

# CIVIL RIGHTS CLINIC

Fall 2026 – Spring 2027

Professors Laura Rovner & Nicole Godfrey

The Civil Rights Clinic (CRC) is an intensive, year-long litigation program in which students represent clients in civil rights cases in federal and state courts under the supervision of clinic faculty. Currently, the focus of the CRC's work is on challenging illegal conditions of confinement in federal and state prisons, such as the failure to provide incarcerated people with adequate medical or mental health care, disability discrimination, and infringements on the free exercise of religion, although other kinds of civil rights matters may also be on our docket, including challenges to racially discriminatory policing practices and police brutality against people of color. Some of the claims currently being litigated in the CRC will impact civil rights jurisprudence nationwide. For a more detailed description of some of the current and past cases on the CRC's docket, see <https://www.law.du.edu/academics/practical-experience/clinical-programs/civil-rights>.

Working with clients on complex civil rights matters is an experience that students have found intellectually challenging and personally compelling on multiple levels. Students enrolled in this course will have the opportunity to gain substantive experience related to a variety of aspects of complex litigation, including complaint drafting, development of case theory, discovery planning, researching and drafting various motions, conducting written discovery, taking and/or defending depositions, and appearing and arguing in court. In addition, students develop interpersonal lawyering skills through interviewing and counseling their clients, interacting with opposing counsel, and making decisions as part of a “case team” of students. The cases in the CRC are complex, offering the opportunity to assist an underserved population of clients while working in an area of constitutional law that is deeply textured, ever-changing, and profoundly rewarding.

## Prerequisites

**Evidence** and **Legal Profession** are pre- or co-requisites. To appear in federal district court, students must have completed a course in **Evidence**. To participate in a Student Law Office Clinic, students must complete 30 credit hours by the start of the clinic and have a GPA of 2.3 or higher.

## Class Requirements

Class attendance is required. Classes are expected to meet **Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30 - 11:45**. In addition, students will be required to attend orientation for the full week before

the fall semester begins. **Attendance at orientation is mandatory.**

## Credits

Students enroll for the full academic year (fall and spring semesters), earning a **total of 18 credits** (9 credits per semester). Six credits are earned through participation in the clinic seminar, and the remaining 12 credits come from clinic-related work outside of class. Students are expected to participate in both classroom instruction and client work all year.

## Time Commitment

The Civil Rights Clinic requires a substantial time commitment. Though students are not required to spend a set amount of time in the clinic each week, students should anticipate devoting at least 30 hours per week on client-related matters. Given the intensive time commitment of clinic courses as well as the potential for ethical conflicts of interest, **students are not allowed to simultaneously participate in a clinic in the Student Law Office and an externship through the Legal Externship Program or any other experiential course in the law school that involves client work. In addition, students in the CRC may not participate in Trial Team while enrolled in the clinic.** Please consult our website [FAQs](#) to review the SLO policy on paid and volunteer work.

## Apply

Applications open **Monday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. and close Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.** on the [Clinical Programs Webpage](#). Applications submissions for the **Civil Rights Clinic** must include the following:

- *A current resume (pdf)*
- *A legal writing sample of 5 - 10 pages (pdf)*

Students may apply to up to two clinics. Late applications will not be accepted.

## Learn More

- [Clinical Programs Webpage FAQs](#) (QR code)
- Instagram [@denver\\_law\\_clinical\\_programs](#)
- LinkedIn [@student-law-office-at-du](#)

