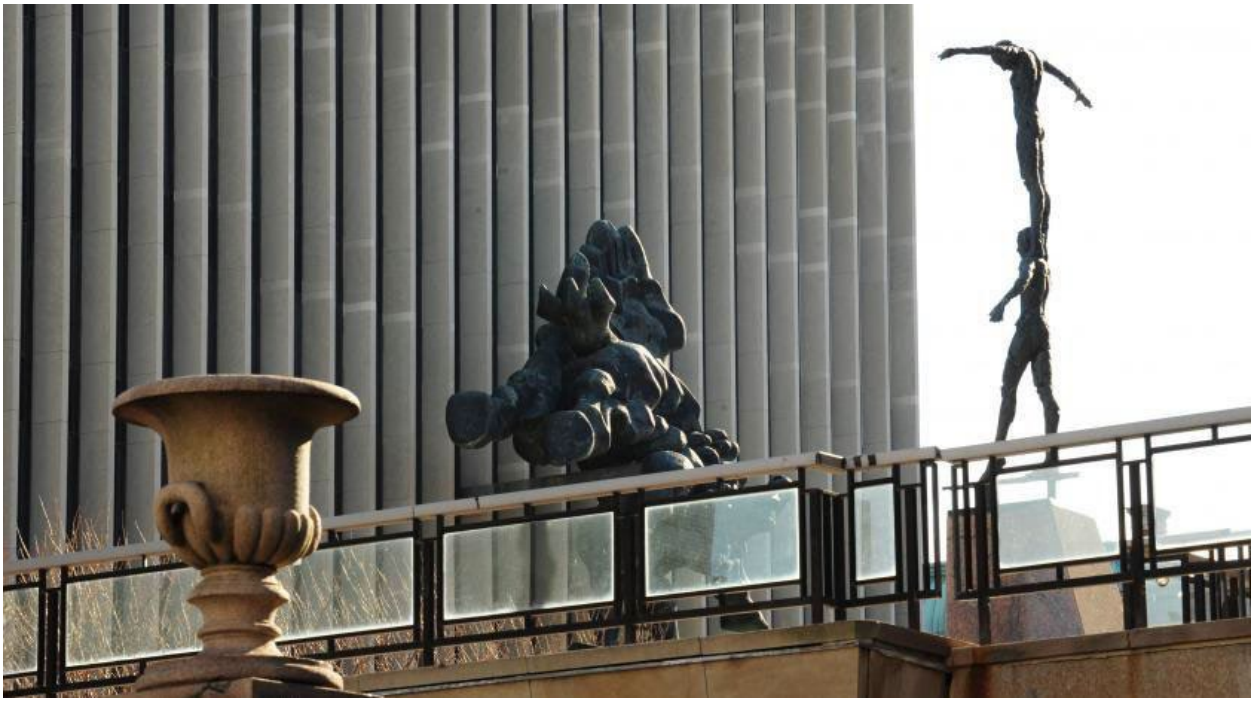
Columbia Law School

PI/PS
Office of Public Interest/
Public Service Law and Careers



Your Public Interest Roadmap

Exploring Public Interest/Public Service Law at Columbia Law School

2026-2027

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Introduction: Exploring Public Interest and Government Pathways at Columbia Law School

Welcome to Columbia Law School! The Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers (the PI/PS Office) is dedicated to providing opportunities, mentoring, and counseling for students interested in exploring opportunities or careers in public interest or public service (government), and for those who want to engage in pro bono work wherever they practice. Public interest and public service careers are exciting and satisfying, enabling you to use your lawyering skills to make a difference on issues you are passionate about and that are vital to the impacted communities. This guide will serve as a roadmap for your three years at Columbia, providing information about Law School offerings as well as a timeline for taking advantage of those opportunities. Here is a quick snapshot to get you started, but please read the entire guide for full information.

Tips:

- Students interested in a public interest or public service career can get further guidance on planning their 2L and 3L course of study in our Public Interest/Public Service Curricular Guidelines. The guidelines provide extensive advice on choosing classes and co-curricular activities.
- See the Student Life Roadmaps for more help planning your time at the Law School

1Ls: Jump right in!

➔ **Programming:** Attend public interest and government events presented by the PI/PS Office, Columbia centers, and student organizations. Hear from practitioners, learn about practice areas, and begin to plan your own path. Attend sessions on Columbia's generous loan repayment assistance program (LRAP) and on financing a public interest career. For up-to-date information on events, check LawCal and the PI/PS Monday newsletter.

➔ **Student Activities:** Build your community and your skills. Participate in student organizations or activities like moot courts. In the spring, consider applying for a position on a journal.

➔ **Summer Job Exploration:** 1L summer is important to your career path**.**

- ❑ Apply for Columbia Summer Funding (CSF) or the Human Rights Internship Program (HRIP).
- ❑ Attend PI/PS Office programs on planning your job search, crafting your resume and cover letters, and interviewing. Attend "The Scoop" in the early fall to hear from upper-year students about their summer internships and ask questions.
- ❑ Check out our job search tools, including the Public Interest Job Search Toolkit and New York Public Interest Index.
- ❑ Search for jobs or organizations of interest on PSJD.org and Symplicity. Read evaluations of

internships by past CLS interns on Symplicity.

