

Law 4122: Judging the Jury
Professor Valerie Hans, Cornell Law School
Spring 2012
The Group Project – Jury Representativeness

In this project, your group will tackle one of the most challenging problems facing the contemporary American jury system today – how to encourage full participation from all segments of the community. Over the next few weeks, as we discuss issues of jury selection and you do research for your group project, you'll learn that although the ideal of the representative jury is very attractive, it's also notoriously difficult to produce in reality.

Court officials, legal professionals, scholars, and jury commissioners have all tried many approaches to try to get people to respond to jury qualification questionnaires and summons for jury duty. You'll learn about their efforts over the next few weeks. Many of their efforts have resulted in notable improvements in response rates and in the representativeness of the jury pools. We have much more representative juries now than in the past. But we're not there yet, as the New York state report and Monroe County report indicate.

That's where you come in! Your group assignment is to develop one or more creative ideas for increasing the response to jury qualification questionnaires and jury summons in New York. You will write a 500 word group blog post and make a class presentation about your ideas.

I have used Blackboard to randomly assign our class into 10 groups (much like a jury wheel might randomly assign citizens into juries). We all want these groups to work to their maximum potential, so our class will use approaches recommended by Cornell's Center for Teaching Excellence to promote excellent group work. First, your group will identify and agree to a set of group rules. I will set aside some class time for your groups to confer, to minimize problems that might occur if your group members have conflicting class or work schedules. I have also made available all the Blackboard tools you might use to develop your project (wikis, email, discussions, etc.). To ensure full participation by all group members, each group member will take on specific roles during the project. In addition, to make sure that everyone contributes to the group products, there will be an opportunity for confidential peer evaluation at the conclusion of the group project. Each of the two group products (blog post, presentation) will be given a group grade, but in addition, the peer evaluations will be factored into each individual's grade.

More details on the 500 word blog post, and on the class presentation, will be coming. For now, start by doing background research and brainstorming about ideas!

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The Group Project on Jury Representativeness – More Details

Your group assignment is to develop one or more creative ideas for increasing the response to jury qualification questionnaires and jury summons in New York. You will write a 500 word group blog post and make a class presentation about your ideas.

Last week, I used Blackboard to randomly assign our class into 10 groups (much like a jury wheel might randomly assign citizens into juries). In class, students from each group with all members present developed and signed their team expectations agreements. Those are now distributed to each group member from those groups. The groups with missing members are to complete and sign the agreements and turn them in during class on Tuesday, February 21.

Over the next 3 class periods (February 21, 23, and 28), I will set aside a minimum of 30 minutes during each class for your group to work, to minimize problems that might occur if your group members have conflicting class or work schedules. Blackboard tools are also available for your use in developing your project (wikis, email, discussions, etc.).

All of you will share in doing background research and brainstorming for your project. There is a lot to research, so it makes sense to divide the work up fairly.

In addition, as recommended by Cornell's Center for Teaching Excellence, to ensure full participation by all group members, each group member will take on specific roles during the project. The idea behind adopting these roles is to promote smooth group functioning. As you will see, each role has an important and distinct contribution to make to the group project.

The roles for the blog post are:

Facilitator/Chair: takes chief organizing role for the group; ensures that everyone is involved and participating; organizes and chairs the group meetings; allocates tasks (e.g. reading and research) so that they are distributed fairly.

Recorder: takes notes of the group's in-person and email discussions; summarizes the notes and group discussions; distributes notes and summaries to group members

Drafter: Writes first draft of the blog post, based on notes, summaries, and group discussions, and distributes it to group members

Editor: solicits feedback from group members on first draft; edits, corrects, and polishes the first draft of the blog post and distributes to group members; posts the blog post when all group members are satisfied (deadline: February 28).

As you work together to prepare your 5 minute group presentation, you may keep the same roles or switch roles (e.g. the recorder becomes the drafter of the PowerPoint slides or other material for the presentation). All group members should take part in some way in the classroom presentation itself (deadline: in class March 1 – any PowerPoint slides or other audio or visual material should be preloaded in advance of the class period).

Grading

Each of the two group products (blog post, presentation) will be given a group grade, but in addition, the confidential peer evaluations, done at the conclusion of the group project, will be factored into each individual's grade.

The blog post will be evaluated in terms of the creativity, quality, and support for the ideas presented, as well as the standard criteria for a written product. The blog post should be well-written. Be sure it fulfills the following:

- It includes a short but engaging introduction, which states the main topic or theme, and previews the structure of the blog post.
- The paragraphs are well-developed; they include supporting details and sentences that develop the main idea in each paragraph.
- The paragraphs are organized in a clear and sensible structure.
- The blog post ends with a concise conclusion, perhaps one that emphasizes its major take-away point.
- The blog post is free of errors in sentence structure, word usage, punctuation, and spelling.
- The blog post is no more than (and not substantially less than) 500 words.

