**SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION FOR LAWYER LEADERS**

**FALL 2023**

***Professor Joan M. Heminway Professor Nick McCall***

***Room 337 Room 332***

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**Class Syllabus and Course Outline**

Welcome to Small Group Communication for Lawyer Leaders! This course is designed to engage you in the exploration and practice of communication skills and methods important to leadership in small group situations common to lawyering and to the lives of lawyer leaders outside their workplaces. The overall goal is effective communication in small groups. Students who complete the course requirements will:

* Understand a variety of small-group contexts and dynamics in which lawyers are expected to lead, interact, and participate actively;
* Recognize the importance of audience and mission to effective communication and learn how to use each to advantage in effective small group communications;
* Recognize the value of the different types of communication (written, verbal, and nonverbal) that lawyers can use to lead effectively in small groups;
* Be in a position to identify and assess the legal and reputational risks and consequences of various communication methods and approaches;
* Understand and appreciate both the “black letter law” defining lawyer communications in small groups and more nuanced bases for lawyer participation in small group communications;
* Be familiar with ethical and professional responsibility issues that may arise in small-group interactions involving lawyers;
* Be better able to determine whether and if so, to whom, when, and how ideas or a message should be communicated to group members; and
* In general, be equipped to communicate appropriately as a lawyer with increased ease and impact in various common small group settings involving lawyers.

**Course materials**: *There is no required text for this course*. Core class preparation assignments and related guidance are provided in the “Covered Topics – Course Outline” part of this Class Syllabus and Course Outline. These assignments are subject to change. Changes will be announced in class, when possible, and posted on the course TWEN website.

**Grading**:Course grades will be based on your class participation in person and on the course TWEN website (**30%**) and your performance on a midterm email critique (**20%**) and a final written assignment reflecting on a local public small group meeting (**40%**). Details about the midterm and final assignments will be shared over the course of the semester.

**Guest Speakers**: Class sessions may include guest speakers. Please be prepared, respectful, and engaged during their time with us.

**Class meetings**: Class will meet in Room 342 on Wednesdays from 1:00 pm to 2:40 pm, beginning on August 16th and ending on September 27th.

**Office hours**: Professor Heminway has open office hours on Tuesdays (starting on August 22) from 9:00 am to 11:00 am and on Wednesdays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm (starting on August 23) in the College of Law Commons. Professor McCall has open office hours from 11:00 am to Noon on Wednesdays in his office, Room 332.

In addition, both of us will make every effort to be available to answer any questions or just to chat. You are welcome to stop by Professor Heminway’s office at any time without an appointment, but appointments are encouraged if you desire to secure a specific time.

**Attendance Policy; Assignments; General Expectations**: Attendance for this course will be taken on the law portal (<https://my.law.utk.edu/app/>). We expect you to attend all seven scheduled class meetings. Excused absences will be approved only for the most compelling reasons. We also expect you to complete and, as required, submit all course assignments on a timely basis or, as applicable, request and receive an extension of time to complete or submit the assignment. **Please note the assignment due dates included in this Class Syllabus and Course Outline in your planning calendars.**  Extensions must be requested *before* assignments are due, absent emergent circumstances.

**Laptops**: This course involves significant time in which laptop usage is not permitted, to facilitate the further development of listening skills (which are, of course, critical to effective communication). Please let either Professor Heminway or Professor McCall know if you have questions or concerns about this course policy.

**Generative Artificial Intelligence**: Our learning objectives for you in this course are rooted in natural human interactions. As a result, we require that all submitted work for the course be produced by you yourself, individually (or, as required or permitted, in collaboration with others in the course). Accordingly, you are not permitted to seek the assistance of generative AI tools like ChatGPT. Use of a generative AI tool to complete an assignment constitutes academic dishonesty. However, if you identify an opportunity in the course to use a generative AI tool productively to engage small group communication, please bring it to our attention for discussion and assessment. We are open to uses of these tools that may be productive to small group communication in a professional context, lawyering in general, and your professional development.

**Civil, Inclusive Professional Environment**: Our classroom and course website are professional education and work settings within our overall College of Law community. As such, they are places for open, frank, and sometimes difficult conversations and debates. Respect, inclusion, reflection, and tolerance are values inherent to this environment. Each class member is responsible for upholding these values in communications and other conduct. In addition, please note the campus principles of civility and community: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

Please help us in creating a welcoming, engaged, and productive environment for all class members**. If you prefer the use of a specific name or pronoun, please let us know and we will be glad to accommodate your request.** Also, please offer help in pronouncing your name correctly—either in advance or through critical feedback. Moreover, given the existence of blind spots, please reach out to either of us if anything one of us says or does is hurtful or inappropriate.

**Community Health**:Please do not attend class if you are ill. We can record all or part of a class meeting if we are notified in advance.

**Covered Topics – Course Outline**

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| ***Date*** | ***Coverage Topics*** | ***Assignment*** |
| 8/16 | *Course Introduction/**Communication Matrices* | Please register for our TWEN website [here](https://lawschool.westlaw.com/twen/). Then, please watch this [Simon Sinek TED talk](https://embed.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action) and this [Emergent Leadership in Groups video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuqeMShuQsU&list=PLvkPI8QIE9MJ0HXoAWAZVfNSix1uMjgxc&index=27) and read:* [*Small Group Communication: Chapter 1*](https://pressbooks.pub/smallgroup/chapter/introduction/#:~:text=Small%20group%20communication%20refers%20to,influence%2C%20and%20a%20shared%20identity); and
* Chapter 5 from Teague et al. (available in the Course Materials area on the TWEN website).

