

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLINIC

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Faculty	Prof. Rachel Camp and Fellows
What do students do	Students represent indigent victims of family violence in protection order cases in the D.C. Superior Court, and engage in projects designed to increase access to justice and improve the system's response to domestic abuse.
Semester or year-long	One semester, Fall or Spring
Open to	All 2Ls and 3Ls (at least 30 credits). Preference given to 3Ls.
Prerequisite(s)	All first-year courses and (as a pre- or co-requisite) Evidence
Credits	10
Requires Student Bar Certification	Yes
How many students	10-12/semester
Conflicts	Handled on a case-by-case basis
Average time commitment	35 hours/week, on average. Work on cases may continue into the reading and exam period.
Seminar hours	Tues. & Thurs. 1:20pm-3:20pm
Orientation	A multi-day orientation will be held before classes begin in both the Fall and Spring
Information session(s)	Friday, March 26, 2021 1:30pm - 3:00pm

THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLINIC EXPERIENCE

The Domestic Violence Clinic offers students the opportunity to represent victims of intimate abuse in civil protection order cases in the District of Columbia Superior Court. Through on-the-ground client representation, individual supervision, “case rounds” conversations with colleagues, and seminar-based simulations, exercises, and discussions, students learn to engage in client-centered advocacy, develop strong trial and negotiation skills, obtain a thorough understanding of family, criminal, and poverty law, and provide representation in an area of substantial community need.

Clinic students work to obtain civil protection orders (“CPOs”) for their clients. These orders typically last for one year, and may include a broad spectrum of relief designed to effectively end the violence in an intimate partner relationship. A CPO may contain basic safety provisions, directing the abusive partner to stop assaulting and threatening the victim, to stay away from her, her home, and her workplace, vacate her residence, and not to contact her in any manner. The order also may resolve family law issues, including an award of temporary custody of the parties' children, visitation rights for the non-custodial parent, and child support awards. Other commonly-litigated issues include reimbursement for injury-related medical bills and property damage, referrals to appropriate counseling programs, and the surrender of firearms and other weapons.

Students in the Clinic serve as lead counsel for their clients, and learn to excel in every phase of expedited civil litigation, including pretrial skills (such as counseling, interviewing, investigation, and negotiation)

and trial skills (such as opening statements, direct and cross examination, making objections, and closing arguments). Students gain expertise in the law of evidence; a typical caseload involves the introduction of photographs, text messages, police reports, 911 calls, and/or medical records at trial. In addition, in those cases where clients are interested in pursuing a criminal prosecution of their abusive partner, students learn to navigate the criminal justice system, working with the U.S. Attorney's Office. Clinic students learn a systematic approach to lawyering involving careful planning, practical engagement, and critical post-performance reflection. They leave the clinic having internalized a valuable method for long-term professional improvement and with essential skills that transfer across a wide variety of practice areas.

Although caseloads are flexible and depend on the scope of each individual case, Clinic students can expect to represent 3-4 clients over the course of the semester, working in teams of two. It is not possible to predict whether any particular case will settle or go to trial, but every Clinic student will have an opportunity to question a witness on the stand at one or more ex parte Temporary Protection Order hearings, and each student will have opportunities to negotiate a settlement or go to trial. Each student team has regular meetings with a faculty supervisor to discuss litigation strategy and receive intensive feedback on drafts of documents, testimony, and legal arguments.

In addition to their litigation work, Clinic students work on a project designed to expand their understanding of the potential scope of legal services and to meet larger-scale community needs. Clinic projects have included: providing in-court legal counseling to pro se petitioners in CPO cases, creating know-your-rights presentations and pamphlets, and drafting proposed revisions to the Metropolitan Police Department's policies and to DC Superior Court rules.

Clinic alum Chris Harlem says: *Working with Georgetown's Domestic Violence Clinic gave rise to the most meaningful semester I've had at law school. Not only does it provide a much-needed service to the DC community, but it also bridges the gap between doctrinal teachings in lecture courses and the practice of law. Having gone through two trials this semester, I was exposed to trial practice and litigation in a way that could not have been simulated in a standard class. The DV Clinic philosophy promoted taking ownership over one's work and pushing students towards a level of competence whereby they could handle their clients on their own. I highly recommend applying for a seat in the Domestic Violence Clinic.*

