For example, externships taken pass/fail can fulfill the lawyering-skills requirement and will not be included in GPA calculation, but the grade in the one-hour externship course will be counted. If you take multiple courses that may count for a single requirement, the highest grade fulfilling that requirement will be counted for GPA purposes.

Honors will be awarded for achievement of a GPA of 3.6 or higher in **all** public interest law and policy courses taken for the certificate and any additional public interest law and policy electives taken above and beyond the requirements.

Exceptions

Any exceptions to or modifications of these requirements in individual cases are within the discretion of the Center for Access to Justice Faculty Director or Assistant Director. Before requesting an exception or modification, consult with your faculty advisor for approval.

Requirements Subject to Change

Like the public interest legal world itself, the Public Interest Law and Policy certificate will continue to evolve over time. The certificate program reserves the right to change requirements to ensure participants engage in in-depth analysis of issues impacting traditionally underrepresented individuals, communities, and interests, and develop problem-solving skills relevant to working with and on behalf public interest issues and underserved populations. Additional or alternative courses may be offered or required as part of the certificate program, and some courses may be discontinued. Appropriate advance notice will be given to all students enrolled in the program.

Verification

It is the student's responsibility to submit a verification form (see attached example) confirming satisfactory completion of certificate requirements no later than the drop-add date of the student's last semester in the JD program. The faculty advisor must sign the verification form before it is submitted to the Assistant Director. The Assistant Director will then verify grades after graduation when available from the Registrar.

The verification form must be accompanied by the extracurricular report, which must also receive pre-approval from the faculty advisor. Each extracurricular activity should be reported in sufficient detail to document attendance or participation, including the time, date, location, and people or organization overseeing the activity.

Every effort should be made to submit these forms in a timely manner. The Faculty Director or Assistant Director, at their discretion, may choose not to accept late, incomplete, or unsigned forms.

Contact

For more information, contact the Assistant Director, Darcy Meals, at dmeals@gsu.edu or 404-413-9253.



**PUBLIC INTEREST LAW AND POLICY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM
DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Student email: _____

Student ID#: _____

Anticipated Graduation Date (Semester/Year): _____ Full or Part-Time? _____

I am interested in pursuing the certificate program in Public Interest Law and Policy at the Georgia State College of Law. I understand that, in summary, the requirements are:

1. **Course Work:** The two foundational required courses; my choice of at least one course from a selection of courses focused on underrepresented communities; my choice of one experiential learning course from a list of pre-approved courses; and my choice of two electives from a pre-approved list, or others by petition.
2. **Writing Requirement:** A substantial writing project on a public interest law and policy topic, which may also be used to satisfy the College of Law writing requirement.
3. **Extracurricular Activities:** 40 hours of approved pro bono legal work. Coursework (including externships) and summer internship hours may not be counted.
4. **Grades:** Minimum GPA of 3.0 in the required courses and minimum of 3.0 for the writing project.
5. **Verification deadline:** Submission of a verification form and extracurricular activities report to faculty advisor and Assistant Director before the drop/add date of the last semester before graduation.

Please describe briefly your reasons for wanting to pursue the certificate and describe your career interests:

Please indicate if you have a preference for a particular faculty advisor. We will make every effort to accommodate preferences, subject to availability.

Are you a dual-degree student? Yes/No

If yes, please specify: JD/_____

Please advise if there is anything else we should know about your goals and interests:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the Certificate packet for full details and information and that I understand all of the requirements for earning a certificate in Public Interest Law and Policy. I understand that by enrolling in the certificate program, I am not required to complete it; I may change my mind at any time. I will periodically consult with my faculty advisor about course selection and my progress toward completing the certificate requirements by the deadlines.

Student Name (Print)

Student Signature

Date

Assistant Director, Center for Access to Justice

Date



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES REPORT

The certificate program requires participation in 40 hours of approved pro bono work, either through the student-run Pro Bono Program or other pre-approved law-related activity.

Approved Activity	Approx. Date	Location	Sponsoring Organization	Number of Hours

CERTIFICATION: I certify that I have participated in the above activities to fulfill this requirement and that such activities do in fact satisfy this requirement.

Student Name (Print)

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Advisor

Date

Assistant Director, Center for Access to Justice

Date



VERIFICATION FOR CERTIFICATE IN PUBLIC INTEREST LAW AND POLICY

Deadline: This form must be completed, with your faculty advisor’s signature, and submitted along with your extracurricular activities report to the Assistant Director for the Center for Access to Justice before the drop/add deadline of your last semester before graduation. Once final grades have been entered and provided by the Registrar, the Assistant Director will verify that you have met the requirements.

Student Name: _____ Graduation Date (Semester/Year): _____

Required Course	Semester/Year	Grade	Professor	Credit hours
Additional Electives	Semester/Year	Grade	Professor	Credit hours

Are you also completing a dual degree? Yes/No If yes, please specify: JD/_____

For our records and so that we might be able to assist with career goals, do you already have a post-graduation position secured? Yes/No

If yes, please describe where and what type of work you will be doing:

If no, please describe the area of law, type(s) of positions, and location in which you are interested:

Please specify how you would like your name to appear on the Public Interest Law and Policy certificate:

Please provide the address where you would like your certificate mailed:

CERTIFICATION: I certify that the above information is true and accurate and that I have completed all of the requirements for the Public Interest Law and Policy certificate. My extracurricular activities report accompanies this verification form.

Student Name (Print)

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Advisor

Date

Assistant Director, Center for Access to Justice

Date

This box for administrative use only.

Grades verified by:

Print Name

Assistant Director, Center for Access to Justice

Date

Graduation Date (Semester/Year): _____

GPA for required courses: _____

3.0 or greater? Yes/No

Writing requirement 3.0 or greater?

Yes/No

GPA for all public interest courses: _____

3.6 or greater? Yes/No

Certificate earned? Yes/No

Honors earned? Yes/No

Notes: