



ANU COLLEGE OF LAW

COURSE STUDY GUIDE

LAWS2240: International Social Justice Clinic

Semester 2, 2011

Course description and rationale

This course is offered as part of the College of Law's *Law Reform and Social Justice Program*. It gives you the opportunity to learn about issues of law and social justice in the context of non-government organisation (NGO) practice, often working with human rights standards, and usually in developing countries.

The course is a 'clinical' course – see 'Teaching Method' below' – which means that your course work is actually activity for an NGO. Your course work is supervised by officers of the NGO, with whom you liaise electronically, by email, Skype and through Wattle. The course work is supplemented by classes on campus.

The course will enhance your knowledge of NGOs' structure and operations, and their role in aid and development activity. Depending on the identity and location of the partner NGO, you will also learn about developing countries in south east Asia or the Pacific, or disadvantaged communities in Australia.

Your participation in the course will contribute to the operation and effectiveness of the partner NGO, and will offer you insights into future study and career options.

Course CONTENT

The content of the course is both general: the theory and reality of the work of international NGOs, and specific: the particular environment of, and issues raised by, the activities being done with the partner NGO.

Knowledge and skills

At the end of the course you can expect to have achieved

- detailed knowledge of a current regional social justice issue
- understanding of the operation of a regional NGO
- enhanced legal scholarship skills of research, analysis, evaluation, reflection, collaboration and time management
- new or confirmed directions in future studies and career.

Class Outline

Week Beginning	Topic
Week 1 25 July	Course Introduction
Week 2 1 August	Project design and management
Week 3 8 August	Governance culture and nation states in SE Asia
Week 4 15 August	NGOs, aid and development in SE Asia
Week 12 24 October	Team project presentations

Teaching and learning approach and activities

Method of teaching

The course is taught by the clinical method, which requires you to work under supervision from both a practice supervisor in the field, and an academic. The essence of clinical legal education is that you are closely and supportively supervised, and that you reflect on your experience. You will be in Canberra at the ANU, and will maintain contact with the partner NGO electronically, taking instructions from it and carrying out work for it.

The complementary classes require you to participate in five x 2 hour classes during the semester, with guest presenters, and discussion be based on prescribed readings and your reflections on their experiences in the clinic to date. Attendance at classes is compulsory, and will be assessed. Classes will not be recorded. When possible the classes will connect online with the staff at the partner NGO.

You are likely to learn effectively in this course if you:

1. work closely with your teammates and supervisors
2. share your experiences and reflections
3. read, analyse and critically reflect on the required readings
4. engage with the ideas and discussion in class.

Clinical activity

You will work under academic supervision in Australia, providing research and project support to an NGO partner: *Bridges Across Borders South East Asia* (BABSEA), and *Save the Children*, Swaziland. Rather than working on-site at the NGO partner, you will maintain your relationship with them electronically, through email and web.

You will work in teams on projects identified by the NGO partner, conducting research and drafting documents as required. The project will be overseen by a nominated person at the NGO partner to whom you will report, and your work will be supervised by the course convenor.

You will be asked to agree among yourselves on teams and projects, failing which the course convenor will allocate teams and projects.

Projects

Possible BABSEA projects are:

1. Research international experience in law school / pro bono lawyer collaboration, and prepare background papers and activities for symposiums on the issue in Vietnam and Laos.
2. Research international experience in university clinics for juvenile justice, and draft a proposal for collaboration between the law school at the University of Lao and Friends International to provide justice services to Laotian street kids.
3. Research international experience in national clinic associations, and prepare background papers and activities for a workshop in Vietnam.

Possible Save the Children projects are:

1. Research and report on whether the new constitution of Swaziland contains a right to access government-held information.
2. Research and report on international experience, to draft founding documents for a university-based legal clinic in Swaziland, ie policy statement, constitution, deed of trust etc.
3. Research and report on existing NGO activity in the field of 'human rights-based theatre', to propose establishing and funding such an entity in Swaziland.

Online Activities

Most of your supervisory contacts with the NGO partner will be online, by email, Skype or chatroom, using Wattle.

You will be required to post your reflective writing and assessment online, using Wattle.

Study requirements and expectations

You are expected to work on a project for the usual course workload of about 10 hours a week, (8 hours in weeks where there is a 2 hour class). You will aim to get the bulk of the project work done in weeks 4-12.

Required reading for the class will be posted to the course Wattle site, and you will read them before the class.

Assessment

Assessment components

You must satisfy each of following three requirements to pass the course:

1. Attendance at all five class
2. Provide fortnightly progress reports on the NGO's project
3. Receive a satisfactory performance report from NGO, regarding your reliability and communication.

As well, you must undertake (but need not pass) each of following assessable tasks to pass the course:

1. Journal: 600 words x 3 = 1,800 words (30%)
2. Team project presentation (20%)
3. Assignment : 3,000 words (50%)

There is no examination.

Journal entries

Description of the journal entries

You will write three journal entries of a maximum of 600 words each, reflecting on your experiences at that stage of the course. This is not a research essay; rather, it requires you to reflect on your own ideas and thoughts about the topics: whether and how they have altered, and the direction they are taking, in light of the course.

