

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD1423F

Date of Senate Approval 12/07/2023

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 10 (SSCI): Addition of new course, SSCI 360, Poverty Law Practicum

Effective Date: Fall 2024

1. **Add:** On page 291, new course, **SSCI 360, Poverty Law Practicum:**

360 Poverty Law Practicum (4)

Students with an interest in law, social work, and public policy will receive training and then make calls to screen applicants who are applying for assistance from Pisgah Legal Services. Through this process, students will develop skills in active listening, legal issue spotting, determining eligibility, critical thinking, and navigating an online database system to input data. Additionally, they will explore how these cases work their way through the system, and critically examine theories related to poverty and law as a social institution. Students will assess the extent to which the legal system works to help vulnerable community members and will directly assist with connecting community members to important legal advocacy. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. Fall.

2a. **Add:** On page 194, in the listing of courses for the **Interdisciplinary Certificate in Applied Social Science Research**, after SOC 338:

SSCI 360 Poverty Law Practicum (4)

2b. **Add:** On page 215, in the “nature of law” category for the **Minor in Legal Studies**, after SOC 480:

SSCI 360 Poverty Law Practicum (4)

Impact: The addition of this course has no impact on staffing as it has already been offered as a Special Topics course 3 times. It provides students with an additional elective toward completing their certificate in Applied Social Science Research, the major or minor in Sociology (with approved substitution), and the minor in Legal Studies. It previously has been taught as a Service-Learning course.

The student learning objectives are:

- Effectively screen applicants for civil legal aid for a variety of issues including access to public benefits, housing issues, consumer situations, and others;
- Describe and assess the legal process for individuals and families living in poverty who have turned to Pisgah Legal Services for assistance with meeting their basic needs;
- Identify and evaluate theories of poverty and law that describe, assess, and explain the structural issues that cause poverty to exist and persist; and
- Reflect on and assess how and why the legal system works and doesn't work to address providing support and assistance to individuals and families who are poor.

The anticipated/past class size is 10-15.

The course meets 3:20 per week and additional training/activities/study outside of class approximates an average of 4-7 hour per week.

No additional space or specialized equipment is required.

Faculty contact hours are the same as any 4-credit course, depending on total student enrollment.

The class is taught by a single faculty member.

Rationale: This course has been offered as a Special Topics course 3 times. We propose to shift it to a regular catalog course. It currently serves as an elective for the Applied Social Science Research interdisciplinary certificate as well as for Sociology majors and minors. It is an important course that not only helps students apply their learning to real world issues, but also one that links students and the university with the community.