In this course we will be studying legal practice for social change. When I say “social change,” I do not mean just any change in society, I mean change that implements social justice. Social justice is a broad term that encompasses many different visions. What do I mean by social justice? I mean the ability to engage in basic human relationships and activities without regard to factors such as race, class, gender, or sexuality. I mean access to resources necessary to human fulfillment, including education, housing, employment, and other economic resources. And I mean freedom from oppression and freedom to participate fully in the political, economic, social, and justice systems.

Lawyers have different goals and engage in many types of legal practice for social change. Some lawyers work for long-term social change through bringing class action litigation. Other attorneys seek short-term social change by helping clients who are confronting emergencies such as an imminent eviction or school suspension. Attorneys working for social change represent groups, participate in movements, and work with not-for profit corporations. They advocate formally and informally with administrative agencies and lobby legislative bodies. In short, within resource constraints, there is virtually no limit to the possible strategies for social change and the legal practices that can support them.

We will examine these goals and strategies in the context of several case studies, including urban poverty, school desegregation and the civil rights movement, and political participation. We will think critically about different strategies in an attempt to determine their strengths and weaknesses. By the end of the semester, I hope that you will be able to think strategically about legal practice for social change. I hope you will be able to identify a social problem, determine what strategies can help solve the problem, and examine what lawyers can do to support these strategies.

I also want to share one thing about what I will not be doing in this course. I will not be focusing on teaching doctrine or expecting you to master a particular area of law. We will, of course, encounter legal doctrine and I will speak about it and assign readings that cover doctrine, including several cases. But our emphasis will be on how lawyers use legal doctrine or the legal system to effectuate change, not on mastering the doctrine itself.

Watching Season 4 of The Wire is a requirement for the course. Reading assignments for the course are either contained in the textbook for the course, Public Interest Lawyering: A
Contemporary Perspective by Alan K. Chen and Scott L. Cummings, or in the course supplement, which is available in the Copy Center. All reading assignments in the textbook will be noted as “Public Interest Lawyering.” All other assignments are in the course supplement or will be distributed prior to the noted class.

**Written Assignments and Grading**

There are three components of your final grade:

1. **Class Participation: 30%**

   Class participation includes class attendance, thoughtful and informed contributions to class discussions, and effective participation in small group problem-solving exercises.

2. **Short Writing Assignments: 30%**

   You will be responsible for completing four short writing assignments of approximately 700 words each over the course of the semester. Your writing assignment should explore your thoughts and reactions to issues raised in the readings. Each writing assignment should be handed in in class on the date it is due. I will grade each assignment on a scale of 1-10. In assigning a grade I will consider the originality and thoughtfulness of your written assignment, your integration of reading assignments, writing style and grammar. Please proofread your writing assignments. Spelling counts and please double space!

3. **Final Paper: 40%**

   Each student will be required to submit a paper at the end of the semester. The paper should be a minimum of 15 pages. I will assign each student a character from The Wire. In your paper you are to assume the role of a lawyer working to achieve social justice for the character. You must identify and describe the social justice problems facing the character, put the problems in their larger societal context, and then discuss some of the possible strategies a lawyer could use to address those social justice issues. The reading assignments for the course and the class discussions will provide you with some material to frame your analysis. However, you will need to do additional research about the social problem and, perhaps, ways that other legal organizations or individuals have addressed similar problems. I will also expect you to explain why you selected a particular social justice issue and why your approach would be effective at working to ultimately achieve social justice for your “client.”

   The due dates for the paper are:

   - November 13: detailed outline is due to me in class
   - December 13: final paper due to me by email

**Laptops.** Based on past experience, laptops are not permitted in class. There are several reasons for the ban, but primarily, I believe it improves the quality of in-class discussion and minimizes the distraction that comes from the widespread practice of students using laptops for purposes other than taking notes. I do not believe that the inability to use laptops will have an adverse
effect on anyone’s performance in the course. Any student that is eligible for and receives an accommodation from the Office of Student Life may bring a laptop to class provided that I receive notification from the Office.

