

# CRIMINAL DEFENSE CLINIC

Fall 2025  
Professor Amanda Savage

Students enrolled in the semester-long Criminal Defense Clinic represent low-income adults and young people charged with a variety of municipal ordinance violations and/or 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, and students may work on policy-related projects.

## Are there any prerequisites?

Although they are not required, it is highly recommended that students take Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Evidence, Trial Practice, and Evidence Practicum before or concurrently with the clinic. A demonstrated commitment to public interest law is preferred.

## Are classes required?

Yes, class attendance is mandatory. Classes are expected to meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:15pm - 2:55pm. Students are also required to attend a mandatory orientation starting the week before the fall semester begins. The orientation will include simulations and classes scheduled around clinic participants' availability. Expect to meet as a class at least once daily for the first two weeks, with significant out-of-class work during this period. The orientation will cover the substantive, procedural, and ethical aspects of criminal defense and familiarize students with the Student Law Office and Criminal Defense Clinic procedures.

## How many credits will I receive?

Students enroll for the full semester, earning 9 credits in total. Throughout the semester, students must participate in the classroom component and conduct client work. Four of the credits will be earned through in-class activities, while the other five will come from out-of-class client work.

## 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 adults and young people 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. 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?

- Online at [law.du.edu/student-law-office](http://law.du.edu/student-law-office) and on our Instagram [@denver\\_law\\_clinical\\_programs](https://www.instagram.com/denver_law_clinical_programs).
- At our in-person spring recruitment events the week of March 3rd, 2025 at Sturm College of Law.
- At the Student Law Office located in suite 335 of the Ricketson Law Building.

### How do I apply?

Applications can be accessed on the Clinical Programs website at [law.du.edu/student-law-office](http://law.du.edu/student-law-office).

Applications for 2025-2026 are open from **Mon March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, at 9:00am - Sun March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 11:59pm**. *Late Applications will not be accepted.*