ALBANY LAW SCHOOL

Government Affairs and Advocacy

M.S. (30 credits), LL.M. (24 credits), and Advanced Certificate (9 credits)

CORE REQUIREMENTS:

Master of Science (M.S.):

- Introduction to Law and Legal Methods for Non-Lawyers (3-credits)
- 18 credits in GVAA
  - Administrative Law (3-credits)
  - 15 additional
- 6 credits of electives
- Capstone Thesis (3-credits)

Total of 30 credits

Master of Laws (LL.M.):

- 18 credits in GVAA
  - Administrative Law (3-credits; waived if previously taken in an approved J.D. program)
  - 15 additional
- 3 credits of electives
- Capstone Thesis (3-credits)

Total of 24 credits

9-Credit Advanced Certificate of Study:
Take any 9 credits in GVAA courses (excluding field placement)

OPTIONAL VIRTUAL FIELD EXPERIENCE:
To help you get ahead of your competition, and with flexibility in mind, students may choose to satisfy up to three credits of their coursework by completing a virtual (or on-site) field placement (42 work hours per credit plus an academic component). Students are eligible after completing one half of their program credits and at the discretion of the faculty program director.

SPECIALIZATION TRACKS:
The program is designed to provide students with skills, knowledge, and professional awareness of multiple perspectives around government and advocacy. Students may take courses in both tracks but can weight credits according to preference.

Government Track 🏛   **Advocacy and Lobbying Track** ♣

The remaining pages provide a generalized overview of course offerings.

Government Affairs and Advocacy Courses
(Subject to modification)

🏛 GOVERNMENT TRACK:

🏛 **GVAA 501: Administrative Law (3-credit, required for all M.S. and LL.M. candidates unless taken in prior JD program)**
A large part of American law is made up of rules and regulations, created by administrative agencies. This course equips students to understand and engage with administrative agencies as they go through the process of making rules and regulations.

🏛 **GVAA 701: Legislative Process and Statutory Interpretation (1- and 3-credit)**
Legislative Process and Statutory Interpretation is a practical roadmap for understanding the legislative process and developing and perfecting statutory analysis skills. Understanding what the law says, what it does and what it was intended to do provides negotiating leverage and will allow you to more effectively assess risk and protect your clients. You will learn when, why and how legislation is developed; why language matters and how it is used in statutory construction. You will learn and apply the basic tools of statutory interpretation, ordinary meaning, statutory context and canons of construction. You will understand how controversies develop around interpreting statutes. Through lectures that reflect real world examples, assignments and discussion you will develop and improve your research, writing and analytical skills.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- The legislative process: The idea, the legislation, and the law
- The words on the Page: Writing and statutory language
- Theories of Statutory Interpretation – Textualism and Intentionalism
- Theories of Statutory Interpretation – Purposivism
- The Absurdity Doctrine and The Rule of Lenity
- Statutory Interpretation Controversies, Regulations and Policy

🏛 **GVAA 702: State and Local Governments (1- and 3-credit):**
In this course, students will learn about the government institutions that have the most immediate impact on their constituents: state and local governments. The course will prepare students to understand how laws and policies are made at the state and local level, and what happens when there is conflict between state and local governments, and between federal and subfederal governments. The course will also provide perspective on how state and local governments shape their communities, including their impact on racial segregation and other forms of inequality.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- Federal/state Preemption
- State/local preemption, including doctrines of home rule
- Structure of local governments
- Structure of state governments
- Government role in residential and spatial segregation
- Local government finance
- Relationships between local governments (shared services)

🏛 **GVAA 703: Government Ethics (1- and 3-credit)**
The course will examine the principles, regulation, and laws that serve as guideposts for and drive the ethical conduct of "public officials." As a general definition of "government ethics" for the course, the focus will be on those rules that further

the concept of the primacy of public over private interest, deter favoritism of one party over another and protect the public from an individual seeking personal gain because such person is a public official. The rules are based on the general goal that a government, which the public believes is acting ethically, is one in which it will have confidence and to which is gives legitimacy and credibility.

The standards of ethical conduct for a particular public official depend on the level of government. The course will examine how the federal government (both houses of Congress and the Executive Branch and its agencies), state government (in particular, New York State but other states, as well – brief mention of rules governing judicial conduct), and localities try to achieve these ends. The goal of the course will be to provide a very practical, usable understanding of what is and what is not ethical behavior and what may not be ethical.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- Sources of ethical issues in government affairs
- Ethical issues for lobbying practices
- Ethical and compliance issues in executive branch and agency activities
- Ethical and compliance issues in legislative branch activities
- Bribery at the national and state level
- Theft of honest services at the national and state level
- Fraud at the national and state level

🏛 GVAA 704: Public Budgets and Finance (1- and 3-credit)
This course will examine the basics of budget legislation on both the state and federal level from the proposal stage, through legislative negotiations, and into implementation. The course will cover both the theory of government budgeting and the practical requirements of budget legislation to enact government policy priorities. The course also addresses the ways that governments generate money including taxes, fees, penalties and charges among others. Finally, the course will provide basic overview of the use of government bond issuances to fund government activities, especially at the local level.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- Government Finance Basics
- Government Budget Legislation: Preparation and Negotiation
- Government Budget Legislation: Enactment and Implementation
- Government Revenue
- Government bond issuance