Clinic alum Kerry Bollerman notes that: *The DV Clinic is an incredible hands-on experience for law students interested in litigating. Clinic students will invariably speak multiple times before a judge on the DC Superior Court and will get extensive practice and feedback from experienced faculty. I grew as a person and a lawyer, thanks to the DV Clinic.*

Alex Hughes, 2016 graduate, puts it this way: *Participating in the Domestic Violence Clinic was, without a doubt, the highlight of my law school experience. First, it gives you a chance to hone your litigation skills in a real life setting, with the benefit of receiving thoughtful faculty feedback throughout the process. Second, and most importantly, it provides you an invaluable opportunity to provide direct legal services in a practice area where legal services are scarce. Every semester, the clinic makes a meaningful impact in several people's lives. Professionally and personally, it is hard to imagine a more rewarding experience.*

CLINIC CLIENTS*

The stories of two of the clients whom the Clinic has assisted illustrate the scope of our work.

Sylvia

Sylvia sought protection from her husband, Robert. Over their three-year marriage, Robert had become increasingly jealous, possessive, and violent. Whenever Sylvia left their apartment, he accused her of seeing another man; he frequently hid the keys to the car and the house from her so that she could not leave. He began to follow her everywhere. One night, after she had gone out for a few hours, Robert told her that if he saw her with another man, he would kill them both. He slammed Sylvia against the bed and held an iron over her head, threatening to kill her with it. Robert was a heavy drinker, and on previous occasions when he was intoxicated, he forced Sylvia to have sex with him, pinning her down on the bed. The day before she came to the Courthouse to seek protection, Sylvia had made the decision to leave Robert. As she began packing, Robert assaulted her in front of their one-year-old son. He then disconnected the phone and blocked the door of the apartment, preventing Sylvia from leaving. Finally, someone outside the building heard Sylvia's cries for help and called the police. Robert was arrested, and Sylvia and her son fled to her sister's apartment for safety. Domestic Violence Clinic students represented Sylvia in her CPO trial. After she won her case, the judge awarded Sylvia a CPO, directing Robert not to assault or threaten her or her child, to stay away from her, and to vacate the family home. Robert was also ordered to enroll in domestic violence counseling and substance abuse treatment, and Sylvia was awarded custody and child support.

Leslie

Leslie's husband regularly physically and emotionally abused her, including several occasions when he threw her to the ground and hit her while she was pregnant with their child. At one point, Leslie separated from her husband, and he went into counseling to learn how to control his violence. But counseling failed to stop his behavior. In October, Leslie's husband became angry and began to yell and shove her in front of their five-year-old son. The boy became upset and placed himself between his parents, yelling, "Don't hurt my mother!" His father slammed the boy's head and back into a wall. Leslie ended the relationship, and her husband moved out of the family home. But several weeks later, he followed her out of a teacher's meeting at their son's preschool, grabbed her by the arm, and told her, "If I'm not going to have you, no one will." In the weeks that followed, he repeatedly came to Leslie's home and assaulted or threatened her. Terrified, Leslie was forced to take her son and stay with relatives. Eventually, Leslie was referred to the DV Clinic. After two contested hearings on issues of domestic violence and child support, the judge granted Leslie a CPO requiring her husband to stay away from her, not to assault or threaten her, and ordering him to participate in domestic violence counseling. The order also awarded temporary custody of the couple's son to Leslie and directed her husband to pay more than \$700 per month in child support.

*Names and minor details have been changed to protect client identities.

TIME COMMITMENT

Over the years, students have found their Clinic semester to be one of the most intense, exciting, exhausting, and rewarding experiences of their lives. The benefits are substantial—by the time students complete the Clinic, they are likely to have more trial experience than most attorneys many years out of law school. But this also means that this litigation-intensive Clinic requires extensive demands on student time. Students have some opportunity for vacation time during their Clinic semester, but because they are representing clients in fast-paced, emergency cases, students must obtain faculty permission before making plans to leave town, even over academic breaks and weekends. Although it is quite unusual, students may be required to continue with casework during the reading and exam period; in this event, Clinic faculty will assist with any conflicts that might arise.

Students participating in either the Fall or Spring semesters of the Clinic will need to return to school several days before classes begin for Clinic Orientation. The DVC faculty will hold intensive preparatory sessions to get Clinic students up to speed on the substantive law and lawyering skills they will need to know to go to court with a client as soon as possible.

On average, students can expect to spend approximately 35 hours per week, engaging in DV Clinic work.

