

YALW GUIDE *to*

**SPECIALIZED
JOURNALS**

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Yale Law Women is pleased to bring you the YLW Guide to Specialized Journals. We would like to thank members of the 2010-2011 YLW Publications Committee for their hard work in creating the Guide and Debevoise & Plimpton for their generous support of YLW Publications.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ah, the Alphabet Soup of YLS specialized journals. Twice every year, YLS students shuffle around YLS's lengthy roster of specialized journals, deciding which ones, if any, to pick or to stick with. From basic membership to running for a position, it can be difficult to get a good answer about what, really, to expect.

You may already be on a journal and wondering if you should take the plunge and get more involved. You may be deciding which journal membership you should axe. Or you may be just dipping into the pool of journal work (and wondering if it's too late to get substantively involved – don't worry, it's not). For all of you, we hope this Guide will help you make decisions about whether and how to get involved with specialized journals. This Guide won't try to answer all your questions, but we think it's a good place to start figuring out how to ask the right ones.

A quick note on methods

Our goal is share frank talk and honest opinions from students who have participated in YLS specialized journals. Some of what you'll find below summarizes information provided to us in individual communication with journal leaders. Some of it (the information on time commitment, as well as general level of work satisfaction) is poll data, collected in Spring 2011 from 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls.¹

A few things to keep in mind while inspecting either the raw data or our conclusions:

- **Time commitment** refers only to time commitment in the first semester of joining – that is, the time one can expect to put in for a normal entry-level journal position. These hours do not reflect the 30-hour weeks that executive editors can log.
- **Work satisfaction** is drawn from responses to the following survey questions:
 - *Do you think joining the journal was a good decision at the time [you joined]? Do you*

¹ In the spirit of transparency, we're making this data available to all interested current YLS community members. Contact the current YLW Publications Chair for more information.

[still] agree with your reasons [at the time]?" [yes/no/open answer]

- Did the journal live up to you reasons for joining?" [open answer]
- What are the best and worst things about this journal? [open answer]

- **Response Pool:** please note the sample size at the end of each review. "High satisfaction with a few outliers" may mean different things when the sample size is four, as opposed to forty.
- **The lengths and details of descriptions** vary in part based on the amount of detail we received in our answers, both in polling and in correspondence with officers from individual journals.

Part of the purpose in providing the raw data is to underscore the nature of this guide – as a ***holistic, neutral snapshot of relevant viewpoints, not a final authority on the comparative merits and weaknesses*** of the specialized journals. You'll have to do your own data-trawling for that, using either the data we've retrieved, or a less (or more) scientific survey means. Good luck!

After a brief intro to the topics, the "flavor," and any relevant history of each journal, we present specialized information. This includes information about the slating process and journal organization style, as well as about concerns including the time commitment and level of work satisfaction after at least one semester's participation. (Note that some answers may represent impressions from a range of positions, from 1L editor up to the editor-in-chief. However, the time commitment questions asked respondents specifically about their activities during their first semester of journal participation.)

General Information for 1Ls

The YLS specialized journal world is a wonderful way to get involved with legal scholarship in a low-commitment way. While many other law schools require students to jump through many hoops to serve on a specialized journal, at YLS, membership is open to all. In September of you 1L fall, you can attend an all-journal information meeting, where each specialized journal will have representatives available to discuss each journal in turn. There is also an all-journal training session on "Bluebooking," or citation-checking, hosted by the Yale Law Journal. Each individual journal will also provide you with training and mentorship after you join.

Participation in specialized journals during 1L Fall is limited to 6 hours for the whole semester (though there are other ways to get involved should you wish to do so). The Yale Law Journal, like other flagship law reviews around the country, does not accept 1L students.

