



The Guide to Extracurricular Activities

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Interest/Affinity Groups



If you're looking to connect with people at YLS with similar experiences or beliefs, you're in luck — there are many interest and affinity groups active in the law school community. These include (but are by no means limited to!): the political, the identity-oriented, the religious, and the professional.

The great thing about interest and affinity groups is that you can join immediately and put in exactly as much or as little time as you please. You can be a consumer who attends social events and guest lectures, or you can become deeply engaged with the organization's work—or anything in between! The choice is entirely yours. Many organizations have listservs you can join that will keep you up-to-date on their events and opportunities. Do what makes your heart sing—there are lots of ways you can contribute.

For a list of some of the student organizations at YLS visit law.yale.edu/student-life/student-journals-organizations/student-organizations. If you want to receive regular updates from these organizations, you should sign up with the organization on [Yale Connect](#).

To contact a Law School Student Organization, or to find out more about what student organizations exist at YLS, you can contact the Office of Student Affairs at osa@yale.edu.

Specialized Journals



You'll quickly realize that YLS has a bunch of unique quirks, one of which is that it allows 1Ls to join specialized journals. At many law schools, the process for joining any journal is competitive and restricted to 2L or 3L students. At YLS, it's just a matter of picking one (or more!) of the specialized journals whose general subject matter interests you and signing up. The eight journals open to 1Ls cover a whole host of topic areas, and none of them have prerequisites for membership.

Legal scholarship is unlike publishing in any other field. Instead of the typical peer-review process, law students oversee the publication of legal pieces from start to finish: selecting pieces to be published, editing them, and producing the finished articles in a bound volume.

This is awesome news for you as an incoming 1L. Although you'll spend your time as a first-year editor doing mostly basic editing and source checking, if you choose to stay involved with secondary journals, you'll have opportunities to choose and shape legal scholarship later on.

The expected time commitment for first-year editors varies from journal to journal but is often 10–20 hours over the course of the first semester. Your main work will be to complete “book-pulls” (exactly what they sound like—you track down the books and articles that an author references and “pull” the hard copy) and “sourcecites” (you use the sources you pulled to check that the author accurately described the source’s content and cited it in the proper format). Depending on the journal, you may also be given the opportunity to take on more substantive projects, such as suggesting revisions to an author or reviewing articles that have been submitted for publication.

Because journals are the keystone of legal scholarship, and because many of you might consider publishing a piece yourself in the not-too-distant future, we recommend at least checking out the journal scene at YLS. If journals aren’t your cup of tea, or you find that journal work is not relevant to your goals at law school and beyond, you’re far from alone. Don’t feel pressured to join one just because everyone else seems to be. There are plenty of other good ways to occupy your time at YLS!

Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics

The [Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics](#) is an interdisciplinary journal whose staff members come from many of Yale's graduate and professional schools. The journal publishes pieces on topics in health policy, health law, and biomedical ethics.

Yale Journal of Law and Feminism

The [Yale Journal of Law and Feminism](#) publishes works concerning a broad range of legal issues as they pertain to gender, sexuality, and feminist theory.

Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities

The [Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities](#) explores the intersections among law, the humanities, and the humanistic social sciences. It is a biannual publication edited by students from the Law School and several graduate departments in the University, and advised by a board of distinguished scholars.

Yale Journal of International Law

The [Yale Journal of International Law](#) contains articles and comments written by scholars, practitioners, policy makers, and students in the fields of international, transnational, and comparative law.

Yale Journal of Law and Technology

The [Yale Journal of Law and Technology](#) offers its readers a cutting-edge, dynamic environment in which to acquire and produce knowledge about the interface between law and technology.

Yale Journal on Regulation

The [Yale Journal on Regulation](#) is a national forum for legal, political, and economic analysis of current issues in regulatory policy.

Yale Law & Policy Review

The [Yale Law & Policy Review](#) is a biannual publication dedicated to publishing legal scholarship and policy proposals by lawmakers, judges, practitioners, academics, and students.

Note that the information in this section does not apply to the flagship [Yale Law Journal](#), which runs a separate admissions process at the end of each school year and is comprised entirely of 2L and 3L students. You will find out more about how you can apply to join the editorial board in your spring semester.

Real World Legal Projects



This category of extracurricular activities is probably the broadest, essentially covering any law-related project that requires research and writing, hands-on client interaction, oral advocacy, or some combination. These projects often resemble clinics, which you can apply to join for credit beginning 1L spring, in that they provide real world exposure to the practice of law. Because real people with real issues are often involved, some (but not all) of these projects require a larger time commitment. 2Ls and 3Ls are great resources as you try to figure out which projects might be right for you and your schedule, so don't hesitate to ask around!

Real world, law-related projects open to 1Ls at YLS include the Civil Rights Project (CRP), the Capital Assistance Project (CAP), the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) Project, the Lowenstein Human Rights Project, and the Green Haven Prison Project, among others. Many interest and affinity groups also provide opportunities for students to get involved in projects outside the law school.

Finally, you can keep an eye out for skill-building extracurriculars that, while not technically "real-world," offer the opportunity to learn and practice valuable advocacy skills. You might find yourself drawn to a practice-oriented group like the Thomas Swan Barristers' Union, an intramural mock trial and a national trial advocacy team. You might also be interested in the Morris Tyler Moot Court pre-part, which offers a chance for 1Ls to research and draft a brief and give an oral argument in a non-competitive setting.

Beyond the Law



We recommend pursuing a hobby or passion totally unrelated to the law while at YLS. It's a great way to maintain a little perspective and balance.

At the University

You can find all kinds of groups organized through Yale University, including a cappella groups, volunteer groups, Yogis at Yale, and tons of others. There are grad student leagues for virtually every sport, and law students will often send out emails to the YLS student listserv (known as "The Window") soliciting teammates. You can also contact Yale's Athletics Department directly if you're interested in meeting people who don't spend all their time in the Sterling Law Building.

We'd also be remiss if we didn't mention a couple of the non-law-related cornerstones of life at the Law School.

At YLS

A perennial favorite is Law Revue, a law school-themed variety show that is hilarious and fun. If you're into singing, acting, or dancing—or have a particular talent for imitating professors—be on the lookout for the first Law Revue meetings, which will take place in the fall. Other school-wide social events are organized by the YLS student representatives, who serve as liaisons between faculty and students and organize all kinds of activities to build community among law students. One recurring, student rep-organized event is Bar Review (get it?), which takes place every Thursday night. The student reps pick a bar and arrange drink specials; all you have to do is show up. Bar Review is a great way to meet people you may not have classes with, including 2Ls and 3Ls, while checking out the delights various New Haven bars have to offer.

The takeaway is that there are as many different ways to spend your time at YLS as there are members of your class, so take time to experiment during your first semester—we're positive you'll be able to find the right fit