Focus Area Information for Students

Upon the recommendation of the Curriculum Committee, in Spring 2016, the Faculty approved a pilot measure that would allow students, at their option, to organize courses taken after the first year in one or more approved curricular focus areas.

This notification is intended to provide information about how students may organize their course of study according to approved focus areas, as explained below. If you have questions, we ask that you contact your faculty advisor, who will also be provided with information about the implementation of the focus areas.

The rationale for identifying focus areas includes: (1) supporting the student advisement process by identifying courses that bear a relationship to one another and which students may wish to study in depth; (2) serving as a vehicle for the law school’s curricular planning; and (3) demonstrating to potential employers that a graduate has organized his or her studies around a particular area of legal practice and taken advantage of CUNY’s particular strength in that area.

The focus areas were developed according to the following criteria:

1. Focus areas were chosen in topics in which there is significant employment opportunity, student interest, and faculty depth and experience.

2. So that students completing a focus area have exposure both to doctrinal and experiential learning in the subject area, each focus area includes the following categories of courses:

   - at least two options for a “Second-Year Practicum,” which includes 4th semester Lawyering Seminar offerings, and also approved internships, approved student fellowships with a CUNY law center; and/or participation in the moot court competition and redrafting of the brief on an approved subject.¹
   - at least two clinic or concentration options;
   - at least five upper-level doctrinal course offerings.²

3. The number of required upper-level electives varies according to the focus area. However, to complete a given focus area, in addition to taking one Second-Year

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¹ If a student seeks to use an approved internship or moot court competition to satisfy the Second-Year Practicum for a focus area, the student is still required to complete a 4th-semester Lawyering Seminar. The requirements for focus areas are in addition to existing curricular requirements, including the 4th-semester Lawyering Seminar and 3rd-year clinic requirements.

² Some of these courses may involve existing requirements for all students but are included to show how completing a particular required course contributes to a student’s depth in a focus area.
Practicum and one clinic or concentration, students (with one exception\(^3\)) are required to take at least three of the upper-level electives offered for the focus area. Please note, however, that the law school may not be able to offer all of the listed electives in a focus area in any given year and the listing of an elective in a focus area does not imply that the course will be offered every year.

(4) To maximize flexibility, an internship for credit in a focus area, if approved by a faculty member as relevant, may count either as one of the upper-level elective options or as a Second-Year Practicum, but the same internship may not count twice. To qualify as a Second-Year Practicum, the internship must be for at least three credits and the work must be comparable to a 4\(^{th}\) Semester Lawyering Seminar. To qualify as an upper-level elective, the internship must be for at least two credits.

The Faculty approved the following focus areas:

- Community Development, Housing, and Economic Justice
- Criminal Law and Justice
- Family and Children’s Rights
- Gender and Sexuality
- Health, Disability, and Elder Law
- Immigration / International Human Rights
- Social Justice, Equality, and Civil Rights
- Solo and Small Firm Practice / Community-Based Legal Services
- Urban Environmental Justice
- Workers Rights, Employment, and Labor Law

Courses designated under each focus area appear in the list attached to this notification. Please note that there is some overlap among the courses so that a number of courses qualify under more than one focus area. **It is anticipated that the list of courses offered within a focus area will change over time as course offerings in the curriculum change.** Accordingly, the Curriculum Committee in consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs will undertake an annual review of courses and update the list as needed.

Students can also craft their own focus areas based on the criteria set out above. In addition, students can request exceptions or variations based on their individual needs. Both crafting of individual focus areas and requests for exceptions should be approved first by a faculty advisor, and ultimately by the Academic Dean. Faculty advisors will work closely with the student; the Academic Dean will generally defer to the faculty advisor’s approval for exceptions, while making sure fairly consistent standards are being applied.

\(^3\) The Criminal Law and Justice focus area requires that students enroll in both Criminal Procedure I and II, and that they take an additional two elective courses.
During the pilot period, a student’s successful completion of a focus area (passing grades in all the requisite courses) will be documented using a form signed by the student’s faculty advisor and countersigned by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs.
Gender and Sexuality

Second Year Practicum  *(Must choose at least one)*

- EJP\(^1\)
- Writing from a Judicial Perspective\(^2\)
- Approved Internship in related field
- Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
- Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

Electives:  *Must choose at least three electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:*

- Advanced Legal Research in Gender and Sexuality Law (1 credit)\(^3\)
- Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
- Criminal Procedure I
- Criminal procedure II
- First Amendment
- Gender and the Law
- Gender, Psychology, and the Law
- New York Domestic Relations Law
- Poverty Law and Social Policy\(^4\)
- Race and the Law
- Reproductive Justice (including variation on Assisted Reproductive Technologies)
- Sexuality and the Law
- Wills, Trusts and Estates
- Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

Third Year Clinics and Concentrations  *(Must choose one)*

- Family Law Concentration
- International Women’s Human Rights Law
- Equality

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\(^1\) This course is relevant to this focus area because threatened benefits loss would have particular impact on single-parent households, which are often headed by women, and would have impact where there are disparities in opportunities for work/income, which may be gender-based.