Working on a specialized journal is often very rewarding for a few reasons. First, it is an easy

way to get to know your classmates and upperclassmen. Second, it is a great opportunity to participate in leadership roles early on in your law school career. Third, and perhaps most importantly for some, it allows interested members to get involved in substantive areas of scholarship – including shaping arguments in articles or selecting articles for publication in the first place. Finally, you do learn how to Bluebook, which for some, is seen as a boon. However, participation as a 1L editor in the fall will involve primarily one thing: cite-checking in sourcecite sessions (and usually this doesn't go away later on: all editors do sourcecites). Some find it fun: others, mind-numbing. Still others think the work is better than tolerable, and that even marathon sessions thereof are fun when there's free food and good company. Some journals are more hierarchical than others, and they also vary in size and how tight-knit the membership is.

Most people join one specialized journal, but many certainly “double up” since the commitment is relatively low. Later on in their law school careers, people move between journals and sometimes take on leadership positions in more than one journal. For example, many members of the Yale Law Journal are also editors on other journals.

Without further ado, here are the specialized journals, listed – you guessed it – alphabetically.

2. SPECIALIZED JOURNALS

Yale Human Rights & Development Law Journal (YHRDLJ)

<http://www.law.yale.edu/academics/yhrdlj.htm>

YHRDLJ explores the tensions and congruencies between human rights, development, and the law, encouraging critical, creative, and multidisciplinary thinking. Past publications have incorporated perspectives from political science, public policy, anthropology, economics, public health, and sociology. In some years, YHRDLJ also plans and organizes a Symposium on a relevant topic (in 2012, it was “Mental Health as a Human Right”), and 1Ls can play a substantial role in the conference's logistical work if they choose.

YHRDLJ tends to attract a particularly public-interest oriented group, and members are often involved in a variety of other activities addressing similar topics at the law school, making for a strong sense of community for those who are actively involved. YHRDLJ publishes only one issue a year, resulting in a more laid-back pace and manageable time commitment than some other journals. The atmosphere has also been described as more informal and people-oriented.

- **Time Commitment:**
 - 100% of respondents report less than a 1 hour per week time commitment.
 - YHRDLJ says members who stay on after 1L year have a high level of control over time commitment (which itself is generally low).
- **Slating/Board Positions:**
 - 1Ls may join an edit team, and may also apply to be a lead editor (coordinates sourcecite and bookpull).
 - If a Symposium is planned for the year, 1Ls can take part in conference organizing (including publicity, fundraising, reaching out to potential speakers, etc.).
- **Level of work satisfaction:**
 - Appears to be a hit or miss, with many people loving the journal and slightly smaller number feeling somewhat dissatisfied.
 - 55% of respondents report that the journal lived up to their reasons for joining.
 - 73% of respondents believe it was a good decision to join the journal when they did.
 - **Greatest praises:** journal size and opportunity for advancement/slating.
 - **Greatest complaints:** lack of strong journal community and events, occasional complaints about the quality and content of the scholarship worked with.

Response pool: 13

Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics (YJHPLE)

<http://www.yale.edu/yjhple/>

YJHPLE is a biannual publication, structured as a joint project between YLS and the Yale Schools of Medicine, Epidemiology and Public Health, and Nursing. It strives to provide a forum for

interdisciplinary discussion on topics in health policy, health law, and biomedical ethics, and targets a broad readership (including academics, professionals, policy-makers and legislators, and students in medicine, law, and public health). YJHPLE's articles are peer-reviewed in the relevant fields, so its scholarship is well regarded in the medical community as well. The quality of articles tends to be high, and authors often choose YJHPLE over flagship journals for its broader access to a medical audience.

As a smaller publication, YJHPLE offers ample opportunity for leadership. During their fall semester, 1Ls may volunteer to serve on the Submissions Committee or "Submission Squad." At the end of their fall semester, 1Ls may slate for a variety of board positions, and begin board work in 1L spring. (Fall slating allows 1Ls to list a YJHPLE board position on their resume by the winter, in time for post-1L summer job applications.) Slating occurs twice a year, so YJHPLE members have the opportunity to apply for a board position in the spring as well. Members may be selected as EIC as early as the first semester of their 2L year, or begin their first board position as late as the first semester of their 3L year. Sources within the journal say that in the past, most who express a sincere interest in taking on a leadership position in YJHPLE have been able to secure a position on the board. The time commitment is low and relatively easy to balance – even with leadership positions in other organizations (including other journals).

