COURSE NAME: Law & Poverty

COURSE NUMBER: 8769

PROFESSOR: Glesner Fines

ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES: An open mind.

DESIABLE PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE BOOKS:

Selected Materials posted on course webpage.

RECOMMENDED:

METHOD OF GRADING & APPRAISAL OF STUDENT FOR GRADE:

Students will be graded on the basis of their class participation, including written reflections on readings and field trips, and on an annotated bibliography on a selected issue of poverty law.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

This course asks “How does law affect individuals with little or no income differently than it does those of moderate income or wealth? What does that difference mean for those who wish to represent those in poverty?” The course will necessarily provide only a snapshot of issues related to poverty representation.

COURSE CONTENT:

Readings and discussion:
Definitions, Dynamics, and Demographics of Poverty
Representing poverty clients and making legal services accessible and affordable
Selected issues in poverty law: hunger, housing, family violence & immigration
Simulated practice problems (interviewing, negotiations, community organizing, etc.)
Field trips to Legal Aid and at least one other service center.
Service learning opportunity: Pro se Divorce Class
COURSE OUTCOMES:

By the end of the week, you will be able to give examples of how poverty affects legal rights and representation and you will believe that you can help.

RELEVANCY OF COURSE FOR CAREER PURPOSES:

Attorneys are the agents for the rule of law. If only the wealthy can access the legal system, the rule of law does not exist. The monopoly the state grants to attorneys to act as exclusive agents for access to the legal system comes with a parallel responsibility to uphold the rule of law. This is relevant to all attorneys.

RELEVANCY OF COURSE FOR MO/MULTI-STATE BAR EXAMINATION:

To the extent the course will create enthusiasm for the practice of law as a vehicle for improving people’s lives, it may provide motivation to endure through the bar exam successfully.