

THEA POSEL

727 E Dean Keeton, Austin TX 78705

(512) 232-1598

tposal@law.utexas.edu

EDUCATION

University of Colorado School of Law, Boulder, Colorado

Juris Doctor (Order of the Coif), 2016

University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado

Bachelor of the Arts, Sociology, 2013

- Research Assistant, Professor Michael Radelet (2011-12)

ACADEMIC/TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Steve Hicks School of Social Work & Capital Punishment Clinic, University of Texas School of Law, Austin, Texas

Clinical Assistant Professor, August 2020 – present

- Teaching responsibilities:
 - Law - Capital Punishment Clinic (collaborative)
 - Law - Providing Effective Assistance of Counsel in Capital Trials (collaborative)
 - Law – Introduction to Contemporary Criminal Justice Issues through Film (collaborative, 2021)
 - Interdisciplinary - Mitigation Matters (collaboratively developed and taught 2018-21, taught independently '22-23)
 - Social Work - Social Policy Analysis and Social Problems
 - Social Work – Forensic Social Work & the Legal System (designed and taught Spring2024)
- Other responsibilities:
 - Faculty Advisor, University of Texas at Austin JD/MSSW Dual Degree Program, 2020-present
 - Field Supervisor, Steve Hicks School of Social Work Capital Punishment Clinic Field Placement (UT Law), 2016-present
 - Field Education Committee (SSW), 2020-present
 - MSSW-APP Committee (SSW), 2021-present
 - MSSW Program Committee (SSW), 2023-present
 - Member, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (SSW), 2020-2023
 - *Committee Co-Chair, 2023*
 - *Co-chair, Curriculum and Field Sub-committee 2020-21*
 - 1L Mentorship program (Law), 2020-21
 - Strategic Planning Committee (School of Social Work Clinical Program), 2023
 - Directed Research Supervising Professor, Spring 2024

Capital Punishment Clinic, University of Texas School of Law, Austin, Texas

Clinical Instructor and Research Fellow, August 2016-present

- Teaching responsibilities (collaborative):
 - Capital Punishment Clinic (Spring '17–Spring '23) supervision of law students investigating and litigating capital cases
 - Topics including mitigation and social history investigation, mental health, trauma, and race/culture issues
 - Capital Punishment Seminar (Fall '17, Fall '18; Fall '19 guest lecture role)
 - Lectures covering law related to jury selection, mental health/competency and the law, and clemency
 - Providing Effective Assistance of Counsel in Capital Trials (Fall '17, Spring '18, Spring '19, Spring '20, Spring '21, Spring '22, Spring '23)
 - Co-developed/co-taught interdisciplinary Mitigation Matters course bridging law and social work programs (Fall '18-'21, solely responsible Fall '22 and '23)
- Academic projects and advocacy:
 - Coordinated federally sponsored mitigation skills training for practitioners (January 2019, 2020, 2023, and May 2023)
 - Co-developed related one-credit student course (Interviewing for Criminal Defense, Spring '20)
 - Seven years experience supervising undergraduate and masters-level social work student interns in the clinic
 - Primary author of amicus brief on behalf of five law clinics including UT Capital Punishment and Actual Innocence Clinics

RELEVANT LEGAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

- Eight years consulting experience with Texas lawyers in pre-trial, appellate, and postconviction capital cases
- Presented appellate oral argument before the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in *Falk v. State*, No. AP-77,071 (Jun. 3, 2020), *Green v. State*, No. AP-77-088 (Jan. 24, 2024)
- Third chair/appellate counsel in a death penalty trial, Webb County Texas—jury returned unanimous life verdict July 11, 2023
- Represented numerous clients under a sentence of death on direct appeal and in state and federal postconviction proceedings

- Co-prepared and co-presented a pre-trial settlement presentation to the Dallas County District Attorney in a capital case
- Assisted with jury selection in Texas capital cases
- Conducted capital and non-capital mitigation investigation in Colorado, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, and Washington
- Developed and presented bond arguments, multiple jury trials, and sentencing negotiations in misdemeanor cases

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Capital Life Votes Project, Austin, Texas

Faculty Coordinator, September 2019–March 2020 (suspended due to COVID-19)

- Developing databank of successful capital mitigation presentations in Texas trials
- Interviewing members of trial team and jurors rendering capital verdicts, cataloguing and analyzing interviews and case information

National College of Capital Voir Dire Annual Colorado Method Training, Boulder, Colorado