- **Time Commitment:**
 - o 100% of respondents report less than a 1 hour per week time commitment.
- **Slating/Board Positions:**
 - o First semester 1Ls may serve as staff editors, as well as join the (open) Submissions Committee.
 - § At the end of the fall, 1Ls may slate to serve as board members during their 1L spring by submitting a written component and interviewing with the EIC.
 - § Second semester 1Ls frequently occupy board positions such as Managing Editor, Articles Editor, Submissions Editor, Notes Editor, and Webmaster.
 - o EIC positions are restricted to law students. Executive editorships are also usually filled by law students as well, due to the bluebook-heavy nature of the work. (Other positions on the board are open to all students, including those from the other Yale schools.)

- **Level of work satisfaction:**
 - o Overwhelmingly high. Few negative outliers.
 - o 100% of respondents report feeling as though the journal lived up to their reasons for joining.
 - o 100% of respondents believe that they joined the journal at a good time in their career (almost all students joined as 1Ls).
 - o **Greatest praises:** varied, including opportunities for advancement, doing hands-on academic work, journal size, and getting to know upperclassmen.
 - o **Greatest complaints:** the complaints tend to be few. Some students expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of opportunity to do hands-on academic work, while others had hoped for greater opportunities to get to know upperclassmen.

Response pool: 10

Yale Journal of International Law (YJIL)

<http://www.yjil.org/>

The oldest specialized journal at YLS, and by some counts the largest, YJIL is known for its rigorous work product and efficient organization. It is very well-respected in the international law field, and internal sources say that cutting-edge scholars often write to YJIL before contacting other topical journals to pitch new article ideas for online or print publication.

In addition to its print and online publications, YJIL also sponsors and organizes conferences on timely topics where editors can meet scholars, practitioners, and YJIL authors (the 2012 conference focused on international arbitration). The organization speaks highly of its strong member community, hosting some journal-wide parties and social events, and offering networking and career help.

- **Time Commitment:**
 - o Close split between those reporting < 1 and 1-2 hours per week for entry-level work. Several reported 2-4 hours per week.
 - o Board positions do require more time commitment. The journal's attention to organization helps busier members plan their schedules far in advance.
- **Slating/Board Positions:**

- o Officers are elected from current board members in early March; new officers then conduct interviews for incoming board members. Candidates write a brief description of what they expect to do, and interviews last about 15 minutes.
- **Level of work satisfaction:**
 - o High, few negative outliers.
 - o 88% of respondents report feeling as though the journal lived up to their reasons for joining.
 - o 96% of respondents believe that joining the journal when they did was a good decision.
 - o **Greatest praises:** the ability to get to know upperclassmen, opportunity to do hands-on academic work, and the feeling of community between journal members.
 - o **Greatest complaints:** the size of the journal (large).

Response pool: 37

Yale Journal of Law and Feminism (LawFem)

<http://www.law.yale.edu/academics/YJLF.htm>

YJLF publishes on differing feminist perspectives toward a wide variety of topics pertaining to gender, race, and class. In recent issues, YLJF (or “LawFem,” as it is often known) has published on reproductive freedom, the concerns of women of color, judicial prosecution of prostitutes, criticism of judicial deference to the military, and the feminization of poverty. It describes itself as striving to foster a welcoming and non-hierarchical environment.

The perks of being on a smaller journal like YJLF include a more hands-on and substantive role in the editorial process even for 1Ls, as well as a closer working relationship with upper-level students. The journal is unusual for emphasizing a consensus mode of decision-making (with occasional final resort of majoritarian voting). New journal members, particularly 1Ls, are mentored individually by senior members. YJLF also emphasizes its flexibility, with a variety of roles tailored toward different levels of involvement available beginning in 1L year.