\(^2\) This course regularly addresses cases such as *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, *DeShaney v. Winnebago County*, *Michael H. v. Gerald D.*, and *Canada (Attorney General) v. Mossop*, and includes Family Court placements, which could be increased.

\(^3\) In the Spring semester, the Legal Research faculty will, as resources permit, offer up to (2) one-credit topic research courses that correspond to two of the pilot focus areas as well as a two-credit general Advanced Legal Research course covering Administrative Law, Municipal Law, Practice and Case Management Materials, Legislative History, and International Law sources; this general Advanced Legal Research course will include drills and examples from several other pilot focus areas. The content of the courses will be determined by the Legal Research faculty with consultation as needed with other faculty members.

\(^4\) Prof. Ann Cammett has indicated that she is developing this course, which is currently planned for Spring 2016.
Other Suggested Courses:

- Contemplative Practice
- New York Practice
- Professional Responsibility
Family and Children’s Rights

Second Year Practicum  (Must choose at least one)

Defender Lawyering Seminar
EJP
Mediation
Writing from a Judicial Perspective
Approved Internship in related field
Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

Electives: Must choose at least three electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:

Advanced Legal Research in Family and Children’s Rights Law (1 credit)
Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
Children’s Rights
Criminal Procedure I
Criminal Procedure II
Education Law
First Amendment
Gender and the Law
Gender, Psychology, and the Law
New York Domestic Relations Law
Poverty Law and Social Policy
Public Institutions in Context: Education
Race and the Law
Reproductive Justice (including variation on Assisted Reproductive Technologies)
Sexuality and the Law
Wills, Trusts and Estates
Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

Third Year Clinics and Concentrations  (Must choose one)

Criminal Defense Clinic
Elder Law placements in Health Law Concentration
Family Law Concentration
International Women’s Human Rights Law

5 This course is relevant to this focus area because threatened benefits loss would have particular impact on single-parent households, which are often headed by women, and would have impact where there are disparities in opportunities for work/income, which may be gender-based.

6 This course regularly addresses cases such as Planned Parenthood v. Casey, DeShaney v. Winnebago County, Michael H. v. Gerald D., and Canada (Attorney General) v. Mossop, and includes Family Court placements, which could be increased.

7 Prof. Ann Cammett has indicated that she is developing this course, which is currently planned for Spring 2016.
Other Suggested Courses:

- Contemplative Practice
- New York Practice
- Professional Responsibility

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8 Dockets on youth in prison and child slavery in Colombia.
Health, Disability, and Elder Law

Second Year Practicum  (Must choose at least one)

EJP
Mediation 9
Trial Practice
Approved Internship in related field
Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

Electives: Must choose at least three electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:

At least two of the three electives must come from this list:

Current Issues in Public Health Law and Policy
Disability Law
Health Care Advocate
Medical Malpractice
Mental Disability Law
Public Health
Reproductive Rights
Reproductive Technology

One of the three electives may come from this list:

Advanced Legal Research in Health and Disability Law (1 credit)
Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
Education Law
Employment Law
Environmental Justice
Environmental Law 10
First Amendment
Land Use and Community Lawyering 11
Wills, Trusts, and Estates
Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

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9 Assuming disability cases are covered.
10 A person who wants to fit within this focus area who does an environmental placement in health law would probably need to take this course before environmental justice.
11 This course covers environmental justice issues and raises public health/ADA issues in the context of post-Sandy lawyering.
Third Year Clinics and Concentrations  (*Must choose one*)

- Elder Law placements in Health Law Concentration
- Health Law Concentration
- Mediation

Other Suggested Courses:

- Contemplative Practice
- New York Practice
- Professional Responsibility
**Social Justice, Equality, and Civil Rights**

**Second Year Practicum (Must choose at least one)**

- Defender Lawyering Seminar
- Economic Justice Project
- Mediation
- Trial Practice
- Writing From a Judicial Perspective
- Approved Internship in related field
- Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
- Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

