

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let Professor Filbert and the Associate Dean of Students know as soon as possible. Please let these same individuals know if you need any disability related accommodations.

For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

**MIZZOU LAW VETERANS CLINIC
SYLLABUS
(Spring 2024)**

Class Time & Location: Tuesdays, 8:30 – 10:10 A.M.,
Room 4

Director: Brent Filbert

Supervising Attorneys: Brent Filbert
Martha Bradley Kleinhesselink
Carter Brooks Templeton

Homelessness Project Manager: Andy Rogers

Veterans Benefits Specialist: Eugene O’Loughlin



Records Authorization Coordinator: Mary Frerking

Executive Assistant: Anita Cowan

Teaching Assistant: Nolan Johnson

Veterans Clinic Location: Hulston Hall, Room 120

Contact Information:

Brent Filbert	filbertb@missouri.edu	
Martha Bradley Kleinhesselink	mmbn4m@missouri.edu	
Carter Templeton	cbtr52@missouri.edu	
Andy Rogers	alw394@missouri.edu	

Eugene O'Loughlin	eugeneoloughlin@missouri.edu	[REDACTED]
Mary Frerking	mafdtc@missouri.edu	[REDACTED]
Anita Cowan	cowana@missouri.edu	[REDACTED]
Nolan Johnson	nj65c@umsystem.edu	[REDACTED]

I. Course Description

In this clinical program, students will help veterans in need and/or their dependents secure disability related benefits and military record corrections, to include discharge upgrades. For disability related claims, work will be primarily done after an initial denial and will include advocacy at the VA Regional Office, the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). Students will also help Veterans Service Officers who assist veterans. Discharge upgrades will be addressed at various Department of Defense discharge boards. Students may also have opportunities to work on pilot projects relating to systemic improvement of the veteran's benefits system as well as opportunities to write amicus briefs and assist with the annual symposium. Students will work with clients and colleagues, including physicians and medical students, in a law firm type atmosphere.

Specifically, students will learn fundamentals of effective advocacy in the following ways:

- learn and apply the legal aspects of veteran's benefits law and discharge upgrades;
- learn client relationship and interviewing skills necessary to represent clients;
- develop writing skills, from letter writing to brief preparation;
- seize opportunities to deliver presentations on veterans related topics to the public and other groups to enhance public speaking skills;
- appreciate the value of providing pro bono representation, and apply other ethical rules to work; and
- develop skills necessary to legal practice including effective time management, professional collaboration, and courtesy.

Assessment: formative and summative, Standard 303 compliant Simulation/Law

Clinic/Field Placement: Yes

II. Course Materials

The resource book for this class will be:

- Veterans Benefits Manual (available online and in the Clinic Office)
- Federal Veterans Laws, Rules, and Regulations (available online and in the Clinic Office)
- Military Discharge Upgrade Legal Practice Manual (available in the Clinic Office)

- M21-1, M21-4, & M21-5 adjudication manuals. (available online)
- Research and Resources Channel (This is a channel in SharePoint with templates, examples, and resources to help you while you are in the Clinic.

III. Attendance and Assignments

Class Attendance: Face-to-face class sessions will occur weekly. You are required to attend class. Except in emergency situations, you are required to notify Professor Filbert via email 24 hours in advance of class if you intend to miss class or if you need to attend class via Teams due to illness. Please do not attend class if you feel ill or if you reasonably believe you have been exposed to the coronavirus. If you miss class due to an illness or any excused reason and do not understand the material you missed, please feel free to reach out to the Teaching Assistant, Nolan Johnson.

Each class will begin with a review of upcoming events and sign-up opportunities (Ex: Tiger for Troops events, Veterans events, etc.). We will make important announcements, and you will be briefed on important new cases and developments in veteran's law.

Class Preparation: Please come to each class fully prepared to discuss the status of your cases and projects upon request. We have several classes dedicated to Case Rounds this semester. At Case Rounds, you will provide an oral brief and demonstrations of your choice (i.e., PowerPoint) on your case(s) and the issues involved. Your supervisor will direct you to discuss some aspect or issue in your case(s). You will receive more directions and instructions from your supervisor and Professor Filbert as the Case Rounds draw near.

Written Assignments: Written assignments are due as assigned by your supervisor. Your supervisor is available to answer questions if you need direction between weekly meetings, as is any person in the Clinic. Late assignments will hurt your grade. Please remember that you will be working on real cases with real clients. Timeliness is essential!