Books on reserve for *Judging the Jury*

I've placed some books on reserve in the Law School library. These books summarize potentially relevant lines of research in several fields: from political science, work on public participation; from social psychology, work on persuasion and compliance; from behavioral economics, work on the factors that influence people's decisions. Don't feel limited by these choices – you come from a variety of fields, any of which might have relevant insights you can apply to the problem of encouraging full participation in jury duty.

1. Ariely, Dan. *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*.
2. Boatright, Robert G. *Improving Citizen Response to Jury Summonses. A Report with Recommendations*.
3. Cialdini, Robert B. *Influence: How and Why People Agree to Things*.
4. Cialdini, Robert B. *Influence: Science and Practice*.
5. Rosenstone, Steven J. *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*.
6. Thaler, Richard H., & Sunstein, Cass. *Nudge*.
7. Verba, Sydney. *Voice and Equality*.

Our Blackboard website (under Assignments; Jury Representativeness Project) also has a substantial number of relevant articles, news clippings, and other useful resources.

**Judging the Jury: Confidential Peer Evaluation
Group Project on Jury Representativeness
Professor Valerie Hans, Spring 2012**

To ensure that your groups work to their maximum potential, our class is employing approaches recommended by Cornell’s Center for Teaching Excellence to promote excellent group work, including agreed-upon group rules, classroom meeting time, Blackboard tools, and confidential peer evaluation. Peer evaluations will be factored into each individual’s grade. Below are different skills and other contributions that students bring to the group’s work. On the next page, please rate each of your group members on a 1-4 scale for each of the different skills.

Skills	4 Advanced and/or exceeds expectations	3 Competent and/or meets expectations	2 Progressing and/or does not fully meet expectations	1 Beginning and/or does not meet expectations
Contributions, Attitude	Always willing to help and do more, routinely offered useful ideas. Always displays positive attitude.	Cooperative, usually offered useful ideas. Generally displays positive attitude.	Sometimes cooperative, sometimes offered useful ideas. Rarely displays positive attitude.	Seldom cooperative, rarely offers useful ideas. Is disruptive.
Cooperation with Others	Did more than others- highly productive Works extremely well with others, never argues	Did their part of the work- cooperative. Works well with others, rarely argues.	Could have done more of the work- has difficulty, requires structure, directions and leadership, sometimes argues.	Did not do any work- does not contribute, does not work well with others, usually argues with teammates.
Focus, Commitment	Tries to keep people working together. Almost always focused on the task and what needs to be done. Is very self-directed.	Does not cause problems in the group. Focuses on the task and what needs to be done most of the time. Can count on this person.	Sometimes not a good team member. Sometimes focuses on the task and what needs to be done. Must be prodded and reminded to keep on task.	Often is not a good team member. Does not focus on the task and what needs to be done. Lets others do the work.
Team Role Fulfillment	Participated in all group meetings, assumed leadership role as necessary. Did the work that was assigned by the group.	Participated in most group meetings. Provided leadership when asked. Did most of the work assigned by the group	Participated in some group meetings. Provided some leadership. Did some of the work assigned by the group.	Participate in few or no group meetings. Provided no leadership. Did little or no work assigned by the group.
Ability to Communicate	Always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Provided effective feedback to other members. Relays a great deal of information- all relates to the topic.	Usually listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Sometimes talks too much. Provided some effective feedback to others. Relays some basic information – most relates to the topic.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Usually does most of the talking- rarely listens to others. Provided little feedback to others. Relays very little information – some relates to the topic.	Rarely listens to, shares with, or supports the efforts of others. Is always talking and never listens to others. Provided no feedback to others. Does not relay any information to teammates.
Correctness	Work is complete, well organized, no errors and is done on time or early.	Work is generally complete, meets the requirements of the task, and is mostly done on time.	Work tends to be disorderly, incomplete, not accurate and is usually late.	Work is generally sloppy and incomplete, excessive errors and is mostly late or not at all.

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Your name: _____ Your group number: _____

Using the table below, please rate each of your group members on each skill using the 1-4 scale (4 is best, 1 is worst).

SKILL	Group member's name:	Group member's name:	Group member's name:	Group member's name:
Contributions, attitude				
Cooperation with others				
Focus, commitment				
Team role fulfillment				
Ability to communicate				
Correctness				
TOTAL SCORE (add up)				

Your optional comments about your group, individual peer evaluations, or the group project more generally: