

# **LAW JOURNAL MANAGEMENT: NATIONAL SECURITY LAW JOURNAL**

**Law 511-005 – Spring 2024**

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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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<sup>1</sup> Alex is a 2015 graduate of the George Mason University School of Law, where he served as the Managing Editor (2013-2014) and Editor-in-Chief (2014-2015) of the *National Security Law Journal*. He also holds a master’s degree in U.S. National Security Policy from the Security Studies Program at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, a Certificate in Public Leadership from Brookings Executive Education, and an Executive Certificate in Facilitation from Georgetown University. He currently works at the White House as the Director of the Contingency Operations Division, Office of Administration, Executive Office of the President. The views he may express in this course are his alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of Administration, the White House, the Biden-Harris Administration, or the United States Government.

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.

### CONTINGENCY PLANS

This class will meet in person at the Law School following current University health and safety protocols. 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](http://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. In the event this class must transition to a remote format, the instructor will inform students as to the manner of instruction (e.g., remote instruction via Zoom). If remote instruction becomes impractical, the instructor will provide information on a make-up class as necessary.

### 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 4. 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 identity guidelines. Each student is responsible for working with fellow editors as needed to deliver their respective portion(s) of this final presentation.

### **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 share during Class 3 (*action: all positions*). Consolidate the revised sections into one updated document and distribute it to the full incoming Editorial Board before Class 4 (*action: Executive Editor*).

*Course Deliverable #1: Revised NSLJ Operating Guide for 2024-2025  
(discuss in Class 3; finalize prior to Class 4)*

2. **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, Notes Editor*).

*Course Deliverable #2: Information session slides, updated write-on and comment-on procedures, promotional flyers, draft social media/web posts  
(discuss in Class 3; present in Class 4)*

3. **Issue Planning:** Draft a tentative production timeline for the fall issue, to include milestones for selecting articles, editing articles, spading, and the production process;

present an initial working draft for discussion in Class 3 (*action: Executive Editor, Articles Team, Research Team*).

Course Deliverable #3: Tentative production schedule for the fall 2024 issue (discuss in Class 3; present in Class 4)

- 4. Spading:** Develop an updated spading tutorial and reference guides 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 #4: Revised spading tutorial and guides (present in Class 4)

- 5. Budgeting:** Review past Student Bar Association budget submissions for NSLJ and other journals, and prepare the Fall 2024 budget proposal for NSLJ to present in Class 4 (*action: Managing Editor*).

Course Deliverable #5: Fall 2024 budget proposal (discuss in Class 3 as needed; present in Class 4)

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

Course Deliverable #6: Promotional mailing (sent prior to Class 4)

- 7. 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 #7: New 2024-2025 Candidate Member Handbook (discuss in Class 3; finalize prior to Class 4)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Mentoring

#### Meeting #1: Before Class 1 – Individual Meeting (30 minutes)

- In March, before Class 1 on Saturday, March 23, all incoming editors should schedule a 30-minute mentoring meeting with their assigned mentor (typically the outgoing editor in the same position)
- Discussion should focus on the requirements of the position and any advice the outgoing editor can share with the incoming editor
- Each incoming editor should request all documents relevant to their position from the outgoing editor

**Class 1: Saturday, March 23, 2024  
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (3 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

### *2023 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 30, 2024 Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (2 hours)**

### *Alumni Panel (Tentative)*

- 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 3 – Individual or Small Group Meetings (60 minutes)**

- 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 4
- 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, publication timetable from article selection to distribution, what to look for during final edits, symposium/speaker events, budget, relations with the administration and other journals, outreach, etc.

- 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, managing communications and alumni relations, advertising the journal, submitting SBA budget requests, obtaining reimbursements, collecting and depositing payments/donations, maintaining and expanding subscriber list, formatting the print edition, managing the write-on competition, updating the website and social media sites
- Articles Editors: Reviewing submissions referred by the Articles Selection Editor, production timeline, editing articles scheduled for publication, working with authors, how to best present edits, 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 5, 2024**

**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 6, 2024**

**Time: 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (3 hours)**

#### *Group Discussion*

- Share lessons learned from the second mentoring session
- Present proposed revisions to NSLJ Operating Guide and Candidate Member Handbook
- Collaborate on remaining group projects
  - Review and discuss tentative timeline for fall 2024 issue
  - Discuss write-on and comment-on process
  - Discuss potential fall 2024 budget
  - Work on promotional/outreach mailing if needed

### **Class 5: Saturday, April 13, 2024**

**Time: 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (3 hours)**

#### *Final Presentations*

#### *Closing Comments and Next Steps*