Welcome! Your first assignment consists of three parts: 1) a one- to two-page memo discussing your goals and expectations for the Mediation Clinic for Families, 2) an observation of a Circuit Court Family Division hearing and reflective memo; and 3) an outline of a hypothetical client interview plan. Each of these parts is described below in greater detail. Please note the due dates listed below for each part of the assignment.

Record all of the time that you spend on this first assignment and in preparing for supervision meetings. Once the semester starts you will transfer those hours to the electronic case management system.

PART I: REFLECTIVE MEMO – GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SEMESTER:

Craft a thoughtful one to two page memo reflecting on your goals and expectations for this semester in the Mediation Clinic for Families. Some questions to consider before writing:

- Why have you chosen to study the law and mediation at this point in your life?
- What are your learning goals for the next 3 months? 6 months? Year?
- What are you bringing from your life experience that will contribute to your client(s)?
- What do you need to learn that will make a difference to your work? What support do you need?

Submit your reflection memo by email to Professor Murphy and Hanan before 8 a.m., Monday, August 17, 2015.

PART II: VISIT THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR BALTIMORE CITY AND OBSERVE A CHILD ACCESS HEARING

Observe a Baltimore City Family Division Special Magistrate hearing involving child access (custody and visitation). These hearings typically are held by Magistrates William Dunn, Theresa Furnari, Andrea Kelly, and Hope Tipton in the hearing rooms you will report to during the semester for case referrals to mediate or represent a client in mediation. You should confirm with the Family Division that the Magistrates are in fact holding hearings before going to the
court. A list of the Magistrate’s locations and chamber phone numbers are in the Clinic manual at Appendix A2 and directions to the Circuit Court are on the orientation schedule.

Observe issues related not only to procedure, application of the rule of law, and court etiquette but also try to view the conflict, the process, and the parties with an eye towards the potential of alternative methods of dispute resolution. What is the interaction between the parties like? Who is in the best position to resolve this particular dispute? If the parties have attorneys present, what role are the attorneys playing? If no attorneys are present, does the dynamic change between the parties and also between the Court and the parties? When the parties talk, listen for values and feelings and determine whether they are being heard by the Magistrate. Finally, if a decision is made, what do you think about the resolution reached by the Magistrate; do you think it is a workable solution for the family?

Write a memo about this observation and submit it by email to Professor Murphy or Professor Hanan before your second supervision meeting, the week of August 24th. Keep the observation in mind when drafting the interview outline assigned in Part III.

PART III: INTERVIEWING A CLIENT WHO SEEKS LIMITED REPRESENTATION IN MEDIATION

Your clients in this clinic will be involved in child access disputes in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City and you will be representing your clients in a mediation setting. You will meet your first client in Circuit Court as part of the Pro Bono Family Mediation Project (PBFMP). To prepare for that meeting, develop a brief outline of your initial interview. What topics would you cover and what questions would you ask? Use the following resources to develop your interview plan:

1. Your knowledge of family law
2. Your observations at the Magistrate’s Hearing.
3. Information contained in the Manual for the Mediation Clinic for Families
4. Readings posted on TWEN:
   a. J. Nicholas Herman & William Cary, A Practical Approach to Client Interviewing, Counseling, and Decision-Making for Clinic Programs
   b. David Chavkin, Chapter 7: Interviewing

The purpose of this assignment is to get you thinking about how you will plan for your first interview with a client. Submit your interview outline by email to Professor Murphy or Professor Hanan before your second supervision meeting, the week of August 24th.