- ❑ Participate in the PI/PS Office Mock Interview Program over the winter.
- ❑ In February, attend the Public Interest Legal Career (PILC) Fair to meet employers and interview for jobs. Consider participating in the Spring On-Campus Interview (OCI) Program (January-February).
- ❑ Keep in mind that developing relationships with your professors will be important for recommendations for fellowship, job, and clerkship applications.
- ❑ Remember to meet with your PI/PS Office adviser—we're here to help throughout this process!

➔ **Experiential Learning:** In the spring, attend information sessions on clinics and externships for 2L year. Applications are due in late spring. Experiential learning is key to becoming a public interest or government lawyer!

➔ **Pro Bono:** Consider getting involved with a pro bono project. Pro bono hours worked after 1L fall semester will count towards your 40-hour pro bono requirement.

1L Summer

Make the most of your summer internship. Your 1L summer is the time to plan for 2L course selection and your 2L summer. Consider doing informational interviews with some organizations. See the Public Interest Job Search Toolkit for more information on informational interviews. Meet with a PI/PS Office adviser to discuss your plans and to work on updating your resume and cover letters as needed.

2Ls: Continue to do everything you did 1L year and more!

➔ **Programming:** Continue to take advantage of the array of programs happening at the Law School, such as information sessions on postgraduate fellowships and funding your public interest career.

Programs on substantive issues can be even more valuable as a 2L, when your interests have started to crystallize. Events with employers of interest or graduates working in public interest/public service are especially valuable. Take advantage of the opportunity to connect with presenters!

➔ **Experiential Learning, Classes, and Pro Bono:** Take a clinic or externship, or do a term-time internship as an alternative. (Pay close attention to the limitations of Academic Rule 1.5.1 as you plan your 2L year). Attend an information session on the Federal Government Semester in D.C. or Pro Bono Scholars Program. Take classes to build knowledge and skills. Develop relationships with professors and practitioners along the way. Consider working as a teaching or research assistant.

➔ **Student Activities and Pro Bono:** Get involved! Help lead a student organization. Work on a journal. Publish an article or note on a public interest topic. Find interesting pro bono work.

➔ **Obtaining a Summer Position:** Your 2L summer internship is especially important to obtaining a postgraduate job. To find a job, attend fairs (like the Equal Justice Works and PILC Fairs) and participate in the Fall On-Campus Interview Program (OCI). In the fall, consult with the PI/PS Office

about 2L summer and updating your resume, crafting cover letters, and preparing for interviews. Register for the Human Rights Internship Program (HRIP) if applicable. If you decide to work at a private sector firm, you should network with public interest practitioners over the summer, do pro bono in a field of interest, or consider splitting your summer. Keep in mind that 2L summer internships in public interest count towards the pro bono requirement.

➔ **Preparing for Postgraduate Employment:** Over 2L summer, start planning for postgraduate employment. Network. Explore fellowships and government honors programs. Let the PI/PS Office know if you will apply; we will work with you. Some applications are due at the end of 2L summer.

➔ **Clerkships:** Think about whether you want to clerk after graduation. Meet with the Office of Judicial Careers to learn more. Under the new hiring plan, you should not apply for clerkships until you have four semesters of grades.

3Ls: Over the summer, fall, and winter, continue to do the above, as well as:

➔ **Postgraduate Fellowship/Job Search:** Start applying for fellowships (project- or organization-based) or government honors programs in late summer. In the fall, explore opportunities on Symplicity, PSJD.org, and other sites. Consider applying for Columbia fellowships during the fall and winter.

Conversations with PI/PS Office advisers, professors, clinic and externship directors, Columbia graduates, and practitioners will be important throughout.

➔ **Financial Planning:** Attend financial programs hosted by the PI/PS Office, the Financial Aid Office, and student groups. Meet with financial aid staff to learn more about LRAP. Consider applying for the Public Service Bridge Loan. Apply for LRAP and Enhanced LRAP as appropriate.

➔ **Clerkships:** Consider applying for a clerkship in consultation with the Office of Judicial Careers.

➔ **Pro bono:** Complete your hours and submit them by the deadline!.

Read on for opportunities in:

Children and Youth/Education Rights
Civil Rights/Racial Justice/Voting Rights
Constitutional Law/Civil Liberties
Criminal Law
Employment/Labor/Work with Dignity
Environmental Law
Family Law
Gender Justice/Women's Rights
Government (Federal, State, Local)
Housing Rights/Homelessness
Human Rights
Immigration/Refugee Rights
LGBTQIA+ Rights
National Security/Veterans
Poverty Law/Economic Justice

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the advantages of exploring public interest/government opportunities as a student?

There are several reasons to explore public interest and government work while at Columbia. You will learn about areas you may want to pursue over summer or after graduation. You will also begin to connect with fellow students, professors, Columbia graduates, and practitioners, relationships that will be crucial for charting your path, and for postgraduate fellowship and job applications. You may feel passionate about a particular subject area, and whether you pursue that passion as a career or through postgraduate pro bono work, it will be useful to learn about that area while in school. Finally, you will have fun learning about—and participating in—meaningful opportunities available to you during school and after you graduate.

Is experiential learning important?

Yes! Experiential learning is essential to your legal education (as reflected by the fact that the American Bar Association requires every law student to graduate with at least six experiential credits). If you are considering a public interest or public service career, this is even more true. Experiential opportunities can help you develop knowledge and skills critically important to many public interest and government positions—most successful applicants for those jobs bring externship, clinical, or practicum experience. They also allow you to get to know professors and practitioners, providing a source of mentorship. Finally, through experiential learning, you can gain insight into real lawyering. Every year we hear from practitioners that an applicant's experiential learning involvement is a key factor in their hiring decisions.

