

Civil Rights Law

What would I do? Civil rights law deals with the protections and liberties enjoyed by the American people. These rights are designed to ensure that people are treated equally and without respect to their ethnicity, gender, or other such attributes. They also guard against overly intrusive conduct by the government. Government actors are not permitted to make decisions arbitrarily, or to deprive individuals of their lives or property without affording them due process of law. While civil rights violations give rise to a host of civil and criminal penalties for the offender, attorneys practicing in this area of the law are generally engaged in seeking financial compensation for victims.

(<http://www.hq.org/civilrgt.html>)

Where would I practice? Although the number of full-time jobs in this field is relatively small, many lawyers whose principal practices are in other fields are able to work in this area by taking cases on a **pro bono basis**. Full-time civil rights attorneys often work for **nonprofit, public interest law firms**, or as part of a **larger firm with a diverse practice**. (<http://www.lsac.org/jd/thinking-about-law-school/fields-of-law>)

What types of cases would I handle?

(<http://hls.harvard.edu/content/uploads/2008/07/guide-civil-rights.pdf>)

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|-------------------|------------------------|
| -Criminal Justice | -Immigrants' Rights |
| -Disability | -LGBT Rights |
| -Education | -Public Accommodations |
| -Employment | -Religious Liberties |
| -First Amendment | -Voting Rights |
| -Housing | -Women's Rights |

What schools in Florida specialize in this field of law?¹

School Name	Specialty Program(s)²
Ave Maria School of Law (Naples)	- Human Trafficking Law Clinic
Barry University Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law (Orlando)	- Civil Poverty Externship Program
Florida Coastal School of Law (Jacksonville)	- Government and Public Interest Law Certificate
Florida International University College of Law (Miami)	- Immigration & Human Rights Clinic

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Fields of Law
As designated by the Law School
Admissions Council (LSAC)



School Name	Specialty Program(s) ²
St. Thomas University School of Law (Miami)	- Certificate in Intercultural Human Rights - St. Thomas University Human Rights Institute - Human Trafficking Academy
Stetson University College of Law (Gulfport)	- Social Justice Advocacy Certificate of Concentration
University of Florida, Frederic G. Levin College of Law (Gainesville)	- Human and Civil Rights Law Externship - Center for the Study of Race and Race Relations - Institute for Human Rights, Peace, and Development
University of Miami School of Law (Miami)	- Social Justice and Public Interest Concentration - Human Rights Clinic - Civil Rights Practicum
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School (Tampa)	- Constitutional Law/Civil Rights Concentration ³

¹This is not an exhaustive list of Florida schools specializing in this field. **Although these schools offer specialty programs in this field, this does not mean you are unable to gain exposure to this field at another law school not listed above.**

²Information obtained through school website and officialguide.lsac.org

³This program is offered across WMU's regional campuses, contact the Tampa Bay, FL location to confirm its offering.

What are these “specialty programs?”

Specialty Program	Definition
Certificates	Specialization certificates allow JD students to focus their elective courses, build substantive knowledge and relevant skills, and enhance their resumes. Though specializations are not required for graduation, they can provide a guiding structure for exploration of various fields of law. With a variety of courses to choose from within each field, students can customize their specialization to their particular area of interest. (http://law.ggu.edu/academics/specialization-certificates/)

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Specialty Program	Definition
Clinics	<p>At many law schools, clinical pedagogy is well established and robust. Typically clinics are focused in areas of law – civil or criminal litigation, civil rights litigation, or representation of community organizations. These clinics involve “live” clients with active legal matters. They include a classroom component and close supervision by a clinical faculty member.</p> <p>http://digitalcommons.tourolaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=jel</p>
Concentrations	<p>"While it is not the best comparison to make, a Concentration is similar to a major in undergraduate studies, in that a student with a specific interest in a field can do focused study in that field. A major difference though, is that students who graduate law school with a Concentration will have the same degree as those without a Concentration, a juris doctor, that will be viable in any area of law in which they wish to practice."</p> <p>http://www.lls.edu/academics/concentrations/</p>
Externships	<p>Today, accepted externship pedagogy involves faculty instruction in a classroom component to every externship opportunity, and some training for the practitioner supervising attorneys. Further, while externships used to include the equivalent of 3-5 credit hours of work outside the law school, an emerging form of externship involves the student spending the entire semester, and 15 credits, working onsite on an externship assignment.</p> <p>http://digitalcommons.tourolaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=jel</p>
Practicum	<p>In practicum classes law students get hands-on learning working under the supervision of attorneys and professors in a non-lawyering role as they work on cases and practica give students insight into a specific area of legal interest and a window into what it is like to practice in that area.</p> <p>http://www.law.miami.edu/academics/externships-fellowships</p>