



## ABRAMS CLINICAL FELLOWSHIP OPENING July 1, 2020

The Yale Information Society Project is now accepting applications for an Abrams Clinical Fellowship, beginning in July 2020. The Abrams Clinical Fellow will be a member of the [Media Freedom and Information Access Clinic](#) (MFIA), a law student clinic whose mission is to support robust investigative journalism, promote the public's right of access to information, and protect freedom of expression.

The ideal candidate will have at least two years relevant litigation experience, including some demonstrated interest in the fields of media law, First Amendment, FOIA, Internet law, administrative law, or intellectual property law.

### **About the MFIA Clinic**

Founded in 2009, MFIA was the first law school clinic dedicated to defending the rights of newsgatherers and promoting government transparency. It evolved out of the recognition that new technologies were forcing radical changes on the media market and leaving established news organizations in sufficiently precarious financial condition that they could neither afford to pursue the affirmative litigation essential to effective newsgathering nor vigorously fight efforts by governments and others to unmask confidential sources and prevent whistleblowing.

MFIA helps to fill these gaps by providing pro bono legal services to journalists, activists and academics who lack access to the legal service needed to exercise their First Amendment rights and to hold governments accountable. The Clinic advises on prepublication issues, pursues affirmative litigation to compel access to information and to enforce newsgathering rights, and defends against lawsuits seeking to punish newsworthy publications. MFIA also develops and implements litigation strategies and policy initiatives for achieving structural change in the rules governing government transparency and accountability.

MFIA is a program of the [Abrams Institute for Freedom of Expression](#) at Yale Law School and is administered by the [Yale Information Society Project](#) (ISP). Both the ISP and the Abrams Institute are directed by Knight Professor of Constitutional Law and the First Amendment Jack Balkin. The Clinic is directed by Abrams Clinical Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow David Schulz, an experienced media litigator and Senior Counsel to the Media Practice Group at Ballard Spahr, LLP.

Over the past decade, the MFIA Clinic has achieved successes for a wide range of clients, from individual journalists at start-up websites, to such major news organizations as *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, the Associated Press, and Pro Publica. It has also successfully represented a range of investigative advocacy clients, from individual civil rights activists to international rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Privacy International. The Clinic has a diverse docket organized loosely into four broad areas:

*Newsgathering and publication:* Defending those eligible for the protections afforded by the Constitution's press clause in a world where online publishing is widespread and

litigating issues that shape the ability of journalists to gather news, including prior restraints, privacy, and the use of new technologies. Current cases include challenges to state drone regulations that impede newsgathering, and to the abuse of governmental power to punish disfavored news reporting.

*Government accountability:* Securing information needed for democratic oversight of government operations at both the state and federal level. The Clinic's current focus includes case seeking to expose financial entanglements and conflicts of interest in government, to hold law enforcement and intelligence agencies accountable, and to support local investigative journalism in Connecticut, New York and New England.

*Constitutional access:* Enforcing and expanding the constitutional right of access to governmental proceedings and related records. Current matters include Section 1983 litigation to establish a constitutional right to information about state executions and to information about those placed under arrest, and motions seeking to define the scope of public access to classified or otherwise secret information placed into the records of court proceedings.

*Open data:* Ensuring access to scientific information and data vital to scientific advancement and proper science-based regulatory decisions. Current cases seek to achieve the level of access to medical data needed to ensure the integrity of the new drug approval process and to facilitate academic research.

MFIA also runs the "DocProject," a dedicated team of Yale law students working under the supervision of experienced media lawyers to advise documentarians and independent filmmakers during the production phase of their projects. The project provides advice on libel, privacy, and other newsgathering issues.

The [MFIA website](#) provides more detail about the Clinic's current caseload.

### **About the Abrams Clinical Fellowship**

MFIA seeks candidates for this position with at least two years of relevant experience who are interested in pursuing a career in litigation or public advocacy on issues surrounding digital age free expression and transparency within government, at a non-governmental organization, or as a law school clinical professor.

The Abrams Fellow will work closely with the Clinic's team of litigators, which currently includes Clinic Director [David Schulz](#) and three full-time Fellows. The fellowship provides the opportunity to gain hands-on experience litigating cutting edge issues, to supervise and teach law students, to work on legal scholarship, and to participate in the intellectual life of the Yale ISP.

The duties of the Abrams Fellow include:

- assuming overall responsibility for selected cases on the MFIA docket and supervising Yale Law School students in the Clinic;
- assisting the Clinic's intake process and shaping its docket;
- teaching several substantive and skill-based classes to students as part of the Clinic's weekly seminar;

- supervising summer law student interns at the Clinic and covering Clinic cases during semester breaks;
- coordinating the Freedom of Expression Scholars Conference hosted each Spring by the Abrams Institute;
- engaging in the scholarly activities of the ISP, which include regular academic lunches, workshops, conferences, and talks.

Fellows must live in the New Haven area during their fellowship. The fellowship starts on July 1 and lasts for one year, renewable for a second year. The salary for the Abrams Fellow will be \$75,000. Fellows also receive Yale health benefits and access to university facilities, as well as a travel budget for academic and clinic conferences.

### **Application Instructions**

Applications should be submitted by **February 1, 2020**. Applications should include:

- A one to five-page statement describing the applicant's interest in the fellowship, relevant practice experience, and career goals;
- A copy of the applicant's resume;
- A law school transcript; and
- At least one sample of recent legal writing, preferably a brief or memorandum.

*\*\*\*Please indicate clearly in your application materials that you are applying for the Abrams Clinical Fellowship\*\*\**

Application materials should be sent (in electronic form) to Heather Branch at [heather.branch@yale.edu](mailto:heather.branch@yale.edu).

For further information, please feel free to contact MFIA Clinic Director David Schulz at [david.schulz@yale.edu](mailto:david.schulz@yale.edu).

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