

**PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY FORMATION**  
**POL5200 01**  
**Professor Stephanie Clark**  
**Fall 2024**

**SYLLABUS**

**CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS**

- Professor Clark:
  - Email (preferred): [sclark@vermontlaw.edu](mailto:sclark@vermontlaw.edu)
  - Office phone: (802) 831-1315

**Office Hours:**

- Professor Clark – By appointment, please email to set up a time.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course sets the stage for students to embark on their professional journeys and enhance their professional skills. Professional identity formation involves an internalization of a deep responsibility to people and issues one plans to serve. This course begins, or furthers, the development of students' sense of self as a professional and addresses concrete skill development including basic workplace etiquette and communication, as well as organization teamwork, and reputation building.

This Syllabus, and other important documents and information, are posted on **Canvas** (the course web site). Enrolled students must either check Canvas on a regular basis, or sign up for Canvas updates to be sent via email.

**MATERIALS & ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Friday 9/13:**

GWU School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, SEAS Careers, ***“What is a professional identity, and why is it important?”*** <https://careers.seas.gwu.edu/blog/2022/11/23/building-and-refining-your-professional-identity/#:~:text=Seek%20out%20opportunities,-The%20more%20opportunities&text=Internships%2C%20extracurriculars%2C%20and%20volunteering%20are,with%20your%20area%20of%20study>

***What Is a Law Student’s Professional Identity and What Is Professional Identity Formation? -***  
- A Short Introduction Holloran Center – September 2022: [Holloran Center PIF Definition Law School Context](#)

Fitzpatrick, M., & Queenan, R. (2021). Professional identity formation, leadership and exploration of self. *UMKC Law Review*, 89(3), 539-558.  
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/umkc89&id=505&collection=journals&index=>

**Assignment:** Write down three identities you currently have/hold, and bring them to class. For example, I identify as a professor, a mother, and a daughter. Please choose identities that are central to who you are, and think about why you chose those identities over others (for example, I am also a spouse, a friend, and an outdoor enthusiast).

**Saturday, 9/14:** Will be posted in Canvas by 8/30.

## SELF ASSESSMENT

For this class, attendance and participation are mandatory, but the assessment is your own (no final exam, paper, or presentation!). Instead, as this class is designed to bridge a gap between graduate education and your professional journey beyond, you will be developing awareness and skills to begin or further cultivate the person you want to be in your profession. Only you can decide whether your engagement is successful toward these objectives. I hope and expect that you will think about the content we explore together in class, long after the class has ended.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### Attendance

**Class attendance is mandatory.** The attendance policy is explained in more detail in the Vermont Law and Graduate School Student Handbook II.A., which provides that a student will receive a grade of F-Wd (failure withdrawal) if they are absent from 20% of regularly scheduled classes. Please read the full attendance policy posted in the Handbook before the beginning of the term.

**With the condensed nature of this class, it will be crucial to reach out *in advance* to the Vice Dean for Students, Joseph Brennan, if you anticipate an absence due to a health issue or, at the last minute due to other extraordinary circumstances beyond your control.**

You may also contact Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Lisa Ryan for any accommodation requests. You can review our accommodations policy, and all policies and procedures, in the Student Handbook.

### Class Preparation and Participation

You are expected to be prepared for class and to participate. This class will be workshop oriented, with engagement being an integral component. We will be taking breaks due to the

condensed schedule. In class, please be respectful and patient. Some of our conversations will likely strike very personal chords – we are talking about ourselves, after all – so please be thoughtful of the context of the class, and share things within the context of understanding and building a professional identity.

### Email and Canvas

Canvas is a learning management system (LMS). Many faculty create a Canvas course web page for documents and other materials. You will be automatically enrolled in the course Canvas site, but it is your responsibility to verify that the email address registered with Canvas is one that you can access and check frequently for course updates. You can access your Canvas settings by clicking “Account” on the top left side of the Dashboard screen, beneath the VLGS logo.

You should check Canvas periodically for updates that are posted under [Announcements](#). This Syllabus and related materials are posted there as well, under correspondingly named tabs. Other resources are also posted there. You are responsible for the materials posted under the tabs: [Announcements](#), [Syllabus](#), and Required Course Materials under [Files](#). If we use any recordings and or PowerPoint slides, they will be available after class on our Canvas site.

I use the Announcements function on Canvas to communicate with the class. You should check your VLGS email regularly to ensure that you do not miss any important Announcements. The VLGS email system is an official method of communication at VLGS and for this course. It is the primary way that I communicate with you outside class. You are expected to check your VLGS email on a regular basis. This means at least once a day and probably more often on class days.

The use of the internet or email during class is forbidden, unless I indicate otherwise. Texting during class is also prohibited.

### **COPYRIGHT**

All materials (written and recorded) in this course, including those on the course web site, are copyrighted. This also includes any recording of the class by the professor, any student, or any other person. These materials are only for the use of the individual student enrolled in this course and may not be reproduced or distributed without the express written consent of the professor.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand that how they communicate and perform academic tasks reflects how they are perceived as competent and responsible professionals;
2. Recognize the Academic Regulations and Honor Code expectations of VLGS; and
3. Formulate plans for how they will demonstrate their professional competencies through their personal professional ethos.

These outcomes will be achieved through reading, discussion and collaboration, responding to objective questions, developing skills in a workshop setting allowing students to internalize important facets of professionalism.

## **OUR “ROADMAP” FOR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY FORMATION**

### Day 1

- Welcome and Introductions
- Identities and values
- Professional Identity Formation competencies, generally:
  - Self-evaluation and reflection
  - Values alignment
  - Collaboration
- Professionalism v. Being Professional
- Sense of Self, and Your Story

### Day 2

- Professionalism (cont.)
  - Ethics: integrity
  - Public service
  - Academic Regulations, the Honor Code, and Other Codes of Ethics
- Building a Professional Ethos
  - Initiative
  - Drive
  - Work Ethic
  - Commitment to Professional Development Goal Setting
- Identifying Goals
- Identifying and Building Essential Skills
- Networking
- Teams and teamwork

*See you soon!*