- **Time Commitment:**
 - o 60% of people responding report a 1 hour or less per week time commitment in

the semester of first joining; 40% report greater than 4 hours.

- **Slating/Board Positions:**

- o Prospective board members declare their preferences before slating; incoming and outgoing board members then work together in order to elect the new board in a way that tries to maximize members' satisfaction with their new assignments. In difficult cases, the journal may occasionally turn to traditional competitive elections, but new board members are usually elected using the consensus form.
- o "Seniority rules" are looser than in some journals: second-semester 1Ls may serve immediately as Articles, Submissions, and Business Editors; while both 2Ls and 3Ls are eligible for Managing Editorship (the most senior position on the board).

- **Level of work satisfaction:**

- o Overwhelmingly high satisfaction overall – few complaints.
- o 100% of students believe the journal lived up to their reasons for joining.
- o 100% of students reported that it was a good decision to join the journal when they did.
- o **Greatest praises:** Opportunity for advancement, opportunity to do substantive work, and getting to know upperclassmen.
- o **Greatest complaints:** Time commitment and journal size (small).

Response pool: 14

Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities (YJLH)

<http://www.law.yale.edu/academics/yjlh.htm>

Unlike most of the other specialized journals, YJLH comprises YLS students as well as graduate students in humanities-related disciplines from other Yale graduate programs. YJLH publishes two issues per year, exploring "vital intersections between law and the liberal arts."

With no book pulls and no citation checks, YJLH might be exceptionally laid-back among the specialized journals. Sourcecites are dominated by style/grammar editing and Bluebooking. (Conceived of as a humanities journal in many ways, YJLH enjoys the benefits of the humanities norm of authors checking their own sources, and behaves accordingly.)

- **Time Commitment:**
 - o 100% of respondents report less than a 1 hour time commitment per week for entry-level involvement.
 - o Sources within the journal say that board members (executive or managing editors) could expect to spend 5-10 hours per week on journal work throughout the semester. Articles or notes editors have a less demanding schedule, and may read/vote on approximately five articles, and lead edit once during a semester.
- **Slating/Board Positions:**
 - o For spring slating, candidates write a brief statement of interest; then, at an election forum open to the entire membership, candidates speak briefly to those assembled. All present vote on the positions.
- **Level of work satisfaction:**
 - o Very high, with a few outliers.
 - o 100% of respondents reported that it was a good idea to have joined the journal and that it lived up to their reasons for joining.
 - o 100% believe it was a good idea to have joined when they did (89% joined during 1L Fall).
 - o **Greatest praises:** Opportunity for advancement and opportunity to do hands-on academic work were overwhelmingly cited as perks.
 - o **Greatest complaints:** No consensus. Several members questioned the quality or relevance of some articles received.

Response pool: 9

Yale Journal of Law and Technology (YJoLT)

<http://www.yjolt.org/>

YJOLT is the only YLS specialized journal dedicated to intellectual property issues, including patents, copyright, trademarks, and other issues that arise at the intersection between law and technology. In that spirit, it is also the only YLS specialized journal that publishes exclusively an online edition.

YJoLT is a smaller, and in many ways a more informal journal than others, with members reporting a lighter workload and greater flexibility (members who can't make the sourcecite, for instance, can usually make it up by sourceciting a portion of the article on their own time). YJoLT is also dedicated to fostering student scholarship and is happy to work with interested student authors in crafting a quality article for publication in an upcoming issue. YJoLT also hosts a group dinner at the end of every semester.

- **Time Commitment:**
 - o 100% of respondents report a time commitment of less than 1 hour per week.
- **Slating/Board Positions:**
 - o 1Ls can have a hands-on role their first semester on the journal by joining the submissions committee.
 - o During spring slating, a member of the journal can apply for as many positions as he/she is interested in. Slating is informal, requiring only a short statement of interest, and most interested 1Ls who apply will be able to take on roles such as that of Executive Editor and Lead Submissions Editor.
- **Level of work satisfaction:**
 - o Responses had various points of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
 - § 57% believe the journal lived up to their reasons for joining.
 - § 63% believe that it was a good idea to have joined when they did. (100% of respondents joined 1L Fall)
 - o **Greatest praises:** Time commitment, advancement/slating opportunities, and opportunities to get to know upperclassmen.
 - o **Greatest complaints:** Lack of a cohesive journal community and events.

