

Spring 2023
Lawyering for Social Justice (POLS 260 / POLS 340)
Information Sheet and Application Instructions
Instructor: Professor Doug Smith

Class description

Lawyering for Social Justice is an 8-unit class: students enroll in the Community Law Internship (POLS 260) and the seminar Lawyering for Social Justice (POLS 340) and take these courses concurrently. Enrollment in the 8-units is mandatory.

- POLS 260 meets at a time decided between the student and the intern organization (12 hours total during the week)
- POLS 340 meets Wednesday evenings from 7.15-10.10 pm

In the Lawyering for Social Justice seminar, we will: (1) consider how lawyers and legal strategies have historically contributed to and impeded movements for social justice in the past; (2) explore contemporary case studies of "movement lawyering" practices in Los Angeles; and (3) learn core skills and tactics to align legal strategies with community power-building goals. In the companion Community Law Internship course, students will have the opportunity to work directly with lawyers and community groups supporting movements for social justice, such as campaigns for housing justice, civil rights, environmental justice, immigrants' rights, decriminalization of poverty, and workers' rights. Through this integrated examination of the theory and practice of movement lawyering, we will build skills and identify strategies to strengthen social justice movements in L.A. and beyond. *Note:* POLS 340 fulfills the junior-level writing requirement for Politics majors.

Note: Whether the internship will take place via Zoom, hybrid, or in-person is at the discretion of each organization and may not be known in advance. Students should be prepared for a virtual, hybrid, or in-person internship.

Professor biography

Professor Doug Smith is an attorney at Public Counsel, providing legal and policy support to community-led movements for housing and economic justice. Professor Smith has worked with grassroots organizers and community based organizations to decriminalize and legalize street vending, expand rent control, create policy and funding to develop thousands of units of affordable housing, and advance "People's Plan" campaigns for equitable development and anti-displacement protections. Since 2018, Professor Smith has also co-taught the Community Economic Development Clinic at UCLA School of Law.

Application procedure

POLS 260/POLS 340 is open to all students, but declared Politics majors will receive priority.

Admittance to the class is by application only. All applicants will be reviewed, and finalists will be invited for a 30 minute interview with Professor Smith.

Students must submit applications to Romy Corona (rcorona@oxy.edu) by **Tuesday, October 18 at 5 pm**. Late applications will not be considered under any circumstances.

Please submit the following in either Microsoft Word or PDF:

- (1) cover sheet with name, full contact information (Oxy email and cell), class year, and major(s);
- (2) a resume;
- (3) short written responses to the following questions (please limit each response to no more than 250 words):
 1. Please explain your interest in this course, including any career interests or work/volunteer experience that is relevant to this course.
 2. Please describe other courses you have taken or plan to take related to law or social justice movements.
 3. Please briefly describe a time that you collaborated with others to achieve a shared objective.

Responses to the following question will not affect eligibility for the course and are intended only to help plan seminar discussions and internship placements

4. Please rank your interest in an internship with a public interest law organization working with community groups on the following issues (1 = highest preference; 7 = lowest preference; if no preference, please leave blank):
 - Environmental justice
 - Housing justice
 - Juvenile justice / ending school-to-prison pipeline
 - Immigrants' rights
 - Workers' rights
 - Civil rights
 - Other (please list)

All students will receive a response by **October 21**. If invited to interview, students will be expected to schedule their interview immediately, for the week of October 24 (during advising week). *Attentiveness and responsiveness to email is therefore necessary and part of the requirements for the course.*

Questions?

Students may direct questions to the chair of the Politics Department, Jennifer Piscopo, at piscopo@oxy.edu.