Program Administrator, November 2013–June 2016

- Organized annual three-day jury selection training for capital counsel from across the country
- Ran scholarship program and led admissions committee, increasing program size each year (2013-2016)

PUBLICATIONS

- Co-author, *When Justice Depends On It: The Need For Professional Standards For Mitigation Development In All Criminal Cases*, 52 U. Balt. L. Rev. 449 (2023)
- “Death Penalty Representation,” *SHSSW OADEI Newsletter*, December 2021
- Book Review of *Social Work, Criminal Justice, and the Death Penalty*, Oxford Press (Amicus Journal, Spring 2020)
- Co-author, *The Problem of “Rubber-Stamping” in State Capital Habeas Proceedings: A Harris County Case Study*, 55 Hous. L. Rev. 889 (2018)
- Co-author, Amicus Brief of the Capital Punishment Center in *Ayestas v. Davis*, 138 S.Ct. 1080 (2018)

PRESENTATIONS & TRAININGS

Steer Your Career, Steve Hicks School of Social Work Admitted Students Day, Austin, TX (Apr. 19, 2024)
Lecture, “*Capital Mitigation, Sentencing Advocacy, and Steve Hicks School of Social Work*”

AMICUS US Death Penalty Spring Training 2023, London, England (March 16-17, 2024)

March 16, 2024: “*Mitigation 101: Constructing a Case Narrative & Essential Tools*”

“*Investigation & Litigation of Mental Health & Trauma Issues in Capital Cases*”

“*Jury Selection Practice in Capital Cases*”

March 17, 2024: “*Getting in the Door: Investigation & Interviewing Skills*,” Co-Presenter, with Jim Marcus

“*Building & Maintaining Meaningful Client Relationships*”

Death Penalty in Texas – the “Top Killer State,” (March 12-15, 2024)

Guest Lecture, with Raoul Schonemann and Jim Marcus

March 12, 2024: *Cambridge University School of Law, Cambridge, England*

March 13, 2024: *University of Nottingham School of Law, Nottingham, England*

March 14, 2024: *Oxford University Centre for Criminology, Oxford, England*

March 15, 2024: *City University of London School of Law, London, England*

National Habeas Assistance and Training Mitigation Seminar, Philadelphia, PA (Feb. 23, 2024)

Co-presenter, “*Building Effective Mitigation Narratives*”

Mitigation Investigation & Presentation, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA (Oct. 5, 2023)

Guest Presenter, with Raoul Schonemann and Jamie Newsome

Law Students for Black Lives Discussion Series, Austin, TX (Sept. 26, 2023)

Discussant, “*The Recall*” *Documentary Viewing and Discussion*

National Habeas Assistance and Training Habeas Seminar, Cleveland, OH (Aug. 12, 2023)

Co-presenter, “*Conditions Litigation*”

Travis County Public Defender Summer Intern Program, Austin, TX (June 5, 2023)
Trainer/Presenter, “*All About Investigation: Concepts, Skills, and Strategies*”

Steer Your Career, Steve Hicks School of Social Work Admitted Students Day, Austin, TX (April 14, 2023)
Lecture, “*Capital Mitigation, Sentencing Advocacy, and Steve Hicks School of Social Work*”

AMICUS US Death Penalty Spring Training 2023, London, England via Zoom (March 25, 2023)
March 25, 2023: “*Report from the Field: Current State of the Death Penalty in the United States and Texas*”

Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty 25th Annual Conference, Austin, TX (February 25, 2023)
Panelist, “*Fueling Efforts to Stop Execution*”

“The Shape and Direction of the Death Penalty in Texas and the United States,” Austin, TX (February 16, 2023)
Co-presented with Capital Punishment Center faculty

National Habeas Assistance and Training Capital Mitigation Skills Seminar, Austin, TX (Jan. 15-18, 2023)
Presenter, “*Relevant Eighth Amendment and Constitutional Principles*”

National Defense Investigator Association Regional Conference, Austin, TX (September 8, 2022)
National Defense Investigator Association
Presenter, “*Narrative Investigation*”

“Dismantling Dehumanization” Mitigation Training, Baltimore, MD (June 2-4, 2022)
Advancing Real Change, Inc.
Panelist, “*Mitigation – Past, Present, & Future,*”
Moderator, “*Interdisciplinary Records Collection—Creativity & Collaboration*”

