

**Interdisciplinary Problem Solving: Access to Justice**  
**LAW 741 / EAS 731 / ECON 741 / EDUC 717 / PUBPOL 710 / SI 605 / SW 741**  
**Syllabus – Winter 2019**

**LAB: Tuesdays, 3:15-4:15pm**  
**CLASS: Tuesdays, 4:30-6:30pm**  
**1060 LSSH or Jeffries Hall (formerly South Hall), Law School**

**Instructors**

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**Required Course Materials:**

All materials will either be distributed in class or posted on Canvas throughout the semester.

**Course Description:**

In this problem solving course, multidisciplinary teams of students will address the real-world problem of access to the civil justice system. By some estimates, 86 percent of low-income Americans, and about half of middle-income Americans, receive inadequate or no professional legal help for the civil legal problems they face – eviction, foreclosure, public benefits, consumer, and other issues. And, the numbers are likely increasing. Between 2000 and 2015 in Michigan, for example, the number of persons whose annual income is below 125% of the federal poverty line (those who qualify for government-subsidized legal aid; \$25,525 in 2019 for a family of three) has increased about 44% to almost 2 million persons. This need is not even close to being met by available legal assistance programs or resources for self-represented litigants. Meanwhile, institutions providing legal assistance are overwhelmed by emergency cases and rarely have time or resources to improve their processes.

Students will work on solutions that improve access to civil justice in this context, drawing on insights from law, information technology, engineering, design, public policy, business, sociology, social work, and other relevant fields. The course culminates with students creating a novel solution to the problem, which they will present to a team of experts and stakeholders. We will also strive for teams to connect with groups that could take up solutions.

Teams are organizationally the functioning unit of the course. Students will work collaboratively across disciplines. Class sessions will focus heavily on prototyping potential solutions and collaboratively generating ideas and next steps. Students will also be expected to spend significant time outside of class working in teams to reach out to relevant stakeholders, conduct research, draft documents, and otherwise work toward the creation of the intervention.

In this course, as in all the problem solving initiative courses, students are the leaders in advancing the course objectives. Course instructors will serve as guides and mentors rather than traditional professors delivering pre-established content. In light of all this, your vigorous participation this coming semester will be influential in shaping the syllabus itself and the particular outcomes of our course.

### **Course Objectives:**

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the role of their discipline in addressing the issue of access to basic individual legal services.
2. Define and understand the problem of access to legal services for lower-income households in the United States.
3. Describe methods to communicate across disciplines and with key stakeholders to discuss ways to identify and assist people who need access to legal services.
4. Develop the skills to work collaboratively to create innovative professional perspectives and practices that assist with problem solving with regard to access to legal services.
5. Integrate strategies, tactics, and goals into their professional practice in order to support people who need access to legal services.
6. Reflect on the systemic factors that perpetuate a gap between the need for legal services and the means to provide them.

### **Participation and Attendance:**

Class attendance and participation is mandatory. Class participation is an essential part of the course. We will spend time in class discussing and applying the concepts and research ideas you have gathered.

### **Learning Goals:**

In this course you will be evaluated on both an individual and group level. This course is primarily focused on skills building in the context of problem solving such as:

- Collaborating
- Defining and understanding the problem
- Communicating ideas to key stakeholders
- Innovating
- Developing prototypes and failing fast
- Communicating across disciplines
- Articulating your discipline's contribution to the issue we are working on
- Reflecting
- Tolerating ambiguity
- Developing professional perspectives
- Integrating strategies, tactics, and goals

This course requires significant participation and preparation. You will be working with your colleagues in the course to create an innovative intervention to address the identified problem. Your work will be evaluated by both faculty, other faculty members at the university, professionals within the fields of law, clients of legal services, and other relevant stakeholders, as well as each other.

In any course in which team work is an integral component of the course students may have concerns about workload distribution within the team. We are hopeful in light of the real world applications of our work in this course, that “free riders” will not be an issue. However, peer assessment will be part of the evaluation of the course. Each student will complete a self and peer assessment form at both the midpoint of the semester and at the end.

### **Safety and Self-Care:**

All participants in this class should be aware that we will have frank discussions about legal issues among lower-income residents of the United States. In addition, some of the readings and discussions may be uncomfortable or difficult. Throughout the course the faculty members will remain available for individual conversations about the course topics.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing:**

University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact **Counseling and Psychological Services**

(CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

### **Disability Statement:**

The University of Michigan is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Request for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office located at G 664 Haven Hall. The SSD phone number is 734-763-3000. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, SSD will contact the Law School's Office of Student Life (734-764-0516, [lawstudentlife@umich.edu](mailto:lawstudentlife@umich.edu)) with a recommendation, and Student Life will work with you and SSD to finalize and facilitate your accommodations. For more information about this process, please feel welcome to contact the Office of Student Life.