SELECTION CRITERIA/APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for the Domestic Violence Clinic, students must have completed all first-year courses and (as a pre- or co-requisite) Evidence. Although we reserve one or two clinic seats for students with interest, experience, or enthusiasm about domestic violence issues and/or litigation, we hope to include students with a wide range of background, experiences, and interests. We give preference to students entering their final year of law school.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about the Domestic Violence Clinic, interested students are welcome to reach out to either of the Clinic Directors, Professor Deborah Epstein, at epstein@georgetown.edu or Professor Rachel Camp rachel.camp@georgetown.edu, with any questions. In addition, students can visit [our website](#) for information about the Clinic class and faculty. We will also hold an Open House virtually on a date TBD.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Clinic is being taught by Professors Deborah Epstein and Rachel Camp, and Teaching Fellows Shanta Trivedi and Bonnie Carlson. The students who were enrolled in the Domestic Violence Clinic during this academic year are listed below. Please feel free to contact them.

FACULTY

Professor Deborah Epstein

Professor Epstein has directed the Domestic Violence Clinic since 1993 and has spent almost 20 years working as an advocate for victims of intimate partner abuse. She co-chaired the design and implementation of the D.C. Superior Court's Domestic Violence Division, which fundamentally restructured the way civil and criminal family abuse cases are handled. Specialized judges preside overall family law, civil protection order, and criminal cases involving domestic abuse; a multi-agency approach is employed to decrease the incidence of family violence and to improve litigants' access to crucial legal, medical, and social services. For the court's first five years, Professor Epstein also directed the court's newly-created Domestic Violence Intake Center, a one-stop center where survivors can obtain assistance and advocacy in their civil and criminal court cases as well as crisis intervention counseling and support. Professor Epstein has [served on the NFL Players' Association Domestic Violence Commission](#), as Chair of the DC Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board, on the Board of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the House of Ruth, and as a member of the D.C. Superior Court's Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and the D.C. Mayor's Commission on Violence Against Women. She has trained hundreds of police officers, prosecutors, and judges around the country and internationally on domestic violence issues. In 2020, she was awarded the American Bar Association's Margaret Brent Award for professional excellence in women lawyers. She serves on D.C.'s Judicial Nominations Commission, helping to select judges to serve on the local courts. Professor Epstein's publications in this area include: [Loneliness and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for Intimate Partner Violence Survivors](#), J. FAMILY VIOL. (2020); [From Isolation to Connection: The Practices and Promise of Open Domestic Violence Shelters](#), J. INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE (2020); [Discounting Women: Doubting Domestic Violence Survivors' Credibility and Dismissing Their Experiences](#), 167 U. PENN. L. REV 339 (2019);

[*Beyond the RCT: Integrating Rigor and Relevance to Evaluate the Outcomes of Domestic Violence Programs*](#), 39 *AM. J. EVALUATION* (2018); LISTENING TO BATTERED WOMEN: A SURVIVOR-CENTERED APPROACH TO ADVOCACY, MENTAL HEALTH, AND JUSTICE (APA Press, 2008); [*The Victim-Informed Prosecution Project: A Quasi-Experimental Test of a Collaborative Model for Cases of Intimate Partner Violence*](#), *VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN* (2009); [*Refocusing on Women: A New Direction for Policy and Research on Intimate Partner Violence*](#), 20 *J. INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE* 479 (2005); [*Transforming Aggressive Prosecution Policies: Policies: Prioritizing Victims' Long-Term Safety in the Prosecution of Domestic Violence Cases*](#), 11 *AM. J. GENDER, SOC. POL'Y & LAW* 465 (2003); [*Procedural Justice: Tempering the State's Response to Domestic Violence*](#), 43 *WM. & MARY L.REV.* 1843 (2002); and [*Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence Cases: Rethinking the Roles of Prosecutors, Judges, and the Court System*](#), 11 *YALE JOURNAL OF LAW AND FEMINISM* 3 (1999). In addition to her work in the Clinic, Professor Epstein co-directs Georgetown's Graduate Clinical Fellowship Program.