Course Schedule, Class Topics, and Reading Assignments

Class One: August 28
INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL PRACTICE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
WILLIAM P. QUIEGLEY, LETTER TO A LAW STUDENT INTERESTED IN SOCIAL CHANGE (2007) ..........................................................3
A SYSTEM OF LAWYERS ..........................................................25
MARTHA MINOW, OUTSIDE THE LAW: NARRATIVES OF JUSTICE IN AMERICA ..........................................................34
PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING ..................................................402-410

Class Two: September 4
WHO IS A PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYER?
PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING ...........................................3-30

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: PLEASE COMPLETE THE EXERCISE ON PAGE 120 OF PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING

Class Three: September 11
URBAN AMERICA AND ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
READINGS TO BE DISTRIBUTED

Class Four: September 13
ATTEND NYLS SYMPOSIUM – REMEMBERING THE DREAM, RENEWING THE DREAM: CELEBRATING THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING’S I HAVE A DREAM SPEECH AND THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: EACH STUDENT MUST WRITE A SHORT PAPER DISCUSSING ONE SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER’S REMARKS AND THE SPEAKER’S PERSPECTIVE ON ACHIEVING EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Class Five: September 18
LAWYER CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS AND CLIENT-CENTERED LAWYERING
PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING ...........................................273-304

Class Six: September 25
DEFINITIONS OF JUSTICE
ALEX KOTLOWITZ, “WHERE WAS THE VILLAGE”? ...........................................51
Class Seven: October 2

INTRODUCTION TO MODELS OF LAWYERING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

REBELLIOUS LAWYERING: ONE CHICANO’S VISION OF PROGRESSIVE LAW PRACTICE ........62
PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING ..........................................................204-259, 267-272

Class Eight: October 9

THE WIRE, THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE AND COMPREHENSIVE REFORM

PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING ..........................................................376-381
ADDITIONAL READINGS TO BE DISTRIBUTED
GUEST SPEAKER: DENNIS PARKER, DIRECTOR OF THE ACLU RACIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

Class Nine: October 23

LONG-TERM SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIES: SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION ......................................................73
PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING ..........................................................204-232
LELAND WARE, THE STORY OF BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION: THE LONG ROAD OF RACIAL
EQUALITY ..........................................................................................80
DERRICK BELL, RACE, RACISM, AND AMERICAN LAW, ALTERNATIVE BROWN OPINION......107

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: PLEASE READ THE ALTERNATIVE OPINION IN BROWN V.
BOARD OF EDUCATION WRITTEN BY PROFESSOR DERRICK BELL. WOULD THE ALTERNATIVE
OPINION HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE AT ACHIEVING INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Class Ten: October 30

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: WORKER’S RIGHTS

READINGS TO BE DISTRIBUTED
GUEST SPEAKER: PROFESSOR FRANK MUNGER

Class Eleven: November 6

INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION: IMMIGRATION REFORM

PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING ..........................................................83-87, 169-186
ADDITIONAL READINGS TO BE DISTRIBUTED
GUEST SPEAKER: PROFESSOR LENNI BENSON

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: PLEASE COMPLETE THE EXERCISE ON PAGE 39 OF
PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING

Class Twelve: November 13

LOBBYING AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM: MARRIAGE EQUALITY

PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING ..........................................................82-83, 259-267
ADDITIONAL READINGS TO BE DISTRIBUTED
GUEST SPEAKER: PROFESSOR ARTHUR LEONARD

Class Thirteen: November 20
REPRESENTING THE GOVERNMENT
PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING..............................................................152-169
ADDITIONAL READINGS TO BE DISTRIBUTED
GUEST SPEAKER: KRISTEN CLARKE, BUREAU CHIEF OF THE NEW YORK ATTORNEY GENERAL’S CIVIL RIGHTS BUREAU

Class Fourteen: December 4
Course Evaluations
Course wrap-up