



**Pro Bono Scholars Program at Columbia Law School
Externship on Lawyering for Social Justice
Spring 2018 Notice and Application**

INTRODUCTION

The Externship on Lawyering for Social Justice is Columbia Law School's offering in New York's Pro Bono Scholars Program (PBSP) for Spring 2018. As such, it is the only class that the participating students will take in their final semester at the Law School. They will receive 12 credits upon successful completion of the class. The goal of the externship is to encourage students to learn and think about the need for social justice lawyers, the different approaches to what it means to be a social justice lawyer, including pro bono, and their own future work as social justice lawyers.

Students will consider the critical importance of diversity both in the profession and across the profession. We will discuss and analyze the strengths, tradeoffs, and complementary benefits of various social justice advocacy models, using student placements and the rich fabric of legal non-profits in New York City as case studies. Students also will have ample opportunity to learn skills and values necessary to provide effective, ethical and responsible legal services to low-income individuals and communities.

Ellen Chapnick, the Dean of Social Justice Initiatives at Columbia Law School, and McGregor Smyth, the Executive Director of New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, will co-teach the class.

Participation in Columbia's PBSP also will satisfy New York State's 50 hour pro bono requirement for admission to the bar and Columbia Law School's 40 hour pro bono graduation requirement. Completion of Columbia's PBSP can satisfy the law school's Minor Writing Requirement if certain conditions are met.

Students who find this interesting are encouraged to apply whatever their postgraduate plans are. **The deadline for applications is Friday, August 4 at 4 p.m.**

Pro Bono Scholars Program

The New York State Court of Appeals launched its Pro Bono Scholars Program in spring semester 2015. Instead of following the usual calendar for the last semester of law school and admission to practice law in New York State, Columbia students in the PBSP will:

- Prepare for the New York bar exam in January and early February 2018
- Take the New York bar exam in February 2018
- Devote 12 weeks of their final spring semester in law school (March 5-May 25) to a law school experiential learning program in which they will provide pro bono legal assistance and participate in closely-related classes at their law schools (for a total of 540 hours)
- Receive expedited review of their applications to the bar, if they pass the bar exam; and
- Be eligible for admission to practice in New York about July or August 2018, if they pass the bar exam; successfully complete the PBSP and all other graduation requirements; and the character and fitness requirement is completed. (PBSP Scholars at other law schools may be admitted earlier due to different regulations at their schools.)

All of the law schools in New York State are participating in the PBSP and each is designing its own PBSP course.

This document describes the Columbia PBSP as well as the application and selection process. Please read it carefully.

PREREQUISITES & OTHER PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

The externship is limited to students in the second semester of their third year of law school. Admission is by application only.

To participate in the Columbia PBSP in spring 2018, students must:

- 1. Have sufficient clinical credits remaining (8) to fulfill the ABA and Columbia requirements for graduation.** At least 64 of the 83 credits required for graduation must represent regularly scheduled class sessions. The 4 credits for the PBSP seminar count toward the 64 credits but the 8 credits for the PBSP fieldwork will count against the 19-credit cap.

Students who have taken clinics or other externships or received academic credit for supervised research, law review, moot court or other nonresidential classroom activities should make sure that they will have the necessary credits to graduate if they participate in the PBSP. It is strongly suggested that, before

applying, students consult Rule 1.1 of the Columbia Law School Rules for the JD Degree (<http://www.law.columbia.edu/academics/rules/jd-rules/course-of-studies>) and meet with Joel Kosman, Director of Academic Counseling and Student Organizations.

2. **Have registered for (and preferably completed) the Major Writing requirement.** All 3Ls must register for the Major Writing by the close of Add/Drop in their penultimate term; and submit a first draft by February 1 and a final draft by April 1 of their last term (slight date adjustments for off-cycle grads). Scholars will not have much time during the PBSP to work on Major Writing.
3. **Have met with someone in the Financial Aid Office if they are receiving financial aid.** It will be necessary to adjust a Scholar's package so that it is awarded for the period March 5-May 25, rather than for January and February when they will not be enrolled in Law School classes. The Financial Aid Office will not be able to disperse funds to Scholars earlier than 10 days before March 5. They will need to plan for January and February expenses and can apply for a bar loan to do so. Scholars can apply for a bar loan anytime in the first semester of their 3L year, and can use these funds to pay for a bar course and for the bar prep period.
4. **Have already completed the required Professional Responsibility credits by the end of the first semester of 3L year.** It is necessary to complete the Professional Responsibility credits by the beginning of the PBSP program because the program requirements prevent students from taking any concurrent courses.

COMPONENTS OF THE EXTERNSHIP ON LAWYERING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Pursuant to the Pro Bono Scholar Program rules both the fieldwork component and the seminar will begin the week of March 5, 2018 (the week following the bar exam) and continue until May 25, 2018. Scholars will be able to participate in the Law School's graduation ceremonies but will not graduate until June 2018.

Externship Field Component

Most of the students' time (at least 40 hours per week) will be spent doing associate-level legal work at an organization that is a member of the Leap Legal Advocacy Partnership¹ (leap-ny.org). Students accepted to the class would meet individually with

¹ The members of LEAP are: [Brooklyn Defender Services](#), [Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A](#), [Catholic Migration Services](#), [CAMBA Legal Services](#), [Goddard Riverside Law Project](#), [Housing](#)

the externship teachers to identify which member(s) of Leap would be likely to provide an opportunity to both work on issues of importance to them and explore advocacy methodologies of interest to them. The co-teachers then would manage a process of matching students with the organizations. The field component will not be graded.