### **Evaluation and Assessment:**

Students will be assigned to project teams during the course. Student grades will be determined by the quality of team work product, team processes (*e.g.*, ability to meet deadlines, ability to communicate effectively), and individual performance.

The substantive criteria we will use for evaluation fall into five major categories with the weights described below. (Note that unanticipated course developments may require some modification in category weighting at the end of the term). An additional sixth category is available to recognize exceptional efforts and contributions.

#### **1. Team Deliverables and Contribution to Overall Class Plan or Strategy (40%)**

*Questions to Consider:* Did the team's work product demonstrate excellent judgment and superior research, analysis, critical thinking, and problem solving skills? Did the team express its thoughts in an organized manner? Did the team's written and oral work product employ proper grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary? Did the team's work respond effectively to potential challenges and positions expressed by others? Did the team's ideas consider the practical challenges to implementing the solution?

#### **2. Team Functioning (10%)**

*Questions to Consider:* Did the team display cooperation and effective communication? Did the team function effectively and utilize the skills and knowledge of all team members? Did the team consult with the professors and other knowledgeable experts appropriately? Did the team meet established deadlines?

### **3. Individual Effort and Interaction with Team (20%)**

*Individual Writing Assignment:* Each student will submit a written report about an aspect of the problem of access to justice early on in the course. This assignment will be worth 10% of the final grade.

*Questions to consider:* Did you attend group meetings regularly and arrive on time? Did you contribute meaningfully to group discussions? Were you open to, and respectful of, other points of view? Did you complete group assignments on time? Was the work you prepared for the team high quality? Did you demonstrate a cooperative and supportive attitude? Did you contribute significantly to the success of the project? *Note: The answers to these questions will be determined, in large part, by peer evaluation.*

### **4. Individual Participation and Professional Relationships/Responsibilities (20%)**

*Questions to consider:* Did you participate regularly in class discussions? Were you prepared to discuss developments in your projects in an effective manner with other students? Did you respond courteously and with due consideration to professors, guest speakers, consultants, and classmates? Did you strive for cross-disciplinary cultural competence (i.e., an appreciation for the language, norms, perspectives, and practices of other disciplines) and understanding of other differences among your classmates? Did you display honesty and integrity?

### **5. Individual Reflective Learning (10%)**

*Questions to consider:* Can you effectively criticize your own performance? Are you able to identify your strengths and weaknesses in the various areas of project work? Did you gain insights about your future role as a professional? Did you learn about the value and limitations of professionals in addressing societal challenges? Did you do all you could have done to maximize the benefits you obtained from the problem solving course experience?

### **6. Individual Special Recognition (Extra Credit, up to 5%)**

*Question to consider:* Are there any aspects of your work in the course that are not otherwise described in the preceding criteria that deserve special recognition?

### Grade Assessment Descriptions[1]

The following is a rough guide describing the level of work that corresponds to student grades. The descriptions are necessarily general, but we hope it helps you to understand our grading.

A	Consistently excellent work in all areas, with at least one outstanding piece of significant work. A student who earns an “A” will take full ownership of the project, be organized and attentive to details, will always allocate sufficient time and effort to carry out tasks responsibly, and will recognize, consider, and appropriately resolve ethical issues. The student will show initiative and creativity in planning and developing solutions, rather than merely carrying out plans outlined by the professor, and will be reflective, professional, and respectful. S/he will have shown considerable progress in mastering the various skills necessary to be an effective problem solver, and will actively prepare, participate, and take initiative in all class sessions and team sessions.
A-	Mostly excellent work in all areas and some very good work.
B+	Consistently very good work or a mix of generally very good work, occasional excellent work, and some competent work.
B	Competent and adequate work with some very good work, but with some weaknesses.
B-	On the whole, competent work but with some significant lapses or shortcomings.
C	On the whole, marginally competent work with frequent lapses or shortcomings.
C- or below	Serious difficulties with performance; failing to meet responsibilities.

*Students enrolled in and registered through schools or colleges that permit pass/fail grading may opt for pass/fail grading in this course. Students who choose the pass/fail option will receive a grade of "pass" if they meet the conditions set forth by their schools or colleges for such grade.*

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## Course Schedule

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Adjustments may be made to the syllabus as the semester progresses, especially for the latter half of the course, when guest speakers, etc., will be student-driven.

### **Class #0, Friday, January 18, 2019: Problem Solving Boot Camp**

On Friday, January 18th from 1:00-5:00 PM in 0225 South Hall all PSI students will attend a Problem Solving Boot Camp. Boot Camp presenters will discuss 1) how to work effectively with stakeholders and gather information in order to tackle the class challenge and 2) the creative problem solving process and how to use CPS tools over the course of the semester.