In addition to or instead of enrolling in one of the Law School's clinics, externships, or practicums, (that is, doing experiential work for course credit), some students intern with a New York-based public interest or government employer during the school year (that is, do similar work but as a volunteer without course credit). This is an opportunity to develop your expertise and increase your contacts; and employers frequently hire individuals who have interned with them or with similar organizations. (See Should I Do a Term-Time Internship?)

What is the difference between a clinic and an externship, and how do I choose one or more?

Columbia offers students many experiential opportunities. Both clinics and externships provide opportunities to serve clients or organizations, in addition to having a classroom component. You can do both a clinic and externships while at Columbia, but not in the same semester.

The clinics are on campus and are taught by full-time faculty who are experienced practitioners in their fields. This means that, under New York law, students are able to practice as attorneys with responsibility for their own clients even though they have not yet graduated. Externships are off campus. Students work onsite at an organization and are taught by adjunct faculty who are experts in

the particular field.

Columbia has many experiential learning options, so you need to choose carefully. First, timing is an issue. Not all clinics and externships are offered every semester. Second, think about the issues and skills on which each clinic or externship is focused. Many clinics and externships may have a title that suggests one subject matter area, but actually capture a range of experiences and lawyering skills. Choose those that interest you the most and teach the skills you want to develop; talk to the instructors and to students who have taken the course. Third, weigh time commitment. Clinics generally give students more responsibility for cases than externships and therefore involve a greater time commitment and award more credits. Additionally, some offerings are a one-semester commitment, others two. Many clinics offer "advanced clinic" which allows students to continue for multiple semesters and build a sense of community.

Please remember: if at first you do not get into a clinic or externship, try again later. Space is limited, and sometimes 3Ls and LL.M.s receive preference. This should not discourage you from applying.

In addition to clinics and externships, we encourage you to explore other experiential learning options, such as policy labs and simulations, which develop lawyering skills but without "live" clients.

More information on experiential learning.

Should I do a term-time internship?

You should definitely consider doing a term-time internship during 2L or 3L year. Term-time internships are invaluable for building skills, contacts and knowledge about "real jobs" in public interest and government.

Many students enjoy interning part-time as a balance to their class work, studying, and other activities.

A term-time internship differs from a clinic or externship as it usually does not provide academic credit (more on that below) and does not have a seminar component. Term-time internships can provide more flexibility for students than clinics and externships, as they can be created according to a particular student's schedule and interests and require less of a time commitment. They are also a good opportunity for students who do not get into a clinic or externship, but desire experiential learning; or are interested in issues that are not covered by existing clinics or externships. Additionally, an internship might give a student an opportunity to gain more advanced skills in an area covered by one of the Columbia offerings.

Columbia students have a big advantage being in New York City—there are myriad public interest opportunities at our doorstep. Many employers are thrilled to host a Columbia intern during the year and will often provide more interesting work and better supervision than they do in the summer, when a greater number of interns compete for attention. In addition, it can be easier to get a term-time

internship (especially in the fall) than a summer one, so if you did not get your "dream" summer job, apply for fall or spring.

To find internships, you can research and contact employers directly or view Symplicity or PSJD.org postings. Unlike externships, term-time internships do not earn academic credit unless you (1) apply for credit as an independent project under Supervised J.D. Experiential Study L6695 (and choose an academic adviser to supervise you) or (2) apply for *Externship: Experiential Practice* which is a 3 or 4 credit experiential offering consisting of 2 or 3 credits of placement in an outside placement that you find yourself and a 1 credit seminar that meets every other week. Read about the two options available to obtain academic credit for independent internships. Note that some employers require their interns to receive academic or pro bono credit.

For Columbia pro bono credit, an internship must be unpaid and not for academic credit. (Rising 3Ls working for public interest employers over 2L summer are an exception to this rule and may earn pro bono credit for their summer employment.) An internship that is paid or for credit, however, may count towards the New York State Bar pro bono admission requirements, as would internships that are unpaid and not for academic credit. Visit law.columbia.edu/pro-bono for more information.

Are there certain classes I should take?

In addition to experiential learning, which we strongly recommend, many class offerings will help you expand your knowledge or hone skills important to public interest work. Think carefully about which classes to take. There are no "mandatory" classes for getting a public interest or government job, but there are courses that could be helpful, depending on your career direction. For example, if you are interested in litigating, consider classes like evidence, trial practice, federal courts, and/or negotiation. If you are interested in certain substantive areas, be sure to take a few classes in those subjects and get to know the professors. It is also important to take foundational classes, such as Legislation and Regulation, Criminal Adjudication, and Federal Courts. They may not be specifically public interest- or public service-oriented, but they will lay a foundation for your legal advocacy as a public interest or government lawyer. In addition, consider taking some demanding classes to develop your legal knowledge and demonstrate your intellectual ability. Clinics, externships, and practicums, even those not focused on your interest area, often have broad benefits, providing skills and knowledge needed in a range of fields. Finally, you want to make sure you take a breadth of classes. It is helpful to have exposure to several areas of public interest law since issues and advocacy approaches often overlap or are intersectional.

Be aware that all classes are not available every semester, so plan your schedule accordingly.