🏛 GVAA 705 Government Spending and Grants (1- and 3-credit)
This course will examine how governments spend money. Governments spend money in a variety of ways, both by utilizing state employees and by contracting with private entities to carry out specific functions. This course will examine in detail government contracting including the limitations on such contracting at the state and federal levels. Government also provides grant programs as a means of accomplishing policy goals. The course will examine the practical requirements related to grant applications, conditions of grant awards, and post-award reporting. Finally, governments and in particular state governments use their investment power connected to employee pension funds advance policy goals. The course will provide a basic use of how and when a government may use investment power as a form of government influence.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- Introduction to government spending
- Government Contracting
- Government Grants
- Government investments

🏛 **GVAA 706: NYS Process and Players (1- and 3-credit)**

This course will examine the organizational structures and roles within New York State's legislative and executive branches and the New York City Council. Students will earn strategic workplace skills and functional processes that will make them a more effective player.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- Lower House – NYS Assembly
- Upper House – NYS Senate
- Governor's Office
- Agencies
- NY: Council/Mayor's Office
- Practical Skills (Drafting, LRS/Statewatch, Draft testimony, comment on a Regulation)

👥 LOBBYING & ADVOCACY TRACK:

👥 **GVAA 710: Lobbying Law and Ethics (1- and 3-credit)**

How have lobbying laws and regulations adapted, and what's next? Where is the line between "traditional" lobbyist, PR professional, and political operatives? What skills are necessary for a lobbyist to be both effective and ethical?

This course will establish the historical and constitutional background of lobbying; the legal and ethical framework a lobbyist operates within; and, finally, examines practical considerations facing members of the profession. The goal of the course will be to provide a full picture of what lobbying entails, and demystify some of the perceptions surrounding what lobbying actually is – at all levels of government.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- Introduction to lobbying: History of regulations, scope, perceptions, placement in the landscape of government actors
- Constitutional basis for lobbying: Federal Lobbying Disclosure Act; New York State Lobbying Act; Local Lobbying Laws
- Professional responsibilities of the lobbyist: Licensing, documentation, disclosure, and Public Officer's Law
- Serving Your Client: Finding your client, interacting with your client, and knowing your practical limits
- Limitations on lobbying by tax exempt entities and grassroots organizations
- Lobbying legislatures, executives, regulatory agencies, and localities
- PR/Advocacy/Political Campaigns: Legal and ethical lines and issues
- Navigating the current and future regulatory landscape

👥 **GVAA 711: Policy Change Through Litigation (1- and 3-credit)**

This course explores the multifaceted relationship between the enforcement of constitutional rights and obstacles to enforcement, including the development and expansion of immunity doctrines, limitations on institution-wide remedies, and fluid interpretations of civil rights principles. The course provides students contemplating careers in constitutional rights advocacy with a solid doctrinal foundation and offers a framework for considering how disparities develop between constitutional rights and remedies and how best to address those disparities.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- Litigation as a Tool for Policy Change

- Causes of Action to Enforce the U.S. Constitution
- Constitutional Claims Against Federal and State Officers
- Limitations and Defenses
- Remedies
- Current Issues in Gender Equality and Institutional Reform

❧ GVAA 712: Influencing Policymakers Through Advocacy (1- and 3-credit)

Knowing the landscape and stakeholders, as well as decision-making strategies around position, communication, and relationship building are among the essential skills necessary for any effective lobbyist or advocate navigating the policymaking arena. Through student-centered coursework, students will increase their individual capabilities in these areas as well as improve their value proposition to their organization and clients alike. Moreover, the knowledge and the skills gained will be applicable to any policymaking forum, whether domestic, international, or multilateral.

Learning modules will cover the following topics:
- Understanding the Policymaking Landscape
- Stakeholders
- Tools of Advocacy
- Advocacy Communications Tools
- Thought leadership and organizational positioning
- Outside Entities and Spending
- Tactical Decision-making

❧ GVAA 713: Integrated Communications and PR (1- and 3-credit)

In development. This course will focus on campaign strategy and communications skills for lobbying and advocacy.

❧ GVAA 714: Using Law for Social Change (1- and 3-credit)

In development. This course will focus on advocacy strategy around social movements and other special topics.

OTHER:

GVAA 720: Government Affairs and Advocacy Field Placement (1-3 credits)

Students work with advisor and program director on suitable field experience and deliverables.

THESIS:

The thesis requirement is the capstone for all Online M.S. and LL.M. programs. Students will have a choice to write a Thesis paper on a topic of their choosing within the discipline, or to conduct an approved project that is connected to their professional role. Both courses, Thesis: Research and Thesis: Writing, are taught consecutively and graded separately. Students may not take Thesis: Writing until they have successfully completed Thesis: Research.

MSLS 591: Thesis: Writing (1.5 credits, required for all M.S. and LL.M. candidates in last semeser)

In *Thesis: Research*, students will learn the skills to find resources to make an argument, collect and evaluate those resources, and produce a "pathfinder" – a guide to researching a particularly narrow area of law. Upon successful

completion of the pathfinder and having received a C or better for the course, the student becomes eligible to continue to the second stage of the capstone thesis – the writing phase.

MSLS 591: Thesis: Writing (1.5 credits, required for all M.S. and LL.M. candidates in last semeser)
In *Thesis: Writing*, students will continue with their researched topic and completed pathfinder to build and present their final paper or project. Evaluation of the final paper or project will center on the expanded statement of the thesis topic; an original research plan consisting of the research questions, methodology, strategies, and resources learned in Thesis: Research; the bibliography and the final thesis. Those working on professional projects will collaborate with the thesis professor to ensure the final deliverable meets the academic standards of the program. Students will present their final work either to an internal audience or in an external professional setting, such as an industry conference or corporate professional development event.