

Melia Cerrato

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Lewis & Clark Law School, Portland, OR

Assistant Professor of Law

June 2026- Present

Courses: Lawyering I

Tulane Law School, New Orleans, LA

Sunshine Legal Fellow

June 2023-August 2025

First Amendment Clinic: Litigated free speech cases in federal courts and public records cases in state court.

PUBLICATIONS & WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works in Progress

Censorship at Public Meetings: The Problems with Judicial Deference to Decorum

Articles

Equity in Education: Fixing Compensatory Education for Students with Disabilities, 2022 BYU EDUC. & L.J. 16 (2022).

Individual Liberties v. Federalism: Are Section 1983 Civil Rights Claims Under Attack by New Federalist Judges? 67 LOYOLA L. REV. 513 (2021).

EDUCATION

Loyola University New Orleans College of Law

J.D., magna cum laude, May 2021

Journals: *Loyola Law Review*, Symposium & Candidate Development Editor

Honors: Highest Grade: Environmental Justice, Seminar in Scholarly Writing: Law Review, Law & Education Seminar, Youth Justice Clinic & Successions, Ignatian Law Scholar, Crowe Scholar, & Jesuit Social Justice Scholar

- *Gillis Long Law Clerk*, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, Family Law Unit
- *Student Attorney*, Youth Justice Law Clinic Loyola University College of Law
- *Research Assistant*, Professor Hector Linares
- *Research Assistant*, Professor Rob Verchick
- *Research Assistant*, Professor Davida Finger
- *Research Assistant*, Professor Bill Quigley

Concordia University, Portland, Oregon

Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, cum laude

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Melia Cerrato, Attorney at Law, LLC

Private Practitioner

November 2021- June 2023, August 2025- June 2026

Advocated for clients with children who have disabilities, ensuring proper implementation of Individual Education Programs (I.E.P.) or 504 plans. Litigated due process claims before administrative law judges. Successfully negotiated settlement agreements for parents of children with disabilities against large Louisiana school districts. Represented citizens and organizations in access to public records.

Dovalina Law Group*Of Counsel*

April 2022- June 2023, August 2025- June 2026

Drafted dispositive motions, complaints, discovery requests, and other documents associated with an active law and motion practice in state and federal courts in cases brought under Title VII, the ADA, §504, and § 1983.

Disaster Lawyering Project at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law*Contract Attorney*

September 2021- October 2021

Assisted clients with FEMA claims after Hurricane Ida. Led outreach events to support individuals experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and Spanish-speaking immigrants with FEMA appeals.

Peace Corps, Machala, Ecuador*Youth and Family Development Specialist*

May 2015- December 2017

Taught training courses for community stakeholders and volunteers in Spanish and English. Created curriculum for and implemented community-action partnerships with local librarians to support them in implementing weekly sessions for children, youth, and the elderly. Facilitated a community bank with local women, taught finance skills, and built leadership skills within the nominated board to ensure fidelity and transparency to all bank members.

Certified SPED Educator at New Orleans Public Schools*Kindergarten through Fourth Grade Teacher*

July 2009- June 2014

SERVICE

- *Volunteer*, CourtWatch NOLA's report "COURTS IN REVIEW: A 2019 Analysis of New Orleans' Courts."
- *Member*, National Lawyers Guild, Louisiana Chapter

BAR ADMISSIONS

State of Louisiana, Admitted October 2021

Western District of Louisiana, Admitted September 2023

LANGUAGES

Proficient in Spanish