Response pool: 8

Yale Journal on Regulation (JREG)

<http://yale-jreg.org/>

JREG takes a more practitioner-focused approach than many of the other specialized journals, and has been known to address a broad range of legal topics (including corporations/securities, financial regulation, environmental law, bankruptcy, and information technology). Respected by academics and attorneys alike, JREG is among the top 20 specialized law journals in the United

States by the Washington & Lee University School of Law ranking.²

In addition to its topical focus on regulation, JREG also has a distinct culture that involves social events such as the (in)famous JREGger Kegger, which allow members to get together in informal settings. Journal members describe the board as seeking to foster a sense of community that extends beyond a single sourcecite.

- **Time Commitment:**
 - 100% of respondents report less than 1 hour of time commitment per week.
- **Slating/Board Positions:**
 - 1L students may become lead editors during their first term. Lead editors often go on to serve on the JREG board, but board positions are not limited to those who have served as lead editors in their first or second semesters.
 - During the spring, students may slate for multiple positions at one time. Slating involves both written statements of interest and interviewing. For those who do not serve on the board, senior editorships are also an option.
- **Level of work satisfaction:**
 - Overwhelmingly high. Broad praise, and the complaints are scattered.
 - 90% of respondents feel as though the journal lived up to their reasons for joining.
 - 91% of respondents believe it was a good decision to join the journal when they did (nearly everyone joined as a 1L).
 - **Greatest praises:** journal community and events, time commitment and opportunity to get to know upperclassmen.
 - **Greatest complaints:** lack of opportunities to do hands-on academic work during 1L year (although this has also been cited as one of its strengths).

Response pool: 35

Yale Law & Policy Review (YLPR)

<http://yale-jreg.org/>

² Available at <http://lawlib.wlu.edu/LJ/index.aspx>. (Check boxes “specialized, ranked, rank 2010 combined.” Several other YLS specialized journals also appear at various points on the list.)

As one of the oldest specialized journals, YLPR distinguishes itself among the YLS specialized journals for its strong interest in policy perspectives. It publishes scholarly articles and essays by law professors, as well as timely policy proposals and legal analyses from judges, prominent policy-makers, and practitioners.

In addition to publishing the journal itself twice a year, YLPR also hosts events to bring policy makers to campus (Volume 29 hosted a symposium on net neutrality, Volume 30 hosted a conference on judicial politics, and in 2012 YLPR brought Justice John Paul Stevens to campus for its 30th Anniversary).

As a larger journal, YLPR bills itself as “one-size-fits all” with regard to time commitment and responsibilities, with opportunities for both a little and a lot of involvement. It also bills itself as offering extensive Bluebook training and mentorship.

- **Time Commitment:**
 - o 100% of students report 1 hour or less per week as the time commitment for a first year editor.
- **Slating/Board Positions:**
 - o No slating. All board members (with the exception of Executive Editors, generally 3Ls) are elected by membership at large.
 - o All board positions come up for elections in the spring; a few board positions are elected semiannually (i.e., in the fall as well).
 - o 1Ls are welcome to run in the spring and are often elected. In the fall, first-semester 1Ls may also serve as Lead Editors (coordinating bookpulls and sourcecites), participate in “mini-edit teams” (small groups that review newly-accepted pieces and make editorial suggestions to YLPR’s content editors), or run for those board positions that are elected semiannually.
- **Level of work satisfaction:**
 - o Very high, with a few points of dissatisfaction.
 - o **Greatest praises:** time commitment, opportunity to get to know upperclassmen, and Bluebook training.
 - o **Greatest complaints:** lack of opportunity to do hands-on academic work; dissatisfaction with overall sense of journal “community.”