Cause Lawyers: Seminar
Professor David B. Wilkins and
Visiting Professor Ann Southworth
2 classroom credits 90450-31 Spring 05

This seminar will explore cause lawyering in all its various forms, with particular emphasis on comparing lawyers for liberal and conservative causes and examining the intersection between private practice and public service. Among the questions we will consider are the following: What is a cause lawyer? Are cause lawyers fundamentally different from other lawyers? Are lawyers for causes of the political left and right similar in terms of their social backgrounds, professional identities, practice sites, career tracks, financial support, networks, strategies, relationships with clients, and participation in social movements? Are there important differences between cause lawyers who work in public interest organizations and those who are located in traditional law firms? How has the recent proliferation of conservative legal advocacy organizations shaped debates about pro bono service and public interest practice? How has increased competition between liberal and conservative public interest law groups influenced public law litigation in the federal courts? The course materials will draw on readings from a broad range of disciplines, including law, sociology, history, and political science, as well as from accounts in the legal and popular press. In addition, prominent cause lawyers from both the right and the left will be invited to share their experiences and viewpoints. Students are required to attend classes, participate in class discussion, and write a final seminar paper, preferably one involving original research. Enrollment is limited to twenty students.