**Electives: Must choose at least three electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:**

- Advanced Legal Research in Equality and Civil Rights Law (1 credit)
- Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
- Capital Punishment and the Courts
- Civil Rights Survey
- Constitution and Foreign Affairs
- Criminal Procedure I
- Criminal Procedure II
- Current Issues in Public Health Policy & Law
- Disability Law
- Education Law
- Federal Courts
- First Amendment
- Gender & the Law
- Gender, Psychology, and the Law
- Government Misconduct
- Health Care Advocate
- Labor Law
- Land Use and Community Lawyering
- Legislative Process and Advocacy
- Mental Disability Law
- Poverty Law and Social Policy
- Prisoners’ Rights
- Race & the Law
- Rights of Low-Wage Workers

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12 This focus area can be engaged as a broader, over-arching curricular area dealing with social justice themes that might cut across different areas of study, or it can be organized around more specific areas of practice, such as Criminal Justice (Capital Punishment, Prisoners’ Rights, Race and the Law, Poverty Law and the Family); Public Health (Current Issues in Public Health Law, Disability, Mental Disability, Education Law); and Public Policy (Legislative Process, Voting Rights, First Amendment, Government Misconduct).

13 This course covers post-Sandy advocacy, including ADA issues, and eminent domain issues.
Sexuality & the Law
Voting Rights
Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

Third Year Clinics and Concentrations  *(Must choose one)*

Criminal Defense Clinic  
Elder Law placements in Health Law Concentration  
Equality Concentration  
Immigration and National Security  
IWHR  
Mediation

Other Suggested Courses:

Contemplative Practice  
New York Practice  
Professional Responsibility
Criminal Law and Justice

Second Year Practicum: (Must choose at least one)

- Defender Lawyering Seminar
- Trial Advocacy (Criminal Litigation Skills)
- Approved Internship in related field
- Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
- Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

Core Courses (Must take both of the following)

- Criminal Procedure I
- Criminal Procedure II

Electives: Must choose at least two electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:

- Advanced Legal Research in Criminal Law (1 credit)
- Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
- Current Criminal Law Issues
- Capital Punishment and the Courts
- First Amendment
- Government Misconduct
- Immigration
- Mental Disability Law
- Prisoners’ Rights
- Race and the Law
- Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

Third Year Clinics and Concentrations: (Must choose one)

- Criminal Defense Clinic
- Immigration Clinic

Other Suggested Courses:

- Contemplative Practice
- New York Practice
- Professional Responsibility
Community Development, Housing, and Economic Justice

Second Year Practicum (*Must choose at least one*)

- Community Economic Development
- Economic Justice Project
- Mediation
- Representing Non-Profits
- Approved Internship in related field
- Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
- Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

**Electives:** *Must choose at least three electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:*

- Advanced Legal Research in Community Development and Economic Justice (1 credit)
- Advanced Legal Research in Housing Law (1 credit)
- Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
- Business Associations
- Consumer Law
- Bankruptcy
- Environmental Justice
- First Amendment
- Health Care Advocate
- Income Tax
- Land Use and Community Lawyering
- New York Landlord/Tenant Law
- Real Estate Transactions
- Rights of Low Wage Workers
- Small Firm Practice
- Transactional Drafting
- Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

Third Year Clinics and Concentrations (*Must choose one*)

- Community Economic Development
- Elder Law placements in Health Law Concentration\(^{14}\)
- Health Law\(^{15}\)
- Mediation

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\(^{14}\) This course is relevant to this focus area because, among other things, it deals with guardianship issues that may be triggered by eviction proceedings.

\(^{15}\) This course is relevant to this focus area because it has some placements in supportive housing and may deal with quarantine/public health issues affecting housing.
Other Suggested Courses:

- Contemplative Practice
- New York Practice
- Professional Responsibility
Solo and Small Firm Practice / Community-Based Legal Services

Second Year Practicum  (Must choose at least one)

- Community Economic Development
- Defender Lawyering Seminar
- Economic Justice Project
- Representing Non-Profits
- Trial Practice
- Approved Internship in related field
- Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
- Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

Electives: Must choose at least four electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:

At least two of the four electives must come from this list:

- Bankruptcy
- Consumer Law
- Disability Law
- Education Law
- Environmental Justice
- Health Care Advocate
- Immigration
- Income Tax
- Land Use and Community Lawyering
- Medical Malpractice
- Mental Disability Law
- New York Landlord/Tenant Law
- Rights of Low Wage Workers
- Small Firm Practice
- Transactional Drafting

Two of the four electives may come from this list:

- Advanced Legal Research for a Community-Based Civil Legal Services Practice (1 credit)
- Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
- Business Associations
- Criminal Procedure I
- Criminal Procedure II
- Federal Courts
- New York Domestic Relations Law

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16 This focus area is appropriate for students interested in non-profit or small/solo firm practice that serves a range of community needs.
New York Practice
Public Institutions in Context: Education
Real Estate Transactions
Wills Trusts, and Estates
Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

