

LAW JOURNAL MANAGEMENT: NATIONAL SECURITY LAW JOURNAL

Law 511-005 – Spring 2025

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SYLLABUS

For more than three-quarters of a century, turning to the scholars in our profession has meant turning to the student-edited law journals. In these publications, practicing lawyers and professors have recorded their views on the pressing issues of their times and student authors have often contributed fresh outlooks to problems which have bewildered the experienced attorney. A strong law [journal] is a forum in which able minds subject existing legal principles to critical analysis within the context of changing conditions and in which imaginative alternatives to today's solutions are aired and tested through vigorous informal debate. As such, the virile law [journal] is a repository of fresh ideas not only on the domestic issues with which our dynamic society must grapple, but also on the international problems which must be solved if we are to establish a peaceful community of nations. There are many such publications, and the Supreme Court looks upon them as its most responsible critics.

– Chief Justice Earl Warren, 1 CREIGHTON L. REV. 7, 7-8 (1968)

COURSE OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Welcome to Law Journal Management! As an incoming editor of the *National Security Law Journal* (“Journal” or “NSLJ”), you are tasked with continuing and furthering the Journal’s critical role in advancing the field of national security law, including topics such as foreign affairs, intelligence, homeland security, and national defense. You have an awesome responsibility to the Journal, to the Law School, and to the legal profession. National security law is not an easy field, nor should it be: it is about peace and war, freedom and coercion, the rights of citizens and the power of the state—and what is right and just in a world of hard choices, bounded by laws that can, at times, evolve. You are now in a position to shape that field. It is a responsibility that has tremendous potential, but also requires hard work.

This course covers the skills needed to publish a successful law journal, including author recruitment, article selection, citation research, and the editing and production process. Equally important, this course covers the management and administrative skills needed to run a law journal as a successful organization, including planning, budgeting, team building, outreach, marketing, and communications.

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By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of their specific position on the Editorial Board and their unique role in the successful publication of the Journal;
- (2) Analyze, learn from, and build upon the experience, best practices, and areas for improvement shared by outgoing editors to help strengthen the Journal in the coming year;
- (3) Develop and present a strategic plan for the upcoming academic year, with specific goals, objectives, and milestones for the Journal; and
- (4) Work with fellow incoming editors as an effective team with confidence in their ability to run a successful organization and publish a high-quality product.

COURSE GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

This course will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Those passing the course will receive one academic credit. To receive a passing grade, students must:

- 1. Attend class meetings.** This course is comprised of four in-person sessions specific to NSLJ, plus one joint session with the other student-run journals at the Law School. Please note that Academic Regulation 4-1 has strict and specific rules about attendance that the instructor does not have the authority to waive. Students who are absent for more than 20% of the sessions of a course for any reason (i.e., more than one of our five sessions) are not eligible to receive credit for the course. A student who is not present for at least 75% of a session is considered absent from that session. If you cannot attend a class, or must arrive late or leave early, please email the instructor beforehand. Attendance will be recorded.
- 2. Schedule and attend mentoring meetings** with outgoing editors as described later in this syllabus. A summary of your individual or group meetings, including the date and time, must be sent to the instructor within 48 hours of the meeting.
- 3. Participate in class discussions and group projects.** This class is intended to be interactive. Successful learning requires coming to class prepared and participating actively in class discussions. The amount of time and preparation each student puts into this class will affect the learning outcomes of fellow Editorial Board members.
- 4. Prepare and deliver a final presentation** with strategic goals, objectives, and milestones for your respective part of the Journal for the next academic year. This presentation should represent the culmination of class discussions, individual and group meetings, and group projects throughout the course. This final presentation will be delivered in Class 5. The order of presentations will be:
 - Executive Team
 - Editor-in-Chief
 - Executive Editor
 - Managing Editor
 - Articles Team
 - Research Team
 - Notes Team

Each portion of the final presentation (including the individual Executive Team positions) should be approximately 15-20 minutes in length and should include slides formatted in a manner that is consistent with the NSLJ brand and identity guidelines. Each student is responsible for working with fellow editors as needed to deliver their respective portion(s) of this final presentation.

