

JUVENILE JUSTICE LEGAL CLINIC
Spring, 2026 SYLLABUS

Faculty: **Joanna Wells**
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Office hours: students will be assigned specific meet times

Course objectives: See Clinic Missions and Goals for Students, Mission Statement and Program Goals and Objectives located in the Juvenile Justice Clinic Handbook.

Clinic Student Assessment and Evaluations: See documents contained in the Juvenile Justice Clinic Handbook.

LEGAL CLINIC STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND ALL CLASSES. Should you need to miss a class, discuss this with Professor Wells before missing the class, if possible.

Classes will meet in person. Although this class provides opportunity for you to work your own cases and to experience “practice-oriented” learning, the class also requires you to carefully read the material assigned and to be prepared to discuss it in class.

In addition, you will be assigned specific cases and will be expected to be in court on the dates that your cases are set, unless your class schedule or work commitments conflict. Court attendance is a crucial part of this clinic class, and almost all students say that attendance in court offers some of the most valuable experiences of the course. If you are eligible to obtain your 711 license, I highly encourage to do so to enable you to participate more fully in the court process.

****Read the Juvenile Justice Clinic Handbook prior to the first class.**

Of special note: Emergency Procedures. Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT's website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. **It is important that you follow these instructions and**

stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Class Sessions for Spring, 2026

1. Friday, January 16, 2026

An Overview of Juvenile Neglect and Abuse Law and the Role of Guardians Ad Litem.

Assignment: Read portions of Article I of the Illinois Juvenile Court Act of 1987, 705 ILCS § 405/1-1 through 405/1-8 and 405/1-17, and 705 ILCS § 405/2-1 through 405/2-13.

2. Friday, January 23, 2026

I will answer questions, discuss forms, procedures and the critically important concept of client confidentiality. Sometime within the first week or so of class, you should receive the names of the cases that the clinic will assign to you. You should begin to review your files as soon as possible.

We also will discuss the SIU-C Field Trip Policy. Some of the time you will spend in this class will involve academic activities outside of the law school. The University classifies these off-campus activities as “field trips.” Each clinic student must sign an acknowledgment letter from the Clinic Director as well as SIU-C/Legal Clinic forms for Field Trip Participation and Assumption of Risk. You must complete these forms prior to engaging in *any* off-campus activities.

***Therefore, submit the following to my mailbox by January 31:** SIU-C Participant Agreement and Assumption of Risk Form, Assumption of Risk Form and signed acknowledgment letter.

Discussion of case responsibilities, how to begin and clinic expectations

3. Friday, January 30, 2026

NO CLASS.

4. Friday, February 6, 2026

How a Juvenile Case Proceeds Through the Court System and the Duties and Role of the GAL before and at Adjudication, Disposition and Permanency Hearings.

Assignment: Read 705 ILCS § 405/2-14 through 2/23, and 405/2-28 and 405/28.1

5. **Friday, February 13, 2026**

No assignment. We will meet to discuss how to proceed with your cases. A handout will be provided.

Assignment: Continue to read through your assigned cases and begin to make collateral contacts.

6. **Friday, February 20, 2026**

Duties and Responsibilities of Attorneys for Minor Children - Is the Statutory Minimum Enough to Adequately Represent Your Clients?

Assignment: Read Illinois Supreme Court Rule 907 *and* 705 ILCS § 405/2-17.

7. **Friday, February 27, 2026**

What Factors Do Courts Use When Determining the “Best Interest” of a Child?

Assignment: Review 705 ILCS § 405/1-3(4.05)(a-j).

8. **Friday, March 6, 2026**

Children, Domestic Violence and Trauma Both Before, During and After the Court Process.

Assignment: Read pp. 80-91 of the handout “Children Exposed to Domestic Violence” and be prepared to discuss.

9. **Friday, March 13, 2026**

Spring Break

10. **Friday, March 20, 2026**

Child Safety - Steps for Critical Thinking and Analysis

Assignment: Read the Forward and Preface and pp. 1-19 of “Child Safety - a Guide for Judges and Attorneys

11. Friday, March 27, 2026

Child Safety - Steps for Critical Thinking and Analysis - continued

Assignment: Read the Forward and Preface and pp. 1-19 of “Child Safety - a Guide for Judges and Attorneys

12. Friday, April 3, 2026

No assignment. Guest speaker.

13. Friday, April 10, 2026

Variable Standards of Proof in Neglect/Abuse Cases - From Speed Bumps to High Jumps

Assignment: Read 705 ILCS §§ 405/2-9, 2/18, 2-22 and 2//29.

14. Friday, April 17, 2026

NO CLASS. Continue to work on your cases.

15. Friday, April 24, 2026

Last day of class. Student presentations.

** Be aware that the syllabus is subject to change due to emergency court hearings, changes in the court docket, availability of speakers and other reasons.

*** **IMPORTANT:** If you cannot be in class, you are expected to notify me by text, email or phone call ***before class if at all possible.*** This course follows SIU Law's absence policy.