

## COURSE SYLLABUS – SUMMER TERM 2023

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Rise Women's Legal Centre respectfully acknowledges that our office is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded homelands of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səłilwətaʔt/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

### COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title	Course Code Number	Credit Value
WOMEN'S LEGAL CLINIC EXTERNSHIP AND REFLECTIONS SEMINAR	LAW 379 AND LAW 380	15
SUMMER TERM 2023 (May 9, 2023 – August 11, 2023)		
<b>NB: Rise is located at 516 Richard Street, Vancouver, BC. The course will be conducted on-site but working conditions or location may change in response to UBC Health Guidance, changes in risk levels and/or provincial health orders.</b>		

### CONTACTS

Course Instructors	Contact Details	Office Hours
Vandana Sood, Supervising Lawyer, Rise Women's Legal Centre (she/her/hers)	<a href="mailto:vsood@womenslegalcentre.ca">vsood@womenslegalcentre.ca</a>	Regular office hours at Rise are 9:00am to 5:00pm.  Vandana has in person office hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11:00am-3:00pm; and Thursdays from 11am-noon.
Kim Hawkins, Executive Director, Rise Women's Legal Centre (she/her/hers)	<a href="mailto:khawkins@womenslegalcentre.ca">khawkins@womenslegalcentre.ca</a>	Vandana schedules biweekly file reviews with each student.

## HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

---

Rise Women's Legal Centre is open to the public from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday, and is closed on statutory holidays.

**During the ~three-week mandatory orientation period, students are expected to be in the office from Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.** For the rest of the term, students are generally expected to be in the office Monday to Thursday between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

Apart from during the orientation period, students are generally NOT required to be available for client work on Fridays, although this may occasionally be necessary if court hearings are scheduled or there are other important deadlines on client files that need to be met. *We strongly encourage students to use Fridays to work on the graded written components of the Reflections course.*

## COURSE STRUCTURE

---

The Women's Legal Clinic and co-requisite Reflections Course are a full-term externship program offered to second- and third-year law students at the Peter A. Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia. This externship is a full-time commitment. In order to provide a complete learning experience and high-quality legal services to Rise clients, students are not permitted to enroll in other courses during the term, except in special circumstances and only with prior permission. Enrollment is limited to six students per term. Students are responsible for providing legal services directly to clients and are temporarily articulated by the Law Society of British Columbia and governed by the Rules of the Law Society of British Columbia. As required by the Law Society of British Columbia, Rise will provide a letter reporting on the performance of each student at the end of the period of temporary articles.

Rise provides an experiential learning environment in a non-profit, client-focused, social justice environment with an emphasis on the circumstances of self-identified women and their experiences within the legal system. The Reflections seminar course is designed to support and enhance students' understanding of clinical work and to help situate that work within a broader context. Through weekly seminar discussions, we reflect on themes relating to issues specific to women, access to justice and the practice of law.

The clinic operates akin to a small law firm, where each student is expected to handle their own client files under close supervision and are encouraged to share their learning and support the learning of their peers. We have weekly scheduled time to reflect on the experiential learning component of the course and students will engage in group and individual file reviews all through the term.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

---

The goals of this course are to:

- Familiarize students with family law
- Introduce students to a client-centred, community and social justice legal practice
- Assist students in developing practical advocacy skills to represent clients in diverse situations
- Enhance students' critical reflection, legal analysis, research and writing skills

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Interview clients and identify legal issues
- Screen for violence
- Effectively manage a busy practice and multiple files, including regularly updating clients on the progress of their file
- Obtain instructions, give legal advice and prepare legal opinions
- Correspond with opposing parties, counsel and relevant third parties such as advocates or social workers
- Negotiate with opposing parties or opposing counsel
- Understand and apply Provincial Court rules and processes
- Prepare court pleadings and affidavits
- If appropriate, conduct a family conference in Provincial Court
- If appropriate, conduct short interim applications in Provincial Court
- Plan and implement a research strategy

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

---

This course is taught through a combination of experiential learning, self-reflection, group discussion and academic discourse. Sessions during the orientation period provide students with a crash course in the skills they will need to run their own mini family law practice. Students will be learning through doing, and by receiving and responding to feedback from supervising lawyers.