Third Year Clinics and Concentrations  (*Must choose one*)

Community Economic Development
Criminal Defense Clinic
Elder Law placements in Health Law Concentration
Family Law Concentration
Health Law Concentration
Immigration
Labor Docket
Mediation

Other Suggested Courses:

Contemplative Practice
New York Practice
Professional Responsibility
**Immigration / International Human Rights**

**Second Year Practicum** (*Must choose at least one*)

- Trial Advocacy
- Trial Practice
- Defenders
  (Immigration in the Context of Children’s Rights)
- Approved Internship in related field
- Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
- Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

**Electives: Must choose at least three electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:**

  *At least two of the three electives must come from this list:*

  - Constitution and Foreign Affairs
  - Government Misconduct
  - Human Rights and the Environment
  - Human Rights Law
  - Immigration
  - International Law
  - Prisoners’ Rights
  - Race and the Law
  - Reproductive Justice
  - Rights of Low Wage Workers

  *One of the three electives may come from this list:*

  - Criminal Procedure I
  - Criminal Procedure II
  - Federal Courts
  - Public Institutions
  - Advanced Legal Research with Immigration and/or Human Rights Focus (1 credit)
  - Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
  - Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

**Third Year Clinics and Concentrations** (*Must choose one*)

- Criminal Defense Clinic
- Immigration Clinic
- IWHR

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17 Currently IWHR has a domestic prison-related project using international norms.
Other Suggested Courses:

- Contemplative Practice
- New York Practice
- Professional Responsibility
Workers Rights, Employment, and Labor Law

Second Year Practicum (*Must choose at least one*)

- Collective Bargaining and Arbitration
- EJP
- Mediation
- Trial Practice
- Approved Internship in related field
- Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center
- Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

**Electives:** *Must choose at least three electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:*

**At least two of the three electives must come from this list:**

- Disability Law
- Employment Law
- First Amendment
- Immigration
- Labor Law
- Race and The Law
- Gender and the Law
- Rights of Low Wage Workers

**One of the three electives may come from this list:**

- Advanced Legal Research in Labor Law (1 credit)
- Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
- Business Associations
- Public Institutions
- Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

Third Year Clinics and Concentrations (*Must choose one*)

- Equality Concentration
- Labor Docket (currently attached to Community Economic Development Clinic)
- Mediation

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18 Uses employment discrimination trial as basis for simulation.
Other Suggested Courses:

Contemplative Practice
New York Practice
Professional Responsibility
Urban Environmental Justice

Second Year Practicum  *(Must choose at least one)*

CED Lawyering Seminar
Approved Internship in related field
Approved student fellowship with a CUNY Center (CUER)
Approved Moot Court Competition (based on subject matter)

Electives: *Must choose at least three electives. The following courses, not all of which will be offered in any given semester or year, would qualify as an elective in this area:*

Advanced Legal Research in Environmental Law (1 credit)
Advanced Legal Research (2 credits)
Current Issues in Public Health Law and Policy
Environmental Justice
Environmental Law
Federal Courts
Human Rights and the Environment
Land Use and Community Lawyering
Public Health
Public Institutions in Context: Environmental Law
Race and the Law
Real Estate Transactions
Approved Internship, Approved Independent Study, or Approved Research Assistant position

Third Year Clinics and Concentration  *(Must choose one)*

Community Economic Development
Health Law Concentration

Other Suggested Courses:

Contemplative Practice
New York Practice
Professional Responsibility
Sample Course Schedules for Family and Children’s Rights

86 minimum required credits

FIRST YEAR

30 required credits

SECOND YEAR

FALL SEMESTER
- Evidence 4
- Constitutional Structures 3
- Property 4
- Gender, Psych, & Law 2

SPRING SEMESTER
- Lawyering III (Judicial Writing) 4
- Administrative Law 3
- Professional Responsibility 2
- Wills, Trusts and Estates 3
- New York Domestic Relations Law 3

THIRD YEAR

FALL SEMESTER
- Family Law Concentration 12
- New York Practice 4

SPRING SEMESTER
- Mastery of Core Doctrine 4
- Applied Legal Analysis 1
- Business Associations 3
- Advanced Legal Research 1
  in Family and Children’s Rights Law
- Sexuality and the Law 3

ALTERNATIVE THIRD YEAR

FALL SEMESTER
- IWHR Clinic 8
- New York Practice 4
- Sexuality and the Law 3 or
- Business Associations 3

Courses fulfilling the focus area requirements are in bold. As illustrated, although this focus area requires a student to take three relevant electives, four or five electives would be manageable.
**SPRING SEMESTER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>IWHR Clinic</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery of Core Doctrine</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Legal Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

**Total Credits:** 13