For more information, review our Public Interest/ Public Service Curricular Guidelines.

Meet with an PI/PS Office or Student Services adviser or with professors for advice as you choose your classes. If you plan to clerk, also talk to the Office of Judicial Careers or professors for guidance.

What other factors should I consider when selecting courses?

When selecting courses, you should also consider what kind of learner you are, what you are looking for in a class, and how the class will fit into the broader scheme of your time in law school. Keep the following factors in mind as you plan your schedule:

- **Learning Environment:** Do you prefer large lectures or small seminars that allow for more discussion? Select courses in which you can envision yourself being an active participant. Keep in mind that smaller classes often provide greater opportunity to build relationships with professors. Also, consider the assessment methods in each class. Would you prefer a mix of exams and final papers? Would weekly writing or other assignments provide a balance?
- **Instruction:** Are there instructors who could help you cultivate your interest in a field and serve as mentors?
- **Timing:** Consider the timing of your courses. It may be helpful to take certain foundational courses before advanced ones. Make sure that you will have time to take the prerequisite and recommended classes needed for advanced courses. As you plan, keep in mind semester credit minimums, graduation requirements, and the need to maintain a balanced and varied workload with hands-on learning, substantive courses, and skills-based courses in different areas of the law.
- **Interests:** Think about your goals for law school and the subject areas important to those goals. Are there related topics that would allow you to build broad knowledge and be a well-rounded advocate in your field? You may want to enroll in a few courses that seem unrelated to your objectives but still interest you.
- **Writing Skills:** If you are not doing a note or another significant writing activity outside of the classroom, think about taking courses that involve writing. In addition, the two Law School writing requirements should be treated as opportunities to improve your skills, explore areas of interest, and form a mentoring relationship with a faculty member.

More information on CLS courses.

Should I work on a journal?

Journal work can be satisfying, especially if it focuses on a topic of interest to you. In general, public interest employers value public interest journals over business-related ones. Some employers, particularly those that do direct representation and trial work, value journals less than clinics, externships, and internships.

Organizations engaged in complex litigation, appellate work, or policy may view journals as good preparation. Judges, academic institutions, and some employers look particularly favorably on the

Columbia Law Review. Publishing a note or other legal research and writing experiences also interest them. But if journal work doesn't interest you, don't feel that you need to participate - there are many other opportunities to engage at CLS!

More information on student organizations.

Should I participate in a specialized moot court?

The Law School offers various international and domestic specialized moot courts. These moot courts require that students apply, and they accept a limited number of participants. Many focus on public interest topics, such as the Frederick Douglass, Native American Law Students Association, and Williams Institute moot courts. Joining a specialized moot court will allow you to engage in an area of interest and work with others with similar interests. These moot courts are generally small and can provide a sense of community.

More on information moot courts.

How much pro bono should I do as a 1L?

Law school is a big adjustment, and everyone does it at their own pace. We advise 1Ls to take time to acclimate and focus on classes, and to take on pro bono only if they feel ready. For 1Ls who want to explore pro bono—who feel that interaction with the world outside of school will motivate rather than overwhelm—there are in-house projects at the Law School with manageable time commitments. There are also off-campus opportunities suitable for some 1Ls. Watch for emails from our pro bono office or check our website.

1L pro bono hours completed during and after spring semester of 1L year count towards the Columbia 40-hour pro bono graduation requirement. Pro bono hours completed during fall semester of 1L year do not count towards the 40-hour pro bono requirement, but they will go on your transcript as voluntary pro bono work and may count for the New York State Bar pro bono admission requirement. Any student who completes 100 or more hours of pro bono work by graduation (including voluntary pro bono hours completed during 1L year) will be honored at our annual spring Public Interest Honors Reception.

More information on Columbia pro bono programs.

I'm considering a public interest career, but how will I get a job? How do I learn about fellowships?

Although the public interest job market can be a challenge, there are steps you can take to equip yourself to navigate it. First, make sure to take advantage of public interest opportunities, as outlined in

this guide.

Second, work closely with the PI/PS Office to prepare for postgraduate opportunities. Third, be prepared for the possibility that classmates going into the private sector will have a postgraduate job lined up earlier than you do; the private sector timeline is quite different, and you should not feel bad about this! You will be rewarded for your diligence and patience with a career that is meaningful and satisfying *to you*.

We urge you to consider postgraduate fellowships and honors programs. Although applying can be time-consuming, it is well worth it, allowing you to design or obtain your "dream job" and often providing the best entrée to jobs. If you are interested, sign up for the PI/PS Office fellowship email list and meet with the PI/PS director of public interest lawyering and strategic initiatives to get started. During 2L year, you should also review resources like our Postgraduate Fellowship Toolkit. For project-based fellowships, you will need to begin working to secure a host and a project over 2L summer. Applications for project-based fellowships, and for organization-based ones (which are more like standard job applications), are due starting early in 3L fall.

If you are interested in government fellowships or honors programs, work closely with our director of government programs. Some honors applications are due in late 2L summer and early 3L fall.

Set up a PSJD.org account to monitor fellowship opportunities and consult with the PI/PS Office regularly.

How will I pay my bills?