Leap was chosen to provide the field placements for this externship because its 14 members (a) work collaboratively to increase the availability, breadth and depth of quality community-based civil legal services for low-income persons and communities in New York City and (b) individually offer high quality, diverse and innovative organizational models, delivery systems and methodologies. Leap's membership includes established single community legal services providers and city-wide public interest advocacy groups in areas such as: Access to Health Care, Consumer Law, Disability Rights Law, Domestic Violence, Elder Law, Employment/Labor Law, Environmental Justice, Family Law, Government Benefits, HIV/AIDS, Homelessness, Housing, Immigration, Mental Health, Public Assistance and Special Education.

Depending on the practice of their field placements, the students will have a variety of the following opportunities, among others:

- to gain exposure to and/or experience in interdisciplinary social justice advocacy, including community organizing, policy advocacy, and communications;
- to engage with and learn about low-income individuals, communities community-based organizations as well as government agencies and structures
- to observe and reflect about advocating for social justice, professionalism, ethics, professional goals and lawyering roles;
- to develop and practice professional judgment in the context of solving legal problems;
- to engage in legal research and analysis;
- to draft descriptive, predictive, persuasive and/or dispositional legal writing;
- to develop other professional skills, such as fact investigation including drafting of discovery documents, client interviewing and counseling, negotiation, oral advocacy, organization and management, and recognizing and resolving ethical dilemmas;
- to build a professional network of lawyers, other professionals and advocates and community members for future professional development.

[Conservation Coordinators](#), [Lenox Hill Neighborhood House](#), [Make the Road New York, Inc.](#), [MFY Legal Services, Inc.](#), [New York Lawyers for Public Interest](#), [Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation Legal Services](#), [The Bronx Defenders](#), [The Door](#) and the [Urban Justice Center](#).

Externship Seminar

Students also will participate in a three-hour weekly seminar in the evening, which will provide an opportunity to frame the issues to be explored in the field, discuss their experiences and the assigned readings, and meet with leading practitioners, most of whom work at Leap organizations, who have thought deeply about social justice practice. There will also be an intensive all-day class to prepare students for their fieldwork a Saturday, TBD. All classes are mandatory.

Students will do short written assignments throughout the semester that will promote the integration of their fieldwork with the seminar. The first would be a reflection paper about the book they choose from a list provided by the instructors. It would discuss an insight they gleaned from the book about the social-political-economic context of the legal issues, communities and individuals that are the focus of their field placements. At the end of the semester, students will write a brief reflection paper about an important lesson they learned about their own goals and strategies for becoming a social justice lawyer. The papers must expressly draw on their individual externship field experiences and the seminar. Students will present and discuss their papers in the last class of the semester.

Most classes will be held at NYLPI's office in mid-town. Whenever possible, classes that include guest lecturers, especially Leap members, will be held at their offices so that students can see the different choices social justice legal organizations make about location, architecture, interior design and office structure.

The grade for the seminar will be based on class participation (70%) and the two reflection papers and other writing assignments (30%).

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE

Applications must be received **no later than 4 p.m. on Friday, August 4.**

Applications must be e-mailed as a single PDF file to both Dean Ellen Chapnick (chapnick@law.columbia.edu) and McGregor Smyth (m Smyth@nylpi.org), copying Brian Juergens (bjurgens@law.columbia.edu). Each application will be acknowledged upon receipt. If your application has not been acknowledged, you may call Brian at 212-854-8484 to verify receipt.

APPLICATIONS

The application consists of one PDF document containing, in this order:

1. A current resume

2. A personal statement (3-5 single spaced pages in 12 pt type with 1" borders maximum) that includes discussion of:
 - The applicant's reasons for wanting to participate in the Externship on Lawyering for Social Justice and the Pro Bono Scholars Program. This may but need not include discussion of which Leap organization(s) are of special interest.
 - The applicant's preparation for the Externship, with particular attention to work experience, pro bono and classes taken; and
 - Interest, if any, with respect to pursuing a public interest career (including government) or doing substantial pro bono service.

3. A statement that the applicant:
 - a. Understands that an applicant to Columbia's PBSP is bound to participate in the program in its entirety, for its full semester duration upon acceptance, and that no withdrawal from the program will be permitted;
 - b. Has sufficient clinical credits remaining (8) to fulfill the ABA and Columbia requirements for graduation;
 - c. Has registered for (or, preferably, completed) the Major Writing requirement;
 - d. Has met with someone in the Financial Aid Office or is not receiving financial aid; and
 - e. Has or will have completed the required Professional Responsibility credits by the end of first semester.

4. A copy of the applicant's Columbia Law School transcript (unofficial transcript from Lawnet is acceptable).

SELECTION

Selection will be based upon the candidate's:

- Statement of interest in and learning goals for the externship.
- Demonstrated interest, if any, with respect to pursuing a public interest career (including government) or doing substantial pro bono service.
- Preparation through classes, employment or other activities, not restricted to those done while a student at Columbia Law School.
- Skill set and demonstrated professional responsibility.

INTERVIEW

Applicants must be available in September for an interview and discussion of preferred host organizations.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION SCHEDULE

Friday, August 4 at 4 p.m.	Applications Due
September 5-15	Interviews and discussions of preferred host organizations
Monday, September 18 by 5 p.m.	All applicants informed of their status (accepted, on the wait list, not accepted)

For More Information

For more information, contact:

Logistical questions: Brian Juergens, bjurg@law.columbia.edu

Other questions: Dean Ellen Chapnick, chapnick@law.columbia.edu