Relationship between the journal entries and the course objectives

Reflecting on learning helps us to reinforce newly gained knowledge, and to place it in the context of contemporary phenomena and experience. Reflective practice is a habit of lifelong learning and development that helps us remain focused on issues of justice and ethics while working under the pressure faced by NGOs in practice.

Assessment criteria

Your journal entries are marked against the following criteria:

1. Writing and expression: it is essential to achieving a pass grade that you write with syntax, sentence structure, spelling, grammar and punctuation that is sufficient to consistently convey sensible meaning. How well you do this will be a factor in grading. A fail grade will be awarded if the journal is written so as to consistently not convey sensible meaning.
2. Engagement with the readings and the course objectives: it is essential to achieving a pass grade that you connect your journal with at least one of the readings, and the course objectives. To what degree and how well you do this will be a factor in grading. A fail grade will be awarded if your journal is written without reference to at least one of the readings and the course objectives.
3. Depth of reflection: it is essential to achieving a pass grade that you express your reflections in more than merely a descriptive manner, and volunteer insights into the development of your own thinking and understanding. To what degree and how well you do this will be a factor in grading. A fail grade will be awarded if the reflection is merely a descriptive account of your activity.

Assessment weighting

Each journal entry is marked out of 10, for a total of 30% of the course mark.

Submission dates

Each journal entry must be submitted, online on the Wattle site for the course, according to the following timetable (see penalty for late submission below):

Journal number	Due
One	5 pm Monday 15 August (week 4)
Two	5 pm Monday 19 September (week 7)
Three	5 pm Monday 10 October (week 10)

Team presentation

Description of the team presentation

Your team will present to the class for 20-30 minutes, to report on the project you have been working on and on your learning from it. The presentation can take any form you choose, but must actively involve all team members.

Relationship between the team presentation and the course objectives

Team presentations are an extension of the collaborative work you will have engaged in during the semester. They require you to be able to articulate your work, what you have learned from it, and its relevance to the learning outcomes.

Assessment criteria

Your team presentations are marked against the following criteria:

1. Coherency: it is essential to achieving a pass grade that you present in a way that explains the aims of your project, your activities in carrying it out, and the results achieved. How well you do this will be a factor in grading. A fail grade will be awarded if the presentation fails to convey the overall nature and result of the project .
2. Evaluation: it is essential to achieving a pass grade that you go beyond mere description and evaluate the success of your project by reference to stated criteria. To what degree and how well you do this will be a factor in grading. A fail grade will be awarded if you do not offer an evaluation of the success of your project.
3. Collaboration: it is essential to achieving a pass grade that you share responsibility for the presentation, and demonstrate ways in which you collaborated in carrying out the project.

Assessment weighting

The presentation mark is a mark out of 20 (20% of the course mark). Each team member will receive the same mark, unless by agreement among the team, the presentation mark is to be weighted.

Before making the presentation each team will submit a document to the course convenor which will state whether the team agrees that the presentation mark is to be the same for each team member, or is to be weighted. Marks can be weighted by team members receiving an additional 10% of the presentation mark.

Example 1 (student B has done noticeably more work). Team mark = 15/20; students A and C each receive 15, and student B receives 16.5 (+10%).

Example 2 (students B and C have done noticeably more work). Team mark = 16/20; student A receives 16, and students B and C each receive 17.6 (+10%).

Team presentation date

You will give the presentation in class in week 11, the week commencing 17 October.

Research assignment

Description of the research assignment

You will write a research assignment of no more than 3,000 words on a topic that will be provided before the commencement of week 9. The topic will require you to address policy issues, and to conduct your own library research in support of your arguments.

Relationship between the research assignment and the course objectives

The research assignment enables you to demonstrate the depth of your understanding of the issues that have been raised in the course, by analysing contemporary issues of policy and practice in developing countries. As well, the research assignment enables you to engage in wider research than the prescribed reading, and to develop your legal scholarship skills in constructing written arguments and correctly referencing your research.

Assessment criteria

The assignment will be marked against the following criteria:

1. Issues To pass, you must identify and address the issues that are raised by the assignment topic. Grading will be based on how comprehensively you do this. An assignment will fail if it does not identify issues raised.
2. Critical evaluation To pass, you must critically evaluate the identified issues. Grading will be based on how well you do this. An assignment will fail if it merely reports or comments on the issues, without evaluating them.
3. Structure and thesis To pass, you must set out a clearly structured argument, with a well-articulated response to the issues. Grading will be based on how clearly and coherently you do this. An assignment will fail if it lacks a clear thesis, and a coherent structure to support the argument.
4. Research To pass, your research must draw on relevant references *in addition to* the materials in the prescribed reading. Grading will be based on how far beyond those prescribed reading your research goes, and the relevance of those additional references. An assignment will fail if it relies merely on the prescribed reading.
5. Writing and expression To pass, you must write with syntax, sentence structure, spelling, grammar and punctuation that is sufficient to consistently convey sensible meaning. Grading will be based on how well you do this. An assignment will fail if it is written so as to consistently not convey sensible meaning.

Assessment

The assignment mark is a mark out of 50 (50% of the course mark).