Hours Requirements: In addition to attendance in our weekly class, you will be required to work 150 hours on Clinic matters outside of class, which typically equates to roughly 11 hours of work per week. **The billing period for the semester runs from January 16, 2024, to May 10, 2024, the last day of finals.** You will record your time in Legal Server, our chosen case management software program. If you bill time before you learn how to utilize Legal Server, track your hours in some manner and you can add these hours to Legal Server after the training. Given the nature of the Clinic, some weeks may require that you bill more time than the approximately 11 hours per week necessary to meet the 150-hour requirement. Please note this is a weekly commitment. You cannot wait to do all your work until the end of the semester. You are responsible for providing your total accumulated hours at each weekly meeting with your total hours worked. You may bill time for client work and administrative work. Preparation for class is billable, as "administrative."

Weekly Meetings and Memos: You will meet with your supervisor each week. A sign-up sheet, to select your weekly meeting time slot, will be provided to you before weekly meetings begin.

You will prepare a weekly memorandum each week. The time spent preparing these memos, as well as the meetings themselves, count as billable hours, billed as "administrative." The weekly memo is due 24 hours

before the meeting with your supervisor.

IV. Grading

At the end of the semester, you will write a self-assessment paper according to the Veterans Clinic Grading Matrix found below. Note, your weekly memorandums will be a helpful guide when you self-assess at the end of the semester.

Your grade will be based upon several factors; however, 150 hours must be met to receive a passing grade. The factors are the following:

- 60% - Clinic work to include: work completed for clients (including its quality), additional tasks (i.e., newsletter, symposium, TFT, etc.), quality of weekly memorandums, and any other work product.
- 15% - Case Rounds: the delivery, content, interest, and effort put into your Case Round will determine the percentage you receive.
- 15% - Effort/Attitude: This includes your participation in class, willingness to work, attitude, contributions to the Clinic, and insight demonstrated in your self-assessment. Note, your self-assessment should address personal weaknesses, strengths, and growth throughout the end of the semester.
- 10% - Weekly quizzes: Quizzes will be given after each class on Tuesday and will consist of 5 questions covering information discussed in that class period. Each quiz gives rise to 5 earned points. 1 point will be taken away for each missed quiz question. Please pay attention in class and take notes, as this will enable you to excel on the quizzes. These quizzes are very straightforward questions that are covered directly in class. However, if you need an accommodation, please reach out to your supervising attorney.
- ***Points will be subtracted from your grade for the following:
 - Tardiness to any class, meeting, or event
 - Failure to timely respond/acknowledge email or texts

V. Communication and Meetings

We are always available to discuss your work for the Clinic and on our files throughout the week by phone, email, or in person. Email is an important means of Clinic communication, as it is in everyday law practice. Check your email DAILY! Respond to all emails, even if it is as simple as “got it,” within 24 hours of the email. It is imperative that we are assured you are reading your email. Do not complain about “too many emails.” The Clinic operates as the real world operates.

If you are going to miss class, be late to a meeting, etc. please copy the class teaching assistant on the email you send to your supervisor.

We expect good communication with your files. This communication begins with your Weekly Memo, due 24 hours before your weekly meeting. Email or Teams chat throughout the week is welcome and encouraged. As noted above, we will also have weekly one-on-one meetings throughout the semester. Plan accordingly.

VI. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is important. Follow the Honor Code. If you have any questions about your work as it relates to the Honor Code, consult us immediately.

VII. Drop Policy

Students wishing to withdraw from the class must do so by **3 p.m. on Friday, January 19, 2024**. We represent real clients. Abandoning clients by withdrawing from the Clinic any time after January 19, 2024, negatively impacts our clients and their claims.

VIII. Additional Information about Your Obligations to the Clinic

Always keep in mind the covenants you will sign at Boot Camp. Among other things, if you work for a law firm or legal office outside of the Clinic, your supervisor must be advised, and we must handle conflict checks. You must respect the privacy interests of our clients and always hold their information confidential. You may not store information or work on your personal computer. You must do work in Teams, Legal Server, and SharePoint.

IX. Assignments/Class Schedule:

Please note that this is a general overview of the topics we will cover; the schedule and topics may change based on the work of the Clinic and as our cases require. All assignment materials are in the folder for that class in Teams, unless otherwise noted.

LECTURE/ CLASS SCHEDULE

Class One – January 16: Disability Compensation Overview

Lecturer: Templeton

Video: Waxter

Assignments Due Before This Class: 1) Complete the first day of class requirements sent to you, which includes (1) creating a document in SharePoint and a time entry in Legal Server. (2) Peruse your client's file in SharePoint to get generally familiar with the location of the file. There is no need to read every medical record or memorize the contents of the entire file. (3) Sign up for your weekly meeting time. (4) Review materials in respective class period folder.

Assignment Due During by the End of the Week: (1) Draft an introductory letter to your client(s) using the template in SharePoint found in the administrative folder in the Classroom channel **Friday, January 19, 2023, at 5:00 PM**. (2) Complete the Veteran rating assignment located in the assignments folder by **Friday, January 19, 2023, at 5:00 PM**.

