Civil Litigation & Dispute Resolution Courses

Civil litigators – also known as trial lawyers – represent clients in civil lawsuits, which can be resolved through arbitration, mediation, trial, or settlement. They spend much of their time on pre-trial matters such as investigating facts, researching law, drafting pleadings, engaging in discovery, negotiating with opponents, participating in mediation, filing motions, writing briefs, and preparing cases to be tried. Although most cases are resolved through some form of settlement, the pre-trial process aims to gather and organize the information that will be needed should a trial be necessary. In addition, litigators must have the confidence and skills to try a case to a judge or jury or s/he will not be able to adequately represent the client’s interests.

**FOUNDATION COURSES – INTRODUCING THE BASIC CONCEPTS:**
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Civil Procedure
- Evidence
- Torts
- Trial Advocacy or Trial Techniques
- Professional Responsibility (required)

[Note that Evidence is a prerequisite for Trial Advocacy/Trial Techniques I as well as for some of the clinics and trial teams. Students interested in a litigation specialty should take Evidence as soon as possible.]

**RECOMMENDED COURSES – BASIC ELECTIVES FOR LITIGATORS:**

**Procedure Courses:**
- Appellate Advocacy
- Complex Litigation
- Conflict of Laws
- Depositions
- Expert Witness in Civil Litigation
- Federal Courts
- Law and Social Science
- Negotiation
- Pre-Trial Practice & Advocacy
- Texas Pre-Trial Procedure
- Texas Trial & Appellate Procedure

**Courses Combining Substantive Law & Procedural Issues:**
- Immigration Practice & Advocacy
- Patent Litigation
- Police Misconduct Litigation
- Securities Litigation and Enforcement

**CLINICS**
Many of the law school clinics help students develop litigation-related skills in addition to other
important lawyering skills such as interviewing, advising, counselling, negotiating, and fact-investigation, that will be important in any litigation practice.

Civil/Consumer Clinic
Child Advocacy Clinic
Criminal Clinic
Judge Elmo B. Hunter Legal Center for Victims of Crimes Against Women
Van Sickle Family Law Clinic
Actual Innocence Clinic
Tax Clinic

**RELATED COURSES**
In addition to an understanding of litigation processes, trial lawyers must also understand the areas of law involved in their cases. Students should therefore consider substantive courses in litigation-intensive areas. See the Guides for other areas for lists of basic courses in various fields.

**EXTERNSHIPS**
A large number of externship opportunities are with federal or state judges, government agencies, district attorneys, and public defenders, most of which involve exposure to litigation activities. Students interested in litigation should strongly consider taking the Federal Judicial Externship Course and/or doing a litigation-related externship within the Government & Public Interest Externship.

**PUBLIC SERVICE PLACEMENTS**
Many of the Pre-Approved Public Service Placements allow participating students to acquire litigation skills and experience while also providing community service.

**STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**
Board of Advocates
Moot Court Board

**FACULTY**
Here are some of the full-time faculty members who teach or have an interest in this area:

Hillel Bavli
Anthony Colangelo
Ruth Cross
Bill Dorsaneo
Chris Jenks
George Martinez
Natalie Nanasi
Chante Prox
Meghan Ryan
Mary Spector
Diane Sumoski
David Taylor
Beth Thornburg