Students are expected to take their obligations to clients and to one another seriously, to work diligently on their clients' files, respectfully engage with colleagues and the public, and be available for appointments and course appearances. If a client matter is not concluded by the end of the term, students are expected to complete any time-sensitive deliverables, let clients and opposing parties/opposing counsel/third parties know of the interruption in service, note any important deadlines and prepare a detailed transfer memo for the next student clinician to ensure the best possible service to the client.

Each seminar session will involve a lecture and/or group discussion on a topic relevant to the Centre's work followed by "rounds". Rounds are an opportunity for the students and

staff to discuss challenges and issues arising from clinical work, as well as reflect on new experiences and learnings. Attendance at the seminar and at rounds is required.

## LEARNING MATERIALS

---

Required textbook:

*Clinical Law: Practice, Theory and Social Justice Advocacy (Buhler, Marsden, Smyth)*

The following reference materials are available to you:

*British Columbia Family Law Practice, Trudi Brown*

*CLEBC Annotated Family Practice*

*CLEBC British Columbia Family Practice Manual*

*CLEBC Family Law Sourcebook for British Columbia*

*CLEBC Introducing Evidence at Trial*

*Trauma-informed Legal Practice TOOLKIT [Golden Eagle Rising Society]*

(and many others!)

Any assigned readings for seminars will be provided in advance. Students are expected to complete readings prior to attending seminar and are encouraged to use any additional resources available to them through the law library at the Peter A. Allard School of Law and the Courthouse Library.

## ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

---

### Clinical Component

The clinical component of the externship is graded as pass/fail based upon an evaluation of each student's practice achievements during the term.

Students will undertake an initial self-assessment of clinical skills, participate in a mid-term clinical skills discussion with a supervising lawyer, and will receive a final clinical skills evaluation after the conclusion of the externship.

Students are expected to manage all aspects of client work, conduct intake interviews, prepare correspondence, written submissions and pleadings, prepare for and make submissions at court appearances when appropriate, and work with opposing parties, counsel and self-represented litigants. Students are expected to communicate with supervising lawyers often and as necessary regarding the progress of their files. This will take place via regularly scheduled file reviews with supervising lawyers, supervising lawyers' review of any written work leaving the clinic, and by the opportunity to ask questions daily during supervising lawyers' office hours.

Clinical courses are very different from lecture-based law school courses. There is a steep learning curve and the work requires juggling many files and priorities at once and managing time effectively.

### Reflections Course

Students will be assigned a grade for the Reflections Course to be determined as follows:

- **Engagement in weekly seminar classes and during rounds (10%)**

Student engagement is an essential part of the experiential learning process. Students are expected to respectfully share their experience, insights and opinions during seminar sessions and rounds. Students will be assessed on the quality of their engagement and participation in the class, including preparation and attendance. Failure to participate meaningfully will result in a reduced grade overall.

- **Reflective journaling – 8 journal entries (5%)**

Over the course of the term, students will hand in 8 journal entries. Reflective journals are an opportunity for students to candidly reflect on their experiences at Rise and to receive ongoing feedback and support. Journal entries will only be read by the course instructors. Journal entries should be 1-2 pages of thoughtful reflection on how things are going in the term with clients, file management, on readings assigned by the instructors, or on any other aspect of your experience.

**Journal entries are due by 9:00 am on May 29, June 5, June 12, June 19, June 26, Tuesday July 4, July 17 and July 24. [\*note that there is no reflective journal due the week of July 10]**

Students should submit journal entries to by email to both instructors. Reflective journals will not be graded on their content. If all 8 entries are submitted, students will receive 100% on the assignment. Repeatedly submitting journal entries late may result in a reduced overall grade for this component of the course.

NB: Students are responsible for removing electronic copies of their reflective journals from clinic computers at the end of the term, including any saved electronic files and/or any files that may be accessible through the "sent" folder in Outlook. Consider composing and sending journal entries and graded written work from a personal computer and using a personal email address.