Professor Rachel Camp

Rachel Camp is a Co-Director of the Domestic Violence Clinic and a Professor from Practice at Georgetown University Law Center. She joined Georgetown's faculty in 2011 and became a co-director of the Domestic Violence Clinic (DVC) in 2013. Professor Camp has devoted her career to advocating on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized populations. She has represented and has supervised law students representing hundreds of survivors of intimate partner violence in civil protection order and family law cases during her time at Georgetown and while a Clinical Teaching Fellow at the University of Baltimore School of Law. In addition to direct legal representation, Professor Camp has supervised law students on a variety of community education and systemic legal reform projects aimed at increasing access to justice for survivors. Professor Camp's co-authored article on integrating community legal education into clinical programs was published in the *Clinical Law Review* in 2012. Between 2000-2008, Professor Camp served as an Assistant Attorney General with the Oregon Department of Justice. While there, she served as counsel for a variety of state agencies, including the Department of Human Services, in matters involving child abuse and neglect. Prior to her employment at the Oregon Department of Justice, Professor Camp was an attorney at the Maryland Disability Law Center representing patients at a maximum-security state psychiatric hospital in civil and administrative matters. Professor Camp currently serves on the D.C. Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board and the Board of Directors of the D.C. Affordable Law Firm and Girls on the Run of Central Maryland. In addition to other law review articles and publications, in [*Coercing Pregnancy*](#), 21 *WM. & MARY J. WOMEN & L.* 275 (2015), Professor Camp examined the intersection between intimate partner violence (IPV), reproductive coercion, and pregnancy. In her most recent article, [*Pursuing Accountability for Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: The Peril \(and Utility?\) of Shame*](#), 98 *BOSTON UNIV. L. REV.* 1677 (2018), Professor Camp explores how formal and informal methods of shaming perpetrators of IPV lead to counterproductive outcomes for reducing violence in intimate relationships and increased risk of harm for survivors. In addition to her work in the DVC, Professor Camp directs the LL.M. program for the D.C. Affordable Law Firm, a program that allows recent law graduates to provide civil legal representation to D.C. residents who fall between 200-400% of the federal poverty rate and who otherwise may be unable to obtain legal representation.

Teaching Fellow Bonnie Carlson

Prior to becoming the Domestic Violence Clinical Teaching Fellow, Bonnie Carlson was a Training and Technical Assistance Staff Attorney with the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence. At the Commission, Bonnie wrote training curricula and publications for attorneys practicing domestic violence law around the country. Prior to this position, she was a family law staff attorney for the Alexandria office of Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV) for four years representing victims of domestic violence. She started at LSNV on a year-long fellowship from the George Washington University Law School, where she graduated in May 2012. Upon her graduation, Bonnie was awarded the National Association of Women Lawyers Outstanding Law Graduate Award for

her work with domestic violence victims as well as her academic success. She was an active member of the Alexandria Bar Association and was honored with the Don F. Mela Award for her service to the community in 2015. She taught Legal Research and Writing to first-year law students at the George Washington University Law School for three years. Ms. Carlson grew up in Arlington, Virginia, and earned a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and Women's Studies from the University of Virginia.

Teaching Fellow Shanta Trivedi

Before joining the Domestic Violence Clinic at Georgetown, Shanta was a clinical teaching fellow at the University of Baltimore School of Law, where she taught a weekly seminar and supervised students on family law matters, civil protective order proceedings, and community education projects. She has guest-lectured in family law, poverty law, and applied feminism.

Shanta was previously an associate at Winston & Strawn LLP, where she worked on large-scale federal litigation, and a staff attorney at the Brooklyn Defender Services, Family Defense Practice, where she represented parents embroiled in the child welfare system. Shanta's scholarship focuses on state-sanctioned family separation. In [*The Harm of Child Removal*, 43 *New York University Review of Law & Social Change* 523 \(2019\)](#), she analyzes the various harms and trauma associated with removal from one's family and subsequent placement into foster care. In the piece, Shanta advocates for consideration of these harms in all legal decisions where a child is at risk of removal. Her current article, *A Child's Right to Family Integrity* (forthcoming), analyzes the constitutional right to family integrity for children and how it can be utilized in the criminal, immigration, and child welfare systems. She has also written op-eds for [Slate](#), [The Hill](#), and [NBC News](#).

2020-2021 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLINIC STUDENTS

Fall 2020

Kiah Dixon
Tyler Gerstein
Evie Kallenbach
Juliane Martin
Alison Miller
Kori Pruett
Molly Rosen
Katie (Catherine) Rosenberg
Soraya Todd
Kerry Walsh
Michael Weinberg
Yanpeng Wang

Spring 2021

Luke Albi
Anna Cumming
Grayson Dimick
Madison Glennie
Olivia Hinerfeld
Lauren Katz
Justin LoScalzo
Johanna Moody
Paulina Piasecki
Andrew Quinn
Michelle Wadolowski
Julia White