

CRIMINAL DEFENSE CLINIC

Spring 2025

Professor Amanda Savage

Students enrolled in the semester-long Criminal Defense Clinic represent low-income children and adults charged with a variety of municipal ordinance violations and misdemeanor crimes including assault, resisting arrest, disorderly conduct, theft, and others, in Denver and/or surrounding cities. Students learn and apply lawyering skills such as interviewing, building client relationships, client counseling, investigation, legal research and writing, oral advocacy, negotiation, and trial skills and preparation. Students appear regularly in court for hearings such as arraignments, pretrial conferences, motions hearings, and trials. Through classes and representation of clients, students will learn about systemic injustice in the criminal legal system and about the connections between the criminal legal system and trauma, mental health, and a variety of governmental systems and societal factors. Students will also explore issues of forensic science and learn to incorporate them into their work defending clients.

Are there any prerequisites?

Students participating in clinics must have completed 30 credit hours by the clinic start date. Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Evidence, Trial Practice, and Evidence Practicum are among the classes that are helpful, but they are not required. A demonstrated commitment to public interest law is preferred.

Are classes required?

Yes. **Class attendance is mandatory.** In addition, students will be required to attend a mandatory orientation beginning on January 6, 2025. The orientation will consist of simulations and classes that will be arranged around clinic participants' schedules. You can expect to meet at least once daily as a class for the first three weeks, and to engage in significant out-of-class work during this orientation period. The purpose of the orientation is to introduce students to the substantive, procedural, and ethical aspects of criminal defense, and to familiarize students with Student Law Office and Criminal Defense Clinic procedures. **Attendance throughout the orientation is mandatory.**

How many credits will I receive?

Students will enroll for 9 credits. Four are in-class credits, and five are out-of-class credits.

What kind of time commitment is involved?

The Criminal Defense Clinic requires a substantial time commitment. The clinic is very intensive, and you should expect to spend at least 25 hours per week working on client-related matters. This time commitment will vary somewhat with the ebb and flow of litigation, and you may be required to devote considerable additional time. In addition to the time spent serving your clients, you will spend at least four hours each week in class and at least five hours each week performing class related work, preparation, supervision meetings with faculty, and other clinic assignments. For this reason and to avoid potential conflicts of interest, CDC students may not take on an internship, externship, any other experiential advantage courses, or work while they are enrolled in the CDC, unless given explicit advance authorization to do so.

What are the benefits of taking this clinic?

The Criminal Defense Clinic offers you the opportunity to integrate professional ethics and values, legal theory, and practice by representing low-income children and adults charged with crimes. You will learn the lawyering skills necessary to defend a criminal case, including building relationships with clients, investigation, discovery review, development of a case theme and theory, researching and drafting motions, and litigation and trial skills. The laboratories for learning will be the classroom, supervision sessions with faculty, and Colorado's courtrooms and jails. You will learn how to work with clients who face a variety of legal, social, and economic problems and you will learn the resources that are (or are not) available to them. Depending on the issues involved in clients' individual cases, students may litigate constitutional issues and issues relating to forensic science.

Where can I get more information?

- **Clinic Fair:** Wednesday, October 9th, 2024, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM in the Law Forum Student Street
- **SLO Roast:** Tuesday October 8th, 2024 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM in the outdoor seating area outside of the Law Forum.
- **Online** at law.du.edu/student-law-office and on our Instagram [@denver_law_clinical_programs](https://www.instagram.com/denver_law_clinical_programs)

How and when do I apply or register?

Online applications open at **9:00AM on Monday, October 7th and close at 11:59PM on Sunday, October 13th, 2024.** Online applications for AY 2024-2025 year will be available at: law.du.edu/student-law-office. *Late applications will not be accepted.*

What do I need to apply?

Applicants will need to include their professional resume and a short statement explaining their interest in the Criminal Defense Clinic. They will also need to complete a conflict-of-interest form included in the application.

How do I respond if offered a position in the Criminal Defense Clinic?

If offered a position you must accept or decline the offer, in writing, by the deadline given in the offer letter. **There are no exceptions to this requirement.** If you intend to accept the offer of a position, you must respond by the deadline or your position may be offered to another student. Additionally, you must respond in writing by the deadline even if you are declining the offer – this allows us to offer the position to another student at the earliest opportunity. Please be considerate of other students who may hope to take the clinic if offered a position.

The Administrative Director of the Student Law Office will register accepted students before the start of the Spring semester. It is the responsibility of the student to make room in their schedule to accommodate their schedule as soon as they accept an offer.