

## Tips on Using Zoom

A few recent lessons in case they are helpful:

- (1) I've decided to urge my students, *prior to my first Zoom session with them*, to think about how they'll take notes. If they're using just one device and are trying to use that one device to receive the Zoom feed, take notes, look at course documents, and the like, they've got their hands full—perhaps too full. Some students say they'll need to start relying on handwritten notes. Some students say they have multiple devices and will work it out that way. Some students say that, with some playing around, they can make it work all on one device. Some students will use two monitors, but not all students are so electronically blessed. But it seems clear that they need to think about this ahead of time.
- (2) I learned a lot simply by setting up a meeting just for myself and then fiddling around with the controls. You won't have access to certain things if you're the only participant in a practice meeting, but you can still learn a lot. I just put a Zoom meeting on my Outlook calendar and have kept returning to that Zoom link when there's something I want to try out. Those links work outside the calendared time period—I'm still using a calendared link from last Wednesday or Thursday when there's something I want to try. I think those links remain usable for 30 days, unless you've set it up to be a "recurring" meeting in which case I think it lasts a full year.
- (3) There are some handy shortcut keys that will help spare your students from just watching you peer at the screen looking for one thing or another. There are lots of them, but here are the ones I was glad to find (all of which work on my PC—don't know about Mac):
  - Simply hitting the Alt key makes the Zoom control bar appear and disappear.
  - Alt-M will Mute All and Unmute All other participants (but not your own mic).
  - Alt-U will open and close the Manage Participants box (the box where you can see the names of all participants, see raised hands, unmute or mute individual participants, etc.).
  - Alt-S will turn Share Screen on and off, which makes it much faster for you to get to anything you want to show them if you're using visuals other than your own talking head.
  - Alt-H will open and close the Chat box on your screen (other participants have to open or close the Chat box for themselves on their own devices).
- (4) You can adjust the Chat setting so that students can only send messages *to you*. Unless you activate that setting, they will be able to use the Chat feature to talk to each other, and they'll also be able to use it to send each other private messages that you can't see. Some of you might like students to have that freedom, but others of us will be eager to disable that feature.
- (5) The students have a Record button on their control panel, but it won't let them record the session unless you authorize it.
- (6) Among the Share Screen options is a Whiteboard, and it's pretty cool – you can type or draw in real time, and under the Format tab you can adjust the font size/color of what you're typing. My test-drive students thought 36 was about the right font size—the default is smaller.
- (7) If you're a PowerPoint user (I'm not, but will probably take a minimalist step in that direction for some parts of my online classes, in part because asking them to spend 90 minutes looking at a

screen narrowly focused on my head would be inhumane), I think you'll find that when you click Share Screen and then launch a PP presentation, it takes up the whole screen, blocking out things like the Manage Participant box which you might want to have open so that you can see if someone is raising a hand. I was able to get the MP box back by just clicking on the MP button, and then sliding the box off to the side so that it's not covering up the PP slides.

- (8) When setting things up with my test group, I initially sent them an email containing the Zoom link, and then I followed it up the next day with an Outlook invite. (A show of hands in my final face-to-face Con Law I class indicated that about a third of my 1Ls use Outlook for calendaring, so I wanted my test group to have that as an option.) Those who accepted the Outlook invitation told me that accepting that invite prompted Outlook to delete the email I'd previously sent, which they didn't like. My own plan is thus not to send my students an Outlook invite, and to rely entirely on an email instead.
- (9) I plan to set up just one recurring meeting for my class, using a single Zoom link, for as many weeks as we end up doing online teaching, rather than setting up a separate meeting and separate link for each individual class session. If you need help setting up a recurring meeting, and if you'd also like the link for a given class placed in your Outlook calendar for all of the days you teach that class, take a look at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/214973206-Scheduling-Recurring-Meetings>.
- (10) Another fun feature I just discovered is the Virtual Background feature on Zoom video. A simple click enables you to create the impression of speaking in front of any image you like. I'm currently opting for a Victorian-era library as my background, but you could also pick the beach, the NYC skyline, a coffee shop, the bridge of the starship Enterprise, a litter of puppies, etc. A gazillion free HD images are available for download at [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com), to go with the handful of default ones on Zoom. More info on enabling the Virtual Background is available here: [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background?mobile\\_site=true#h\\_bebf36a4-c1e9-4769-9d3c-e0d01457d341](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background?mobile_site=true#h_bebf36a4-c1e9-4769-9d3c-e0d01457d341)