

Attorney Communication & Persuasion



2024

Attorney Communication & Persuasion

Course Information and Syllabus

Instructors: Jim Lawrence: jelawrence@uh.edu
Karen Jones: kjones15@central.uh.edu

Office Hours: Since this course is being offered in the evening, there won't be set office hours. However, we are available to meet with students when requested.

Textbook: None. Reading materials for the class will be posted on the course website. Reading materials not posted to the link can be accessed through Lexis or Westlaw.

This course is designed to help you understand the dynamics of communication and persuasion – both the psychological dynamic and the presentation dynamic. Each class meeting will address one or two specific communication and persuasion techniques and you will perform exercises designed to increase your individual skill development for each technique. There will be predetermined techniques (see the syllabus), we may insert additional techniques as necessary. Professors Jones and Lawrence each bring years of advocacy experience AND years of professional theatre training to their approach to the class.

This course is applicable to ALL law students. It is not focused on litigation advocacy.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Through this course, and by the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Learn the basic tools necessary for attorneys to become better communicators.
- Gain insights into the psychology of communication.
- Gain insights into the psychology of persuasion.
- Successfully demonstrate basic mastery of each of the predetermined techniques.
- Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in a group setting through a group presentation.

Grading

There will be 4 data points in the grading rubric, and they are:

- 1) **Professionalism and Participation (25% of total grade)**
- 2) **Skill Assessment: Storytelling (20% of total grade)**
- 3) **Skill Assessment: Group Presentation (25% of total grade)**
- 4) **Final Presentation (30% of total grade)**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the “Let’s Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html.

Sexual Misconduct Policy

The University is committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational, working and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from discrimination and sexual misconduct. If you have experienced an incident of discrimination or sexual misconduct, there is a confidential reporting process available to you. For more information, please refer to the University system’s Anti-Discrimination Policy SAM 01.D.07 and Sexual Misconduct Policy SAM 01.D.08, available here:

<http://www.uhsystem.edu/compliance-ethics/uhs-policies/sams/01-general-information/index.php>

<http://www.uhsystem.edu/compliance-ethics/docs/sam/01/1d7.pdf>

(antidiscrimination)

<http://www.uhsystem.edu/compliance-ethics/docs/sam/01/1d8.pdf> (sexual misconduct)

Please be aware that under the sexual misconduct policy, SAM 01.D.08, faculty are required to report to the University any information received regarding sexual misconduct as defined in the policy. Please note that the reporting obligations under the sexual misconduct policy reach to employees and students. Also, as a required reporting party, Law Center employees and faculty members are not a confidential resource.

Names and Pronouns

Chosen names and preferred pronouns (including non-binary ones such as they/them/their) must be respected in this classroom. Please feel free to reach out to us at any time if you want to make us aware of your chosen name or preferred pronoun, or if you have concerns about how we or your classmates address you.

A note from the University of Houston:

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Course Schedule

- May 13** Course Introduction
Technique: Using Your Voice (inflection, tone, etc.)
- May 14** Technique: Using Your Body (gestures, body language, movement, etc.)
- May 15** Technique: Being in the Moment (Improvisation, etc.)
- May 16** Technique: Using “Story” as a Persuasive Tool
- May 20** Skill Assessment: Storytelling
- May 21** Technique: How to Ask Good Questions
Group Presentation Workshop
- May 22** Skill Assessment: Group Presentation
Final Presentation Workshop
- May 23** Skill Assessment: Final Presentation