As you consider going into a career in public interest or public service, it is common to have concerns about what your salary will be, how to manage student loans, and whether you will be able to have the quality of life that you would like to have. We take these concerns seriously. In addition to the resources listed below, the PI/PS Office offers regular programming around financial considerations when going into public interest careers, including Loan Repayment (LRAP) information sessions and panel discussions where students can have frank talks with alumni about finances. Specialist Career Adviser Grace Shim is also available at any point during your law school career and beyond for discussions around financial issues and has extensive knowledge about the Law School's LRAP program.

Some good news is that many public interest and government salaries have risen in the past few years and, when combined with Columbia's generous LRAP benefits, support a comfortable standard of living. Many Columbia graduates in public service report that they are able to live comfortably with the assistance of LRAP. In addition, Columbia offers a public service bridge loan for recent graduates, which provides further support of $10,000 to cover summer expenses for public interest graduates before beginning their first jobs as public interest and public service lawyers.

Most government agencies and many large nonprofit organization salaries are available on their

websites. The PI/PS Office can provide information about other public interest employers—including with recent data from salary surveys of Columbia graduates and sample budgets. We can also advise you about negotiating salaries. The PI/PS and Financial Aid Office websites contain information about LRAP (including FAQs and a detailed program guide), Enhanced LRAP Fellowships, and other key financial information as well.

Resources:
Financial Aid Office
Information on financing your public interest career, including LRAP
PI/PS Office Salary Survey

Exploring Substantive Areas of Interest at Columbia

As you begin to explore your substantive interests, it is helpful to have an idea of the offerings available. For example, if you are interested in immigration, you might want to know about relevant clinics, externships, student groups, and journals. This guide gives a snapshot of available offerings. Note that we are not recommending that you participate in every available opportunity, but rather hope to provide a sense of the choices to consider.

When exploring substantive areas of law, identify the foundational knowledge and skills that would make you a better advocate in those areas. This might lead you to options not specifically related to public interest. Consider foundational courses (such as administrative law, federal courts, advanced constitutional law, legislation, evidence) and options that will increase your lawyering and leadership skills more broadly (such as clinics, externships, or practicums, even if they do not directly relate to your primary interest) or hands-on courses (such as trial practice, negotiation, or other skills-based classes). Talk to an adviser or faculty member about sequencing your classes wisely.

We suggest that you expose yourself to a variety of topics to assess what interests you the most. Many areas are intersectional, so you will benefit from broad exposure.

Please note that the opportunities listed in this section are not exhaustive. In addition, not all of the opportunities listed are available at all times. Classes, clinics, externships, and other opportunities are subject to change based on availability. Check the current curriculum guide for more information on class availability; and seek guidance from your PI/PS Office or Student Services adviser, professors, or mentors when choosing opportunities to pursue. You can also review our Public Interest/ Public Service Curricular Guidelines.

Children and Youth/Education Rights*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Family Defense Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS/PRACTICUMS:

Immigrant Youth Advocacy • Representing New York City: New York City Law Department Externship [may cover juvenile delinquency matters] • Structural Change in Public Education Policy and Social Change Lab

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

S. Juvenile Justice
S. Children and the Law (*not offered currently*)

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Safe Horizon - Anti-Trafficking Program • Advocates for Children of New York • CASA: Advocates for Children of NYS • The Center for Family Representation

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Education Law and Policy Society • Harlem Tutorial Project *(currently inactive)* • High School Law Institute • Mentoring Youth through Legal Education • Suspension Representation Project

CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change • Center for Public Research and Leadership

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Civil Rights/Racial Justice/Voting Rights*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Family Defense Clinic • Immigrants' Rights Clinic • Post-Conviction and Reentry Justice Clinic • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Law, Power and Social Change Externship • New York Attorney General Office Social and Environmental Justice Externship • Bronx Defenders on Holistic Defense • Economic Justice and Empowerment Externship: Consumer Bankruptcy • Economic Justice and Empowerment Externship: Consumer Debt, Tax, and Community Development • Environmental Practice • Federal Defenders of New York • Housing Justice: Power in Numbers Through Group Representation and Movement Lawyering • Housing Justice: The Right to Counsel in Housing Court • N.Y. Attorney General's Office: Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigations and Oversight

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

S. Access to Justice for People in Prisons
Civil Rights
S. Current Issues in Civil Liberties and Civil Rights Lawyering for Change
S. Native American Law
S. Access to Civil Justice
S. Breakthrough in Abolition Through Transformative Learning Exchange
S. Free Expression and Civil Rights on Campus
S. Law and Humanities Workshop: Racial Tyranny and the Future of American Democracy
S. Legal Conflict and Change During the Civil War and Reconstruction
S. Poverty
S. Universities and the First Amendment
Reading Group: Lawyering for Justice
Regulation of Gender & Sexuality
S. Environmental Justice Law and Policy
S. Homelessness Law and Policy
S. Latino/as and Civil Rights Law
S. Reproductive Rights after Dobbs
S. The American Bail System
S. The Rights of Non-Citizens after September 11, and the Trump Administration
S. Transnational Justice
Workshop on Facilitating Meaningful Reentry

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs Workers' Rights Clinic • Housing Legal

Clinic with Neighborhood Defender Services and Harlem Community Justice Center • Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Race and Law • *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems* • Civil Rights Law Society • American Constitution Society • American Civil Liberties Union • Empowering Women of Color • Affinity Groups: BLSA, APALSA, LALSA, MELSA, NALSA, QTPOC, SALSA • First-Generation Professionals

CENTERS:

Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies • Center for Institutional and Social Change • Center for the Study of Law and Culture