                                               Also, please review the Office Child Care Scenario posted in the Course Materials area on the TWEN website and post at least one small group communication scenario of your own in the Small Group Communication Scenarios area of the TWEN website. The scenario(s) you post should involve a small group setting that includes at least one lawyer. Give each scenario a descriptive title in the Document Title text box and upload the scenario in word format. We will use the Office Child Care Scenario in class on the first day and other scenarios—including potentially some of yours—in the course from time to time. |
| 8/23 | *Knowing Your Crowd & Your Mission* | Please read:* Chapters 19 and 20 from Teague et al.;
* Pp.10-15 & Chapter 5 from Fujishin; and
* *Why Should Anyone Be Led by You?*

All of these readings are available in the Course Materials area on the TWEN website. Come to class prepared to discuss your observations about how the nature of a group and its objectives impact the ability of a group member to communicate as a leader. |
| 8/30 | *Written Communication* | Please read: * [*Writing an Interoffice Memo*](https://resources.nu.edu/writingresources/officememo);
* [*Legal Form, Style, and Etiquette for Email*](https://ir.law.utk.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1297&context=transactions); and
* [*A Complete Guide for Lawyers Texting Clients*](https://www.clio.com/blog/lawyer-texting/?amp).

In addition, please review the Email Message String posted in the Course Materials area of the TWEN website and come to class prepared to critique these communications based on your class preparation to date and your accumulated experience. |
| 9/6 | *Verbal Communication* | Please watch this [Vivian Ta TED talk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laDnZ_FWyhM), listen to [*The “Neutral” Umpires of the Supreme Court*](https://scholars.org/podcast/neutral-umpires-supreme-court), and read Chapter 1 of Berger (available in the Course Materials area on the TWEN website).As you watch, listen, and read, consider ways in which verbal communication can lead effectively in a small group setting. Bring your notes to class. |
| 9/8 | *Midterm Email Critique* | Please submit your midterm email critique in the TWEN dropbox at or before 11:59 pm on this date. The assignment requirements are outlined in a separate assignment document posted in the Assignments area on the TWEN website. |
| 9/13 | *Nonverbal Communication* | Please watch this [Amy Cuddy TED talk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc);), listen to this [podcast featuring Barbara Tannenbaum](https://this-shit-works.captivate.fm/episode/persuasive-communication-with-dr-barbara-tannenbaum), and read:* Pp. 338-40 from Teague et al.; and
* Ch. 7 from Scott.

Both of these readings are available in the Course Materials area on the TWEN website. Reflect on how the assigned materials might help you to use, interpret, and evaluate nonverbal cues and signals. Consider any nonverbal “warning signs” a speaker should avoid conveying because they may cause a listener to reject the speaker’s leadership in a small group setting.This class meeting also will include a discussion of the final reflection paper, due October 20. You will be offered materials and tools to help you prepare for that assignment in connection with the discussion. |
| 9/20 | *Lawyer Professional Responsibilities Relating to Communication* | Please read [*Building an Ethical Small Group* (Chapter 9 ofMeeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership)](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1093&context=gfsb) and Rules 1.6, 1.9, 1.10, and 4.1 of the [Tennessee Rules of Professional Conduct](https://www.tncourts.gov/rules/supreme-court/8) (including the related comments). Also, please consider the potential applicability of these and other Tennessee professional conduct rules (including those listed in the Selected Relevant Tennessee Rules of Professional Conduct document available in the Course Materials area of the TWEN website) in small group communication contexts involving lawyers.In addition, please read and consider the Ethics Scenarios in the Course Materials area of the TWEN website. Come to class prepared to work through these scenarios in a small group setting. |
| 9/27 | *Revisiting Communication Matrices and Values/Concluding Reflections* | Please listen to: [*Am I using my morals as a weapon or a gift?*](https://baker.utk.edu/podcast/am-i-using-my-morals-as-a-weapon-or-a-gift/) and read:* [*The Effective Lawyer: Communication, Cultural Competence, and Civility*](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/government_public/publications/public-lawyer/2023-winter/effective-lawyer-communication-cultural-competence-civility/); and
* [*Well-developed communications skills are fundamentally important for in-house counsel*](https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/legal/in-house-counsel-communications-skills/).

Please note that the latter reading has broader applicability than its title would suggest—in other words, it offers much to lawyers who are not in-house counsel.What do the assigned materials confirm, reject, or add to the wisdom you have gained from this course? Note your observations. Why? Which materials provide an illustration of or support for your observations?Based on what you have learned to date in this course and your experiential wisdom, what tips would you add to [our accumulated list of small group communication tips](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1msgjnmqv1sqZLuVHxP689qpebXM2FzUgFoPIDW0VLGo/edit)? What refinements would you make to our pre-existing tips? Come to our class meeting with a list of your observations, additions, and refinements and be prepared to discuss which Coverage Topics in this course relate to these tips and others on our list.  |
| 10/20 | *Final Reflection Paper* | Please submit your final reflection assignment to the TWEN dropbox. The assignment requirements are outlined in a separate assignment document posted in the Assignments area on the TWEN website. |