Class Two – January 23: Discharge Upgrades Overview

Lecturer: Filbert

Video: Callisti

Assignments Due Before This Class: Read materials in respective class folder.

Class Three – January 30: Medical Research & Working with Medical Professionals

Lecturer: Dr. Caldwell & Laura Wilcoxon

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Read materials in respective class folder.

Class Four – February 6: How to Interview a Client, Healthcare Eligibility, & Suicide Prevention

Lecturer: Randall Rogers, Heather Brown, Katie McDonald

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Read materials in respective class folder.

Class Five – February 13: Pancakes for Roger

Lecturer: N/A

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Stay tuned for details on this annual event.

Class Six – February 20: Case Rounds

Lecturer: N/A

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Be prepared to brief the class on your most interesting assignment and raise issues for discussion.

Class Seven – February 27: Case Rounds

Lecturer: N/A

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Be prepared to brief the class on your most interesting assignment and raise issues for discussion.

Class Eight – March 5: Advanced Discharge Upgrade Practice

Lecturer: Filbert

Video: Seesengood

Assignments Due Before this Class: N/A

Class Nine – March 12: Appellate Advocacy

Lecturer: Templeton

Video: You Can't Handle the Truth!

Assignments Due Before this Class: Read materials in respective class folder.

Class Ten – March 19: Case Rounds

Lecturer: N/A

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Be prepared to brief the class on your most interesting assignment and raise issues for discussion.

Class Eleven – April 2: Case Rounds

Lecturer: N/A

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Be prepared to brief the class on your most interesting assignment and raise issues for discussion.

Class Twelve – April 9: Case Rounds; Work Hour

Lecturer: TBD

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Be prepared to brief the class on your most interesting assignment and raise issues for discussion.

Class Thirteen – April 16: Veterans Law Career Panel

Lecturer: Amy Kretkowski, Diane Rober, Judge Raymond

Video: None

Assignments Due Before this Class: Be prepared to ask questions to the panelists regarding careers in veteran's law.

Class Fourteen – April 23: Veterans Law Jeopardy

Lecturer: N/A

Video: N/A

Assignments Due Before this Class: N/A

A. Please write a 2–4-page self-assessment touching on the following:

Skill 1: Problem Solving

- 1.1. Identifying and diagnosing the problem
 - 1.2. Generating alternatives, solutions, and strategies
 - 1.3. Developing a plan of action
 - 1.4. Implementing the plan
 - 1.5. Keeping the planning process open to new information and new ideas
-

Skill 2: Legal Analysis and Reasoning

- 2.1. Identifying and formulating legal issues
 - 2.2. Formulating relevant legal theories
 - 2.3. Elaborating legal theory
 - 2.4. Evaluating legal theory
 - 2.5. Criticizing and synthesizing legal argument
-

Skill 3: Legal Research

- 3.1. Knowledge of the nature of legal rules and institutions
 - 3.2. Knowledge of and ability to use the most relevant tools of legal research
 - 3.3. Understanding the process of devising and implementing a coherent and effective research design
-

Skill 4: Factual Investigation

- 4.1. Determining the need for factual investigation
 - 4.2. Planning a factual investigation
 - 4.3. Implementing the investigation strategy
 - 4.4. Memorializing and organizing information in an accessible format
 - 4.5. Deciding whether to conclude the process of fact gathering
 - 4.6. Evaluating the information that has been gathered
-

Skill 5: Communication

- 5.1. Assessing the perspective of the recipient of the communication
 - 5.2. Using effective methods of communication
-

Skill 6: Counseling

- 6.1. Establishing a counseling relationship that respects the nature and bounds of a lawyer's role
 - 6.2. Gathering information relevant to the decision to be made
 - 6.3. Analyzing the decision to be made
 - 6.4. Counseling the client about the decision to be made
 - 6.5. Ascertaining and implementing the client's decision
-

Skill 7: Organization and Management of Legal Work

- 7.1. Formulating goals and principles for effective practice management

- 7.2. Developing systems and procedures to ensure that time, effort, and resources are allocated efficiently
- 7.3. Developing systems and procedures to ensure that work is performed and completed at the appropriate time
- 7.4. Developing systems and procedures for effectively working with other people
- 7.5. Developing systems and procedures for efficiently administering a law office

Skill 8: Recognizing and Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

- 8.1. The nature and sources of ethical standards
- 8.2. The means by which ethical standards are enforced
- 8.3. The process for recognizing and resolving ethical dilemmas

B. Comment on the following values:

Value 1: Provision of Competent Representation

Value 2: Striving to Promote Justice, Fairness, and Morality

Value 3: Striving to Improve the Profession

Value 4: Professional Self-Development