CONTINGENCY PLANS

This class will meet in person at the Law School. In the event of inclement weather, the Law School follows the closure decisions of the University. If inclement weather is expected, please check the University's operating status before heading to campus. The University's operating status can be found by viewing the George Mason University homepage (www.gmu.edu), by registering for the Mason Alert email notification system (<https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert>), or by calling the University's Information Line at (703) 993-1000. This class will transition to remote instruction when the University's campuses are closed to avoid re-scheduling class sessions. If widespread power outages or dangerous weather makes remote instruction impractical, the instructor will provide information on a make-up class as necessary.

GROUP PROJECTS

An important aspect of this course is getting hands-on experience with some of the management and administrative aspects of running a successful law journal. All new incoming editors will work together to design and execute the following group projects. While some class time is allotted to plan these projects, a majority of the work is expected to be completed outside of class. All students in the course have a shared responsibility for working collaboratively to ensure the course deliverables are completed.

- 1. Operating Guide:** Based on classroom discussions and mentoring meetings with outgoing editors, review and update relevant portions of the NSLJ Operating Guide. Include revised processes, updated administrative details, and new best practices for each respective section to present during Class 4 for discussion (*action: all positions*). Consolidate the revised sections into one updated document and distribute it to the full incoming Editorial Board (*action: Executive Editor*).

Course Deliverable #1: Revised NSLJ Operating Guide for 2025-2026 (present proposed edits in Class 4 for discussion)

- 2. Candidate Member Handbook:** Review and revise the NSLJ Candidate Member Handbook (*action: all positions*), including spading guidelines and worksheets (*action: Research Team*), guidance and suggested topics for Notes or Comments (*action: Notes Team*), descriptions of the Editorial Board positions (*action: all positions*), and the NSLJ Style Guide (*action: Executive Team*).

Course Deliverable #2: New 2025-2026 Candidate Member Handbook (present proposed edits in Class 4 for discussion)

- 3. New Member Recruitment:** Develop a plan to promote and manage NSLJ participation in the write-on competition in May and the comment-on process in June (*action: Editor-in-Chief, Executive Editor, Managing Editor, Notes Editor*).

Course Deliverable #3: Information session slides, promotional flyers, draft social media/web posts, and updated procedures for internal NSLJ management of the write-on and comment-on process (present in Class 4)

4. **Issue Planning:** Draft a tentative production timeline for the fall issue, to include milestones for selecting articles, editing articles, spading, and the production process (action: Executive Editor, Articles Team, Research Team).

Course Deliverable #4: Tentative production schedule for the fall 2025 issue (Executive Editor to present in Class 5 as part of final presentation)

5. **Spading:** Develop an updated spading tutorial and reference guide(s) for new Candidate Members to help improve the quality of spading. Put together a collection of good spading samples relevant to national security law, particularly for sources that are unique to the field and difficult to cite (action: Research Team).

Course Deliverable #5: Revised spading tutorial and guides (Research Team to present in Class 5 as part of final presentation)

6. **Budgeting:** Review past Student Bar Association budget submissions for NSLJ and other journals, and prepare the Fall 2025 budget proposal for NSLJ to present in Class 5 (action: Managing Editor).

Course Deliverable #6: Fall 2025 budget proposal (Managing Editor to present in Class 5 as part of final presentation)

7. **Outreach:** Review and update the NSLJ contact database. Design, produce, and send a large promotional mailing (print and/or electronic) to NSLJ alumni and other supporters of the Journal to provide updates and solicit donations (action: Managing Editor). Include a cover letter or introduction co-signed by the incoming and outgoing Editors-in-Chief.

Course Deliverable #7: Promotional mailing (Managing Editor presents draft in Class 4; mailing is sent prior to Class 5)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Mentoring

Meeting #1: Before Class 1 – Individual Meeting (1 hour)

- Before Class 1, all incoming editors should schedule a one-hour mentoring meeting with their assigned mentor (typically the outgoing editor in the same position)
- Incoming editors are responsible for reaching out to outgoing editors to schedule this meeting
- Incoming editors should use this meeting as an opportunity to begin to understand the requirements and scope of their new position and solicit advice from outgoing editors (e.g., challenges they encountered, what they wish they had known when starting out, etc.)
- Each incoming editor should request documents relevant to their position from the outgoing editor to review (internal procedures or templates, etc.)