“Finding A Spark: Incorporating Social Workers into Law Clinics” (May 12, 2022)
AALS Annual Conference on Clinical Legal Education via Zoom
Co-presenter, with Elissa Steglich and Valerie Whiting

AMICUS US Death Penalty Spring Training 2022, London, England via Zoom (March 25-26, 2022)
March 25, 2022: “*Mitigation 101: Constructing a Case Narrative & Essential Tools*”
&
“*Report from the Field: Current State of the US Death Penalty - Texas*”
Co-Presenter, with Jim Marcus & Raoul Schonemann
March 26, 2022: “*Investigation and Litigation of Jury Issues in Capital Cases*”

“Death Penalty in the Shadow of COVID” Continuing Legal Education program (Oct. 20, 2020)
American Constitutional Society—Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter
Panelist

Recruitment, Training, and Retention of Mitigation Specialists (May 6, 2020)
National Habeas Assistance and Training Counsel/Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts
Panelist

Mitigation Matters: Using Your Social Work Degree to Tell Your Client's Story

DiNitto Center Career Services at UT School of Social Work Brown Bag Career Series

- Co-presenter, with Beth Donnan, UT MSW '18, (September 11, 2017)
- Co-presenter, with Randi Chavez, UT MSSW '03 & Miranda Nolen, UT MSSW '17 (March 22, 2018)
- Co-presenter, with Lindsey Hulett, UT MSSW '19, and Sarah Champ, UT MSSW '19 (March 12, 2019)
- Co-presenter, with Lindsey Hulett (November 11, 2019)

The American Death Penalty

Annual presentation to Argentinian governmental delegates, *Fundacion Universitaria del Rio de la Plata*

- June 2024
- April 2023
- January 2020
- May 2019
- February 2018
- February 2017

AMICUS US Death Penalty Spring Training 2020, London, England via Zoom (March 14 & 21-22, 2020)

March 14, 2020: “*Introduction to the US legal system: Constitution, government, and the Supreme Court*”

March 21, 2020: “*Social History, Mitigation, and Developing a Case Narrative*”

&

“*Mental Health Investigation and Litigating Mental Health Issues*”

March 22, 2020: “*Investigation and Litigation of Jury Issues in Capital Cases*”

Ryukoko University, Kyoto, Japan (June 16, 2018)

Co-discussant with Jim Marcus and Raoul Schonemann, “*Panel discussion: Capital Proceedings in the United States*”

Osaka Bar Association, Osaka, Japan (June 15, 2018)

Co-presenter with Jim Marcus and Raoul Schonemann, “*Overview of Contemporary Capital Proceedings in the United States*”

Japan Federation of Bar Association Lawyers, Tokyo, Japan (June 13, 2018)

Co-presenter with Jim Marcus and Raoul Schonemann, “*Overview of Contemporary Capital Proceedings in the United States*”

AWARDS

- Austin Community Law Center 2022 Rising Star Award
- Texas Law Fellowships Excellence in Public Interest Faculty Award 2019
- Women’s Law Caucus Award, Colorado Law Class of 2016

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- **National Habeas Assistance and Training Counsel, Capital Mitigation Skills Seminar**
Six-time faculty member, small group skills workshops
 - Kansas City, MO (May 17–20, 2018, and May 30–June 2, 2019)
 - Austin, TX (January 17–20, 2019, January 16–19, 2020, January 19-22, 2023 & May 18-21, 2023)
- **National Habeas Assistance and Training Counsel, “Race, Policing and Criminal ‘Justice’ in 2021” Virtual Seminar**
Small group facilitator
(June 3-4, 2021)
- **Bridging Disciplines Program**, University of Texas at Austin Department of Undergraduate Studies
Member, Criminal Legal System Certificate Development Subcommittee, 2022-23; Criminal Law, Justice, and Inequality Certificate Governing Committee, 2023-present
- **First Annual Social Work & Law Symposium**, Founding Organizing Committee Member (**Virtual, September 29-30, 2022**)
 - Crime and Courts Subcommittee Chair
 - Professional Development Coordinator
 - Student Mentoring Initiative Co-Coordinator
- **Second Annual Social Work & Law Symposium**, Organizing Committee Member (**Virtual, September 28-29, 2023**)
 - Crime and Courts Subcommittee Chair
 - Professional Development Coordinator
- **Second Annual Social Work & Law Symposium**, Organizing Committee Member (**Virtual, September 26-27, 2024**)
 - Professional Development Coordinator