Background

For decades, political stagnation around comprehensive immigration reform, combined with increased enforcement measures, has limited access to lawful migration, compromised rights immigrants in the United States, and steadily increased detention of immigrants within the United States. Because deportation is classified as a civil rather than a criminal sanction, immigrants facing removal are not afforded the constitutional that are provided to criminal defendants. Immigrants facing deportation, including children, often do not have an opportunity to be represented. Detained immigrants, particularly those held in remote locations, face the additional obstacle of accessing counsel from behind bars. Yet, in every immigration case, a trained attorney who can argue for deportation, regardless of whether the immigrant is represented, represents the government.

The stakes for immigrants are high, including prolonged detention, deportation, and family separation. Recent changes to immigration policy have resulted in over 30,000 migrants, including asylum seekers, to wait in Mexico border towns until their case can be processed. This can take several months, if not longer, putting children and families at risk of further harm while they wait. Given the lack of due process for immigrants in legal proceedings and documented human and civil rights abuses of immigrant detainees, there is a critical need for legal representation of immigrants. Immigrants who have access to an attorney are ten times more likely to receive immigration protection. For many, especially those seeking asylum, working with an attorney can mean life or death

Spring Break Immigration Detention Project

*Sunday, February 22, 2019 9:00 am – 12 pm (in person or online via Zoom); and  
Saturday, February 29 (9:00 am - 11:30 am); and  
March 2-7, 2020 (Sundays are travel days); Students are expected to commit a full-day each weekday.*

In 2019, the Immigrant Rights Coalition, in Partnership with the Immigration Law Practicum, launched the Immigration Detention Project to respond to the critical need for legal services. The Immigration Detention Project provides an opportunity for School of Law students, faculty, and alumni to provide direct representation of detained immigrants around the country where the need is greatest. Faculty and practitioners will supervise students, with one practitioner per four students. Participants will travel over spring break in March to provide on-site representation at 2-4 detention centers and business offices in collaboration with local organizations. Some cases may require ongoing representation, which will be coordinated through CHRC and the Immigration Law Practicum.
Up to 10 student participants are selected each year for this experience. The selection committee consists of the Co-Chairs of the Immigrant Rights Coalition (student organization) and Immigration Law Practicum Director, Katherine Kaufka Walts. Selected students will participate in one, half-day course on February 22, 2019, and 1/2 day-long orientation workshop in the Saturday prior to departure (February 29, 2019). The weekend course will cover a brief history of immigration law and policy, and an introduction to foundational law and skills applicable to the site, which may include bond hearings, asylum applications, and preparation for credible fear interviews. The orientation workshop will provide in-person, skills-based training, including trauma-informed interviewing, managing vicarious trauma, and address travel logistics. Reading materials are assigned in advance. Site location partners may provide their own orientation upon arrival.

Participants will be required to submit personal information to pass background clearance checks to enter detention facilities. You must pass the background clearance check to participate on site. If you have any questions about this, please contact kkaufkawalts@luc.edu.

After the trip, the Immigrant Rights Coalition will organize a public forum for participating students to share their experience and reflections, and to identify opportunities for other students and practitioners to engage in social justice advocacy on behalf of immigrants both in Chicago and nationwide.

**Partners:** the project will work with nationally renowned organizations managing legal representation on site at various detention centers throughout the South, including the Florence Project, ProBar of the American Bar Association, RAICES, American Immigration Council, the Southeast Immigrant Freedom Initiative (SIFI) of the Southern Poverty Law Center, and CLINIC. The Immigrant Rights Coalition and the Immigration Law Practicum Director make the site selections each year, depending on the organizations needs and capacity.

**FAQ**

**Q:** Do I need to take the course/apply for credit to participate?

**A:** No. Please indicate in the application whether you are seeking credit (2 credits). If you are not seeking academic credit, you are still expected to participate in all aspects of the project, including the February 22 course and pre-trip orientation workshop.

**Q:** If I am a 1L, can I participate in the Immigration Detention Project?

**A:** Yes. However, 1L students are not eligible for experiential learning credits.

**Q:** If I am enrolled in the Spring Term Immigration Law Practicum (Law 470), can I use this experience to satisfy my experiential learning credit (2) for a total of 4 credits?

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1 The number of participants will vary by site/project partner and their capacity. This varies by site.
A: Yes. Please contact the Immigration Law Practicum Director, Katherine Kaufka Walts, to discuss. kkaufkawalts@luc.edu

Q: What kind of work will I be doing during the week?

A: It depends on the current immigration policy, and needs of the site partner organization. This can change month to month. It will be a combination of work on-site at the partner organization’s office (e.g., gathering evidence, conducting legal research, drafting documents), and work off site (e.g., conducting intakes at detention centers, meeting with detainees’ family members, and immigration court observations).

Q: Do I need to know immigration law/have experience with immigration law to participate?

A: No.

Q: How is the trip financed?

A: Students are expected to be responsible for their own out-of-pocket costs (airfare, hotel, car rental, food), which is estimated between $1500-2000 per person, depending on the site location. Loyola University School of Law will launch a crowdfunding campaign to try to offset the costs. Last year, 100% of student costs were reimbursed via the crowdfunding campaign.
APPLICATION PART ONE

Name: ________________________________  Circle: 1L  2L  3L  Day  Weekend

E-mail: _______________________________

Phone: _______________________________

Please list any relevant experience working, volunteering with, or advocating for international populations, marginalized populations, and/or those suffering from trauma. Please include the organization/company name and dates you worked/volunteered there if applicable.

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Do you speak Spanish? If yes, please list your level of proficiency. For those who list themselves as proficient, we will likely be conducting applicant interviews in Spanish. Preference will be given to fluent Spanish speakers, although this is not a requirement.

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APPLICATION – PART TWO

In 1-2 pages, please the following questions:

(1) Why are you interested in working with detained immigrants over Spring Break?
(2) What professional, personal, or otherwise relevant experiences have you had that would make you a good fit for this program?

Please attach your response to this document.

Are you seeking academic credit for this experience (circle)?
YES
NO
(Only for 2L, 3L, or Weekend JD students)

Are you enrolled (or planning to enroll) in the Immigration Law Practicum (470) for Spring Term (circle)
YES
NO

Applicant Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________

Please submit your application to kkaufkawalts@luc.edu with “IDP Project Application” as the subject line by 5:00 pm November 22, 2019. In-person and phone (WJD) interviews with candidates will be scheduled shortly thereafter.