Class 1: **Saturday, March 22, 2025**
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (2.5 hours)

Introduction to Law Journal Management

- Introduction to the course
- Overview of in-class discussions and expectations for course deliverables
- Introductions of new Editorial Board members and respective roles
- Initial review of NSLJ Operating Guide and Candidate Member Handbook

2024 Retrospective

- Retrospective on major accomplishments and events from the past year from the outgoing Editor-in-Chief

Group Discussion

- Initial planning for group projects (brainstorming session)

Class 2: **Saturday, March 29, 2025**
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (2.5 hours)

Alumni Panel

- Question-and-answer session with NSLJ alumni editors

Group Discussion

- Discuss in depth the day-to-day responsibilities for all positions
- Compare notes of lessons learned and best practices discussed in initial mentoring meetings with outgoing editors
- Review and begin to propose edits and enhancements to the NSLJ Operating Guide and Candidate Member Handbook
- Begin planning an approach to each of the group projects

Mentoring

Meeting #2: **Between Class 2 and Class 4 – Individual or Small Group Meetings (2 hours)**

- Incoming and outgoing editors should meet for an in-depth review of their respective positions and what will be expected of the incoming editors once the transition occurs to the new NSLJ Editorial Board
- This meeting may be held individually (e.g., outgoing and incoming Managing Editor meet one-on-one) or in small groups by team (e.g., outgoing and incoming Notes Editors meet in a small group)
- Incoming editors are responsible for reaching out to the outgoing editors to schedule this meeting
- Incoming editors should use this meeting to collect as much information as possible to help prepare for the final presentations in Class 5
- Incoming editors should share their plans for their group projects and final presentation, including any proposed changes or ideas regarding their positions or the journal as a whole; outgoing editors should provide feedback to incoming editors regarding the proposed changes and offer any advice based on their experience in that position
- Below are some topics to consider discussing at this meeting:

- Editor-in-Chief: Setting overall goals, managing competing priorities, managing the publication timetable from article selection to distribution, what to look for during final edits, planning symposium/speaker events, working with the Law School administration and outside organizations
- Executive Editor: Publication timetable, weekly update/snapshot, what to look for during final edits, journal policies including participation and discipline, publish-on process, Candidate Member orientation planning, Editorial Board selection, student article selection process, etc.
- Managing Editor: Managing NSLJ's image and brand, formatting the print edition, managing the write-on competition, updating the website and social media sites, managing communications and alumni relations, advertising the journal, submitting SBA budget requests and obtaining reimbursements, collecting and depositing payments/donations, planning events (topics, speakers, venue, catering, budget, logistics, etc.)
- Articles Editors: Production timeline, editing responsibilities and schedule, working with authors, how to present edits to authors, meeting deadlines
- Notes Editors: Mentoring and guiding Candidate Members, orientation process, working with Candidate Members to produce quality articles
- Research Editors: Source gathering field trip (meet with law library staff, review online sources), spading process and timeline, updating spading guidelines, preparing a spading workshop for NSLJ orientation

**Class 3: Joint Journal Session – Friday, April 4, 2025
Time: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. (2 hours)**

This is a joint session with the incoming editors of the other law journals to discuss the upcoming academic year. By the end of this session, you will:

- Meet incoming editors from other journals with similar positions to lay groundwork for a professional, collaborative environment for the year
- Dialogue with adjunct professors and outgoing editors
- Receive additional insight into approaches for managing a law journal

**Class 4: Saturday, April 12, 2025
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (3 hours)**

Group Discussion

- Share lessons learned from the second mentoring meeting and joint journal session
- Present proposed revisions to NSLJ Operating Guide for 2025-2026 (Course Deliverable #1) and the Candidate Member Handbook (Course Deliverable #2)
- Present items to prepare for the write-on and comment-on process (Course Deliverable #3) and discuss roles and responsibilities
- Present draft of promotional mailing (Course Deliverable #7)
- Collaborate on remaining group projects

**Class 5: Saturday, April 19, 2025
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (3 hours)**

Final Presentations

Closing Comments and Next Steps