



Department

Law of Procedure and Law of Evidence

Study year of students

Fourth year

Credits: 8

Module offered during

First and second semester

Lecturer

Adv. Inez Bezuidenhout

Brief description

This module aims at inculcating practical skills and values related to the procedural aspects of a criminal trial to senior law students attending the UFS Law Clinic in the appeal unit. The values and skills normally associated with the attorney's practice and/or the role of a prosecutor are enhanced through meaningful service learning activities.

Community partners

- Community members visiting the University of the Free State Law Clinic
- Juvenile-accused appearing in criminal trials at the Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court
- Juveniles in conflict with the law from One Stop Centre
- Children at Ons Kinderhuis Youth Care Centre, Brandwag Primary School and Calculus College

Service sector partners

UFS Law Clinic, Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court
Mangaung One-Stop Child Justice Centre
Ons Kinderhuis Youth Care Centre
Brandwag Primary School, Calculus College
Huis Soetehoop, Kidz Care Trust.

Service learning component

In this module, students serve by attending the UFS Law Clinic once a week in the various units of the clinic, e.g. the family unit, the evictions unit, labour unit and appeal unit. Students attending the appeal unit assist an advocate with the drafting of heads of argument for criminal appeal cases. They then practically apply the knowledge gained through the drafting of the heads of argument in the service learning projects. The oratory skills of students learned through this module prepare them for oral address in court proceedings. These students are then divided into two groups responsible for community engagement. Students are involved in projects at, among others, university residences and secondary schools where they raise awareness regarding the legal consequences of drug abuse and related legislation. Students furthermore assist support staff at the Bloemfontein Magistrates Court in awareness raising and access to justice contact sessions with juveniles in conflict with the law.

Outcomes for students

The module contributes towards the delivery of a well-rounded law graduate. More specifically, students enhance both their oral and writing communication skills; they learn

to analyse data in written, electronic and verbal form; learn how to implement theoretical knowledge accurately and empathetically; develop sensitivity to cultural and aesthetic diversity in the community; use their knowledge effectively and responsibly to the advantage of the community as a whole; develop time management and organisational skills; and learn how to work as a member of a team. They further learn civil and criminal drafting skills, as well as how to manage a law diary and how to interact with clients.

Impact on community

Members of the community receive legal support, which would otherwise not be available to them. The students at the Law Clinic furthermore assist in insuring access to justice, which creates an awareness and respect for the rule of law, as well as mutual accountability and trust. Children in conflict with the law often believe that legal aid assistance is only afforded to those really guilty of a crime. The students develop and create a culture of caring and assist in eliminating these perceptions. Juveniles leave from the service learning experience believing that the law is accessible to all and that legal assistance is available to all those in need thereof.