### **Class #1, Tuesday, January 22, 2019: Collaboration and Communication**

#### Required Reading:

- Course Syllabus
- Team Expectations Agreement (We will work on the agreement in class, just read the handout ahead of time)
- Collaborative Justice: *How to Collaborate*, Center for Effective Public Policy, <http://www.collaborativejustice.org/how.htm> (2013)
- Rhonda Muir, *The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in Law Firm Partners*, Law Practice Magazine 60 (July/Aug. 2007)
- Leigh Thompson, *Creative Conspiracy: The Rules of Breakthrough Collaboration* 120 (2012)

#### Recommended Reading:

- WHO. (2010). Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education & Collaborative Practice. [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/70185/1/WHO\\_HRH\\_HP\\_N\\_10.3\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/70185/1/WHO_HRH_HP_N_10.3_eng.pdf?ua=1)

### **Class #2, Tuesday, January 29, 2019: Introduction to Access to Justice – Guest Speaker: Bob Gillett**

#### Guest:

- Robert F. Gillett (U-M Law '78) – Director, Michigan Advocacy Program, and first recipient of Michigan State Bar Foundation's Access to Justice Award

### Required Readings Assignments:

- Yuille 2004/ No One's Perfect (Not Even Close): Reevaluating Access to Justice in the United States and Western Europe  
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Vc2r-ZPXVArnKBvjL-a2OrERih6PAYGE>
- Cabral et al. 2012 Using Technology to Enhance Access to Justice  
[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1vCete-Re5hK-3iLCNU\\_hKkgNeQSsEXrh](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1vCete-Re5hK-3iLCNU_hKkgNeQSsEXrh)
- Cooper 2014 Access to Justice without Lawyers  
[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1avGR9-idy\\_GjL4QsnhOaf-JHL0nBdYN-](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1avGR9-idy_GjL4QsnhOaf-JHL0nBdYN-)
- Rhode 2016 Access to Justice: A Roadmap for Reform  
[https://drive.google.com/open?id=18K\\_RBG20uhhmdIOVWyoOguM3fUBFhJxH](https://drive.google.com/open?id=18K_RBG20uhhmdIOVWyoOguM3fUBFhJxH)
- State Bar of Michigan 2017 Documenting the Justice Gap in Michigan (Update)  
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1UdsrL-nq4WQuxilF5SRSp4CeCdQOJx>
- Sandefur 2008 Access to Civil Justice and Race, Class, and Gender Inequality  
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1PZdHZaYtgXThMc8wIdcTTb92wuYOECl>
- Legal Services Corporation 2017 The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans  
<https://www.lsc.gov/sites/default/files/images/TheJusticeGap-FullReport.pdf>

### **Class #3, Tuesday, February 5, 2019:**

#### **Part One: Michigan Court Administration: One Court of Justice in Practice.**

Guests: Jodi Latuzek, Supreme Court Administrative Office Regional Representative  
Casey Anbender, SCAO Child Welfare Services  
Angela Tripp, Executive Director MiLegalHelp

#### **Part Two: Workplace Culture**

Guest: Richard Sheridan, Menlo Innovations

### Required Reading Assignments:

- SCAO Administrative Overview  
<https://courts.michigan.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/Publications/Manuals/DirectoryWithResources.pdf>
- TBD



**Class #4, Tuesday, February 12, 2019: Technology's Law of Amplification**

Guests:

Required Reading: TBD

**Class #5: Access To Justice in Michigan: Lawyers and Clients and Judges and Defining Projects and Goals**

Panel including Legal Services Lawyer, Client and District Court Judge moderated by Bob Gillett

Required Reading:

**Class #6, Tuesday, February 26, 2019: MID-TERM FEEDBACK PANEL**

Assignments:

- Submit a draft of written handout for mid-term feedback panel in advance
- Complete feedback form for your group

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[No class Tuesday, March 5 – Spring Break]

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**Class #7, Tuesday, March 12, 2019: Prototyping, Communication, and Presentations - Patrick Barry**

- Check in on teams

**Class #8, Tuesday, March 19, 2019: Brainstorming and Next Steps**

- What intervention(s) are moving forward?

**Class #9, Tuesday, March 26, 2019:**

- What intervention(s) are moving forward?

**Class #10, Tuesday, April 2, 2019:**

- Experts?

**Class #11, Tuesday, April 9, 2019**

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**Class #12, Tuesday, April 16, 2019: Practice Presentation**

**Class #13, Tuesday, April 23, 2019: Final Judging Panel**

Assignments:

- Individual Evaluation Due
- Peer Evaluation Due