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Constitutional Law (Including First Amendment/ Civil Liberties/Fourteenth Amendment)*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Arts Law Externship • Constitutional Rights in Life and Death Penalty Cases • Criminal Appeals • Knight First Amendment Institute Externship • Experiential Practice: Government Agencies • Federal Defenders of New York • Housing Justice: Power in Numbers Through Group Representation and Movement Lawyering

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

S. Current Issues in Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Ideas of the First Amendment
S. Global Constitutionalism
American Civil Procedure
American Constitutional Law
Civil Rights
Comparative Constitutional Law
Conflict of Laws
Constitutional and Foreign Affairs
Federal Courts
Law and Religion
Law of the Political Process
Legislation and Regulation
National Security Law
Reading Group: Lawyering for Justice
Regulation of Gender & Sexuality
S. Access to Justice for People in Prison
S. Breakthrough in Abolition Through Transformative Learning Exchange
S. Constitutional Ideas of the Founding Era
S. Election Law
S. Cash, Crime, and the Constitution: The Legal Frontiers of Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering
S. Free Expression and Civil Rights on Campus
S. Latino/as and Civil Rights Law
S. Law and Humanities Workshop: Racial Tyranny and the Future of American Democracy
S. Legal Conflict and Change During the Civil War and Reconstruction
S. Native American Law
S. Perspectives on the Presidency

S. Political Theory and the 1st Amendment
S. Reproductive Rights after Dobbs
S. The American Bail System
S. The Constitution in the Territories
S. The Rights of Non-Citizens after September 11, and the Trump Administration
S. Universities and the First Amendment
S. War & Speech
Terror and Consent
The Military & the Constitution

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

High School Law Institute • Mentoring Youth through Legal Education [youth debates on constitutional law issues]

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems • *Columbia Law Review* • American Civil Liberties Union • American Constitution Society • Columbia Law Students for Voting Rights • Federalist Society • High School Law Institute • National Lawyers Guild

CENTERS:

Center for Constitutional Governance • Center for Gender and Sexuality Law • Center for Law and Liberty • Center for Public Research and Leadership • Center for Law and Liberty • Constitutional Democracy Initiative • Kernochan Center for Law, Media and the Arts • National Security Law Program

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Criminal Law (Defense, Prosecution, Death Penalty, Prisoners' Rights)*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Criminal Defense Clinic • Post-Conviction and Reentry Justice Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Bronx Defenders Externship on Holistic Defense • Constitutional Rights in Life and Death Penalty Cases • Criminal Appeals Externship • Criminal Prosecution—Manhattan/Brooklyn District Attorney's Office • Domestic Violence Prosecution Externship • Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem Community Defense Externship • U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York Externship • U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York Externship • Experiential Practice: JD Judicial Externship • Federal Defenders of New York Externship • Law, Power and Social Change Externship • N.Y. Attorney General's Office: Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigation and Oversight Externship •

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

S. Black Letter Law/White Collar Comparative Criminal Justice Criminal Adjudication
Criminal Investigations
International Criminal Law
S. Internet and Computer Crimes
Professional Responsibility in Criminal Law
S. The American Bail System
Evidence
Federal Criminal Law
International Criminal Investigations
Jurisprudence of War
Landmark Criminal Trials
S. Access to Justice for People in Prison
S. Animal Law
S. Cash, Crime, and the Constitution: The Legal Frontiers of Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering
S. Criminal Law Theory: Homicide
S. Current Issues in Advanced Federal Criminal Law and Procedure
S. Cybersecurity, Data Privacy and Surveillance Law
S. Developments in International Criminal Law
S. Domestic & International Terrorism: A Comparative History of Investigations & Prosecutions
S. Forensic Evidence
S. Internet and Computer Crimes
S. Juvenile Justice
S. Pretrial Motions Practice
S. Science and the Courts
S. Sentencing

S. Trial Practice
S. Truth and Story in the Language of Justice
S. US Civil and Criminal Enforcement of International Cartels
S. White Collar Investigations and Prosecutions
The Law of Genocide
Workshop on Facilitating Meaningful Reentry I & II

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Prisoners' Legal Services of New York • The Center for Law and Justice • Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Human Rights Law Review • *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems* • Columbia Law School Public Defender Students • Columbia Mock Trial Team • Criminal Justice Action Network • High School Law Institute • Jailhouse Lawyers Manual

CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change

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Employment Law/Labor Law/Work with Dignity*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Appellate Litigation Clinic • Mediation Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Civil Litigation: Employment Externship • Law, Power, and Social Change Externship • N.Y. Attorney General's Office: Antitrust Enforcement Externship • N.Y. Attorney General's Office: Employment Law and Civil Litigation Skills

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Employment Law Labor Law
S. Labor Rights in a Global Economy
S. Transnational Business and Human Rights
C. Public Economic Law
Regulation of Gender & Sexuality
S. Antitrust at Trial
S. Free Expression and Civil Rights on Campus
S. Global Regulation of International Business
Sports and the Law
Business Immigration, Visas, Workforce, and Compliance Law

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund • JustCause • National Center for Law and Economic Justice

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Journal of Law and Social Problems • Columbia Workers' Rights Student Coalition • National Lawyers Guild

CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change • Center for Law and the Economy

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Environmental Law*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Environmental and Climate Justice Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Environmental Practice Externship • New York Attorney General Office Social and Environmental Justice Externship

