Project Overview

The Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project sends upper level law students into local high schools to teach the Constitution and the Bill of Rights using Supreme Court cases involving the rights of young people at school and in the juvenile justice system. The project was founded by Prof. Jamin Raskin in 1999 at American University and has since been replicated at law schools around the country, including Penn, Drexel State, Arizona State, Rutgers, Howard, and Southern University. The project’s goal is to teach students their rights and how to use their knowledge of cases and the Constitution to become effective democratic citizens.

Marshall-Brennan at Northeastern

History

In 2007, Northeastern launched a new Marshall-Brennan Project that serves public and charter schools in the Boston area. During SY ’07-’08, the project sent 17 law students into three schools: Codman Academy Charter Public School (Dorchester), Parkway Academy of Technology and Health (West Roxbury), and Social Justice Academy (Hyde Park). During SY ’08-’09, we sent 20 law students into five schools: Codman Academy, Community Charter School of Cambridge, English High School, Parkway Academy, and Social Justice Academy. This year, we plan to dispatch 24 law students into at least five schools during NUSL’s fall and winter quarters.

Moot Court Competitions

Each year, we hold two city-wide moot court competitions at the end of the fall and winter quarters with faculty members, legal practitioners, and judges serving as moot court judges. Last year, we held both competitions in the law school's moot court room. In SY 09-10 we plan to hold one competition at Northeastern and another at the historic John Adams Courthouse. The winners of our local competitions receive an all expenses paid trip to Philadelphia to compete in the National Marshall-Brennan Moot Court Competition.

Credits and Compensation

Please note that some important changes have been made to the program that will take place this year. Students will now take a 6-credit course, Teaching the Constitution, which explores the case law covered by the Marshall-Brennan curriculum as well as effective strategies for teaching these cases to high school students. While taking the course, students will also complete their teaching practicum with a host teacher in a public high school in the Boston area. To complete the course, students must submit a comprehensive work plan, including all their lesson plans, teaching materials, and a five-page reflective journal.
Requirements

To become a Marshall-Brennan Teaching Fellow, students must:

1. Register for Teaching the Constitution, offered in the fall and winter quarters;
2. Complete a brief Application Form (available on the WEBoard);
3. Complete a brief interview with the project director; and
4. Complete a 1-day orientation the weekend before the quarter begins.

Contact Information

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Marshall-Brennan Faculty Committee:
- Melinda Drew
- Peter Enrich
- Mary O’Connell
- Jane Scarborough (retired)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **When will I know that school I will be placed in?**
   We make school assignments as early as we can before the beginning of the quarter.

2. **How many days per week will I be teaching?**
   To complete the teaching practicum, students must complete approx. 3 hours of teaching each week. Depending on class schedules in your school, this will requiring going to the school two or three days each week. We also have one program that meets once per week on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. – noon.

3. **Will I get any training before I enter the classroom?**
   Yes, there is a mandatory, 1-day orientation session the weekend before the quarter begins.

4. **Will I be in a classroom with a full time teacher?**
   We have two program models. In the first, one Marshall-Brennan Teaching Fellow is placed in a classroom with a host teacher to help teach an existing course in law, government, or civics. In the second model, two Marshall-Brennan Teaching Fellows are paired to run an after school enrichment program without a licensed teacher.
5. **Will I get paid to be a Marshall-Brennan Teaching Fellow?**
   If you are eligible for work-study, you can receive a $13/hour work-study stipend for your time in the classroom and reasonable amount of prep time.

6. **What type of school will I be working in?**
   We work with exclusively public high schools in Boston and Cambridge, including charter public schools.

7. **Which schools were you in last year?**
   Codman Academy Charter Public School (Dorchester), Community Charter School of Cambridge, English High School (Jamaica Plain), Parkway Academy of Technology and Health (West Roxbury), and Social Justice Academy (Hyde Park).

8. **What grade level will I be teaching?**
   Most of our programs work with high school juniors or seniors, but sometimes we also work with younger high school students.

9. **How long does the program run?**
   The project operates during NUSL’s fall and winter quarters, from the beginning of the school year in September to mid-February. Each Teaching Fellow teaches for one academic quarter.

10. **Does the program have a moot court component?**
    Yes, each quarter the program culminates with an appellate-style moot court competition held either in Northeastern’s moot courtroom or the John Adams Courthouse, home of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. We also have funding to take 12 students to Philadelphia compete in the National Marshall-Brennan Moot Court Competition.

11. **Will I be responsible for writing my own lesson plans?**
    Yes, on the days you are in class, you will be lead teacher responsible with designing your own lesson plans. Some class time will be devoted to sharing lesson plan ideas.

12. **How many law students can participate in the program next year?**
    Our goal is to have 24 NUSL students participate during the 2008-09 school year: 12 in the fall and 12 in the winter.

13. **Are there any other ways to get involved with the Marshall-Brennan Project?**
    Yes, we have two work-study supported positions each quarter. The *Marshall-Brennan Student Coordinator* who helps coordinate programs and the moot court competitions. The *Marshall-Brennan Research Assistant* helps conduct legal research, identify classroom resources, and develop teaching materials. Strong preference is given to students who were previously Marshall-Brennan Teaching Fellows.