



YLW

Yale Law Women

5 Easy Tips for Equitable and Effective Class Participation

Establish Good Norms. Don't wait too long to speak in class. Break the ice by speaking early. The longer you wait to raise your hand, the harder it may feel to enter the conversation.

Be Proactive about Professor Face Time. Class participation involves more than raising your hand and speaking in class. It also includes one-on-one interactions with your professors, so seek them out. You are entitled to their time and attention. Commit to attending office hours at least once (and don't give up if the first visit is awkward). Think outside the box—you can also use informal events to get to know professors.

Be Kind to Others. Telling a classmate you appreciated the comment they made in class goes a long way toward building that classmate's confidence. In addition, be sensitive to the classroom dynamic. Try not to dominate classroom discussion, be aware of how your comments affect your classmates, and don't interrupt others while they're speaking.

Be Kind to Yourself. Give yourself a generous margin of error. The law school environment is new for everyone, and we all deserve and require time and space to get comfortable. Don't be afraid to ask for help, and don't feel you need to apologize for your classroom contributions.

Establish Support Systems. Participation is a group effort! Form an outline group early in the semester, get together with friends 10 minutes before class to talk about the readings and generate questions for class, ask other students for tips, and/or use the YLW Outline Bank (it's not just for exams).