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

S. Advanced Climate Change Law
S. Animal Law
Climate Change Law and Policy Energy Regulation Environmental Law
S. Food Systems and U.S. Environmental Law
C. Public Economic Law
S. Environmental Justice Law and Policy
S. Global Regulation of International Business
S. Negotiating International Agreements: The Case of Climate Change/Environment
S. Rethinking Globalization
S. Sustainability in Big Business and Big Law
S. Transactions in Emerging Energy Industries

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Earthjustice • Earth Law Center

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Environmental Law • Environmental Law Society

CENTERS:

Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment • Columbia Earth Institute • Sabin Center for Climate Change Law

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Family Law*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Family Defense Clinic • Immigrants' Rights Clinic • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Bronx Defenders Externship on Holistic Defense • Domestic Violence Prosecution Externship • Immigrant Youth Advocacy Externship

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Advanced Family Law: Pre-Nups, Property Distribution, and Alimony in Divorce
S. Domestic Violence and the Law
Family Law
Regulation of Gender & Sexuality
S. Access to Civil Justice: Where We Are, Where We Go
S. Access to Justice for People in Prison
S. Poverty
S. Reproductive Rights after Dobbs

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Courtroom Advocates Project • U-Visa Project • Her Justice • JustCause • Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Domestic Violence Project

CENTERS:

Center for Gender and Sexuality Law

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Gender Justice/Women's Rights (Including Reproductive Rights and Domestic Violence)*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Family Defense Clinic • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Domestic Violence Prosecution Externship

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

S. Domestic Violence and the Law Family Law
S. Reproductive Rights after Dobbs
Advanced Family Law: Pre-Nups, Property Distribution, and Alimony in Divorce
Civil Rights
Lawyering for Change
Regulation of Gender & Sexuality
S. Access to Justice: Where We Are, Where We Go
S. Access to Justice for People in Prison

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

If/When/How Lawyering for Reproductive Justice • Courtroom Advocates Project • Human Trafficking Intervention Court Project • U-Visa Project • Safe Horizon - Anti-Trafficking Program • Her Justice • Immigration Equality • JustCause

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Gender and Law • Columbia Law Women's Association • Columbia Workers' Rights Student Coalition • Domestic Violence Project • If/When/How Lawyering for Reproductive Justice • Empowering Women of Color • Feminist Law Students

CENTERS:

Center for Gender and Sexuality Law

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Government (Federal, State, and Local)*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Appellate Advocacy Clinic
NOTE: Almost every clinic involves the government, as a partner, opponent, or focus of advocacy.

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Federal Government Semester in DC • New York State Attorney General Office Economics Law Enforcement: Antitrust Externship • New York State Attorney General Office Social and Environmental Justice Externship • Representing New York City: New York City Law Department Externship • U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York Externship • U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York Externship • Housing Justice: Power in Numbers Through Group Representation and Moment Lawyering • Immigrant Youth Advocacy Externship • Immigration Defense Externship • Law, Power and Social Change

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Antitrust and Trade Regulation
Legislation and Regulation S. Rebuilding Government
Securities Regulation
State and Local Government Law
Business Immigration, Visas, Workforce, and Compliance Law
C. Public Economic Law
Energy Regulation
Financial Institutions
Food and Drug Law, Policy, and Practice
Health Law
Immigration Law
Information Privacy and Data Governance Law
Land Use
National Security Law
P. Structural Change in Public Education Policy and Social Change
Regulation of Gender & Sexuality
S. Access to Justice for People in Prison
S. Antitrust in Action
S. Business Transactions and the Healthcare Regulatory Environment
S. Election Law
S. Fintech Innovation in Financial Services: Business Models, Legal and Regulatory Structures & Policy Issues
S. Food Law and Policy
S. Food Systems and US Environmental Law

S. Free Expression and Civil Rights on Campus
S. Homelessness Law and Policy
S. Mental Health Law
S. Reproductive Rights after Dobbs
S. Structural Change in Public Education Policy and Social Change Lab
S. The American Bail System
S. Universities and the First Amendment
The Law of Artificial Intelligence

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Veterans Legal Assistance Project • Individual Research Projects for Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Tax Law • *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems* • *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* • Education Law and Policy Society • Columbia Health Law Association • District of Columbia Law Students

CENTERS:

Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity • Center for Constitutional Governance • Richard Paul Richman Center for Business, Law, and Public Policy

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Housing Rights/Homelessness/Foreclosure*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Mediation Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Harlem Economic Justice Externship • Housing Justice: Right to Counsel • Law, Power, and Social Change Externship • Housing Justice: Power in Numbers Through Group Representation and Moment Lawyering

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

S. Homelessness Law and Policy

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Bankruptcy Assistance Project • Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless • Court Navigator Program in NYC Housing Court • Metropolitan Council on Housing • Housing Legal Clinic with Neighborhood Defender Services and Harlem Community Justice Center • BOOM!Health Legal Advocacy Program

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems • Tenants' Rights Project

CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change

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Human Rights*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Human Rights Clinic • Immigrants' Rights Clinic • Mediation Clinic [work with the United Nations and other transnational organizations] • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Immigration Defense Externship • Immigrant Youth Advocacy Externship • Law, Power, and Social Change Externship • United Nations Externship • N.Y. Attorney General's Office: Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigations and Oversight Externship

