Comparative Education Law and Policy: Early Childhood Education

This unique course will immerse students in a comparative analysis of early childhood education law and policy. The course begins with an exploration of the legal and political structure of American early childhood education, including issues such as: (1) the role of the national and local government in regulating education; (2) the constitutional right to education; (3) the governance of educational institutions and the shaping of curriculum; (4) the rights and responsibilities of teachers; and (5) the image of the child. The American legal system’s resolution of these issues is then compared to the resolution of these same issues by legal and educational systems in other countries, particularly those in Italy and Finland.

One focus of the class will be the world-renowned approach to preschool education developed in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The preschools in Reggio Emilia are widely regarded as the best in the world. The “Reggio” approach to early education is built on a particular understanding of the biological and social nature of children, and the role of the state in developing its young. Accordingly, the class will explore the neuro-science undergirding the Reggio approach and how this science informs: educational objectives and methods; the architecture of the educational environment, the connections between school and community and the legal and political structures surrounding children. Throughout the class, the “Reggio” approach will serve as a benchmark for understanding and assessing the law and policy of early childhood education in the United States. In addition, the class will examine the internationally acclaimed educational system in Finland to determine whether its successes can be replicated in the United States.

Students will be required to participate actively in class exercises and projects, to present material to the class, and to write a 10-15 page analytical, research or policy paper that addresses an issue raised by the class.
Derivatives for Lawyers

Derivative are one of the fastest growing vehicles in the financial industry, yet least understood. This four-course session is a comprehensive introduction to derivative products and the application of derivative tools and skills needed to value and understand equity options and options on futures. The course format includes a combination of group discussion, short examples, and case problems to illustrate and apply the concepts of option. (Vignola)

The Law of Jury Selection

This course will focus on various legal and practical considerations that attorneys must face both during and following the jury selection process. The course will cover: Constitutional issues; what must be proven to establish bias; the role of trial consultants (particularly in high profile cases); challenges to the array, challenges for cause and peremptory challenges; timing and procedural limitations; the significance of group dynamics; questioning techniques and the use of questionnaires; problems at trial and during deliberations; and the extent to which the parties may be entitled to examine prospective jurors in various areas of inquiry (such as occupation, education, knowledge of the case, legal and government experience, religious and educational beliefs). Students will participate in a mock voir dire, prepare a draft questionnaire and complete a brief (5-7 page) paper on a topic to be selected in consultation with the instructor. (Donner)

Law and Poverty

This course concerns those areas of civil law which most affect low income persons: landlord/tenant, federal housing, welfare, social security, Medicaid, Medicare, unemployment compensation, and civil rights. Other systemic issues will be explored, such as wealth discrimination, use of legal remedies to promote social change, and the delivery of legal services to low income persons. (Ramirez, Rose)

Law and the Subprime Debacle

Beginning in late 2007, a rash of defaults in subprime mortgages triggered a historic credit crisis. This crisis has now resulted in a historic global economic contraction. This class will examine the role of law in precipitating and propagating the crisis. Financial regulation, corporate governance, globalization, and housing law will be examined to determine the role of each in creating the crisis and amplifying the crisis. Specific solutions will be offered. Finally, an institutional assessment of law and regulation will be undertaken to consider broader reforms. (Ramirez)

Wrongful Conviction Seminar

This weekend course is designed to provide students with an overview of the issues and case law related to wrongful convictions. Students will gain an understanding of the dynamics of wrongful convictions and this burgeoning area of law. The course will also provide the opportunity for each student to research one recent case of wrongful conviction. 40% of the grade in this course is based on class participation. 60% is based on a research paper.