

“RUN THAT CITE BY THE GUYS IN CORPORATE!”

**LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
WITH AMERICAN LAWYERS AND CLIENTS**

Anyone who works abroad knows that learning a language is not the same thing as understanding how to communicate effectively. Lawyers and business professionals who have studied English as a second language may speak and write with near-perfect grammar and an advanced vocabulary. Yet in business and legal settings with American clients, customers, and colleagues, they may often find, through no fault of their formal education, that they still lack the ability to connect successfully with their audiences. This is a series of writing and speaking courses that offer a new cultural approach to communication to bridge the gap.

Americans can be notoriously hard people with whom to communicate. Part of the problem is that part of the non English-speaking world is still taught “the Queen’s English” or some antiquated version of British or American English concocted by local academics or government officials rather than more natural contemporary English. Many foreign lawyers are also trained in a civil system where they aren’t taught how to make effective arguments in the American common law style and aren’t familiar with how American lawyers and their clients use memos, email, or telephone communication in real life.

Yet the larger problem is that effective communication with Americans is about a lot more than simply words. It entails understanding the unique way Americans think and approach the legal, political, and business world. To Japanese and Chinese, learning to be as direct as an American can involve nothing less than a kind of personal transformation, at odds with the essence of their own native cultures. Danes or Swedes can be surprised to learn that in the US, it’s often considered quick rather than rude to interrupt a speaker in an informal conversation. Even reminding Italians that hand gestures will be less useful in getting their message across to Americans (let’s face it – gestures are not of much use in telephone conferencing) entails an understanding of why Americans think Ronald Reagan communicated far more effectively than Winston Churchill ever did or why Oprah Winfrey annually wins the national survey of the “most admired American.” In an ideal world, Americans would incorporate some of the civility and eloquence of other cultures. But in reality, most

Americans assume without realizing it that everyone understands their unique way of communicating.

Yes, the United States is a huge diverse place and you don't have to know the facts of *Erie v. Tompkins*, become addicted to your "Blackberry," or watch "CSI" to communicate effectively with American lawyers and their clients. But you'll be a lot better speaker and writer in these contexts if you learn what American lawyers and their clients are like – no matter how trivial it may seem. Americans speak and write the way they do because of who they are.

In this unique series of courses you will learn:

Writing

- How to get to the point quickly
- How the common law system changes the way lawyers trained in the civil system should write
- How to write better research memos, letters, and email in an American style
- How computers have changed the American way of writing and legal research
- How to convey complex ideas in a simpler manner
- How to format to make your point more clearly
- How to use storytelling the way Americans do
- How style differs in the US from region to region
- How to make your point directly without making enemies
- Contract drafting in English
- How to present written legal arguments that will resonate in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles as well as they did in their native language in Paris, Tokyo, or Sao Paulo

Speaking

- How to improve your voice, presentation style, and delivery so it fits with the informal American approach
- How television defines for Americans the essence of good communication
- How American humor differs from that of the rest of the world
- How to get to the point quickly

- How to use an interpreter
- How American women present themselves differently from their counterparts around the world
- How to sound on the telephone and in teleconferencing
- Why Americans are hooked on visual aids and PowerPoint
- How to use your accent to your advantage

These courses are designed to meet the professionalism and “elimination of bias” CLE requirements of state bars in the U.S.

The Instructor

Steven Stark, the instructor, has a vast background in the fields of legal writing, communication and inter-cultural studies and has taught writing and speaking to thousands of lawyers, judges, and government officials. A lawyer and former Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School where he gave several upper-level courses on writing and speaking (including a workshop to international LLM students), he is the author of three books, including the highly-acclaimed “Writing to Win: The Legal Writer” (Doubleday). He has been a commentator for CNN, National Public Radio, the BBC, and the Voice of America, where his role was to try to interpret American culture to the rest of the world. A former speechwriter and issues aide to Jimmy Carter, he has been a columnist for the Boston Globe and Montreal Star and has written extensively on American culture in such publications as the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post, and the Atlantic Monthly. He has taught hundreds of speaking and writing courses all over the world. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School.

Who Should Take These Courses?

These courses are intended for two types of audiences. They are designed in the U.S. for those international lawyers who have recently been transferred to the United States. In the rest of the world, they are geared to lawyers who are proficient in English and work in U.S. businesses or firms, or deal frequently with Americans or Canadians.

One-day courses can be taught separately on writing or speaking, or as a combination of the two. In-house courses for law firms, consulting firms, or in corporations that work in specific areas such as pharmaceuticals or information technology are tailored to the particular needs and expectations of the participants in those fields. In corporate workshops or in-house settings, the usual arrangement is to solicit samples in advance from as many participants as possible so the course can be geared to the specific needs of the firm. After the group session, personal meetings are scheduled individually with as many lawyers as possible to go over their writing. Follow-up by phone and email is provided as necessary.

Contact information

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