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Human Rights
S. International Humanitarian Law
S. Sovereignty, Rule of Law and Human Rights
The Law of Genocide
S. Transitional Justice
S. Transnational Business and Human Rights
Comparative Constitutional Law
Conflict of Laws
Immigration Law
Law and Religion
Refugee Law and Policy
Regulation of Gender & Sexuality
S. Access to Civil Justice: Where We Are, Where We Go
S. Breakthrough in Abolition Through Transformative Learning Exchange
S. Developments in International Criminal Law
S. Emerging Trends in International Justice
S. Global Political and Legal Thought
S. Global Regulation of International Business
S. Homelessness Law and Policy
S. Juvenile Justice
S. Labor Rights in a Global Economy
S. Latino/as and Civil Rights Law
S. Law and Humanities Workshop: Racial Tyranny and the Future of American Democracy
S. Legal Conflict and Change During the Civil War and Reconstruction
S. Litigation on Behalf of States and State-Owned Entities Before International Courts and Arbitral Tribunals
S. Native American Law
S. Rethinking Globalization

S. The Rights of Non-Citizens after September 11, and the Trump Administration

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Davis Polk Asylum Workshop • Projects with the Columbia Center for Sustainable Investment • Projects with the Human Rights Institute • Columbia Law Students Human Rights Association • Prisoners' Legal Services of New York • Safe Horizon - Anti-Trafficking Program

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Human Rights Law Review • Columbia Law Students Human Rights Association • Columbia Law School International Refugee Assistance Project • Columbia League of Nations • Columbia Society of International Law • Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change • Columbia Center for Sustainable Investment • Human Rights Institute

OTHER:

Human Rights Internship Program (summer internship program)

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Immigration and Refugee Rights*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Human Rights Clinic • Immigrants' Rights Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Bronx Defenders Externship on Holistic Defense • Immigration Defense Externship • Immigrant Youth Advocacy Externship • Law, Power, and Social Change Externship

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Immigration Law
L. Refugee, Migration and Citizenship Law: A Comparative Perspective Refugee Law and Policy
S. The Rights of Non-Citizens after September 11, and the Trump Administration
S. Trial Skills: Immigration

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Asylum Seekers Advocacy Project • Davis Polk Asylum Workshop • Human Trafficking Intervention Court Project • Immigration Equality • International Refugee Assistance Project • Kids in Need of Defense • U-Visa Project • NYLAG Key to the City Immigration Clinic • Broadway Advocacy Coalition • CUNY Citizenship NOW! Volunteer Corps • Center for Elder Law and Justice • Immigration Court Observation and Awareness Project • Catholic Migration Services • Her Justice • Immigration Legal Services of Long Island • JustCause

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Law Human Rights Review • Columbia Law School International Refugee Assistance Project • Public Defender Students of Columbia Law School • Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change • International Migration Program: Economics, Ethics and Law

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LGBTQIA+ Rights*

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Immigrants' Rights Clinic • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Several externships may touch on LGBTQIA+ Rights, depending on the current caseload

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Gender and Sexuality Law

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Immigration Equality

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Gender and Law • *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems* • Outlaws • Queer and Trans People of Color

CENTERS:

Center for Gender and Sexuality Law

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National Security Law/Veterans*

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York Externship • U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York Externship • Federal Government Semester in DC

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

S. Cybersecurity, Data Privacy and Surveillance Law
S. Global Constitutionalism
Jurisprudence of War
The Military & the Constitution
National Security Law
S. The Rights of Non-Citizens after September 11, and the Trump Administration
Constitution and Foreign Affairs
Information Privacy and Data Governance Law
International Law
S. Consumer Protection Law & Policy
S. Domestic & International Terrorism: A Comparative History of Investigations & Prosecutions
S. Global Political and Legal Thought
S. Global Regulation of International Business
S. International Humanitarian Law
The Law of Artificial Intelligence

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Veterans Legal Assistance Project

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Transnational Law • Columbia Law Military Association • National Security and Law Society

CENTERS:

Center for Constitutional Governance • Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies • Center for Law and Liberty • Center on Global Governance • National Security Law Program

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opportunities listed are intersectional and cover a variety of subjects.

Poverty Law/Economic Justice *

EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Appellate Litigation Clinic • Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic • Family Defense Clinic • Human Rights Clinic • Post-Conviction and Reentry Justice Clinic

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Civil Litigation: Employment Externship • Harlem Economic Justice • Housing Justice: Right to Counsel • Law, Power, and Social Change Externship • Veterans' Rights Externship • Economic Justice and Empowerment Externship: Consumer Bankruptcy Law, Economics, Politics of AI • Economic Justice and Empowerment Externship: Consumer Debt, Tax and Community Development

EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

C. Law and Economics
Law and Development
S. Advanced Antitrust and the Political Theory of Decentralized Capitalism
S. Antitrust at Trial
S. Access to Justice for People in Prison
S. Access to Civil Justice: Where We Are, Where We Go
S. Poverty
C. Public Economic Law
Transitional Justice

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

NYLAG Consumer Protection Unit • NYLAG Outreach Coordinator Volunteers Project • Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless • BOOM!Health Legal Advocacy Program • Her Justice • National Center for Law and Economic Justice • IRC's Center for Economic Empowerment • Community Service Society • The Center for Law and Justice

JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems • First-Generation Professionals • Columbia Workers' Rights Student Coalition • Law and Political Economy Society • National Lawyers Guild

CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change • Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies

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