- **One Blog Post (15%)**

The blog post assignment is intended for students to identify appropriate issues or topics that arise in clinical practice and present those in plain language to a lay audience. Blog posts should cover topics of interest to Rise clients, the legal profession or the public and should convey those topics in an engaging, accessible, appropriate and legally correct manner. The blog entry should be between 1000-1200 words and of publishable quality.

**The blog post is due by 9:00 am on Monday July 10.** Submit in PDF format to Vandana and Kim via email.

- **Research paper on a legal issue related to clinic work (70%)**

**Students will prepare a research paper of a maximum of 7500 words** (inclusive of footnotes, exclusive of bibliography) in which they will provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of a legal issue relevant to client work or a systemic issue concerning access to justice, feminism and the law, or another topic related to the course. There is no minimum word requirement, but assignments which fall significantly short of the expected word length are unlikely to have covered the subject in sufficient detail.

Students are encouraged to begin thinking about their research at the beginning of term and to discuss potential topics with the instructors. With students' permission, research papers may be used by future students at Rise and/or shared with other organisations.

Students must hand in a 2-3 page proposal identifying their selected topic, proposed thesis statement, a short summary or outline of the paper and a partial list of sources consulted or anticipated to be consulted. Students should also consider whether there are any necessary limitations on the research to ensure that the paper is appropriate in scope.

**The paper proposal is due by 9:00 am on Tuesday July 4, and is worth 5% of your grade.** Submit in Word format to Vandana and Kim.

**Research papers are due by 1:00 pm on Wednesday August 16, and are worth 65% of your grade.** Submit in PDF format to Vandana and Kim by email.

Late Submission of Graded Written Assignments:

Assignments submitted late will be reduced by one half letter grade (4%) for each day (or part thereof) they are submitted late (e.g., an A graded assignment submitted late will receive an A-, an A- graded assignment will be reduced to a B+, etc. The grade will be reduced by 4% per day submitted late.)

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

---

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

Requests for Extensions or Accommodation must be made in writing to the Assistant Dean, Students at the Peter A. Allard School of Law. **Instructors are unable to grant requests for extensions or accommodations for the research paper without a written request made through the Office of the Assisant Dean.**

All law students are subject to UBC's rules on academic honesty and standards, including UBC's rules in relation to plagiarism and the penalties which may be imposed, as set out in the Academic Calendar 2019/20, available online: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,0,0,0>

## **LEARNING CLIMATE, CONFIDENTIALITY AND LEGAL ETHICS**

---

An inclusive, respectful and diverse classroom environment – whether we are convening in person or online – is crucial to our work in this course. Participants are sure to have differences of opinion and will be challenged to think critically. We expect class discussion to be spirited, but always conducted with goodwill and respect. Rise Women's Legal Centre is committed to promoting and preserving a positive, supportive and safe environment for all students, staff, clients and visitors to our office and virtual space. We will need to work together to ensure that all aspects of this course live up to this commitment. If you have any concerns, please speak to us.

Rise is a non-profit legal clinic and students are considered part of our law firm, whether or not they have temporary articles under the Law Society's rules. As such, students should consider themselves bound by the Law Society of British Columbia's Code of Professional Conduct, including the duty to hold in strict confidence all information concerning the affairs of clients acquired in the course of the professional relationship.

## **ORIENTATION AND SEMINAR SCHEDULE**

---

Students will be provided with a detailed orientation schedule at the beginning of the term. Seminars have been front-loaded to ensure students have more time at the end of the term to wrap up client work, prepare detailed transfer memos on open files and complete their written assignments. The following topics may be covered in seminars during the term:

- Introduction to Clinic
- Trans Competent Lawyering
- Intersection of Family and Immigration Law
- BC Legal System Responses to Family Violence
- Ethics in Family Law



- Decolonization and Indigenization of the Practice of Family Law
- Psychological Assessment and Response-Based Practice
- Children's Participation in Family Law Processes
- Feminist Approaches to the Practice of Law
- Cultural Humility
- Living in Community – Representing Sex Workers
- Law and Social Change

## **COPYRIGHT**

---

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the course instructors, guest lecturers, or are licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline.

Students may record seminars with prior permission of the instructors.