

MICHIGAN LAW REVIEW FIRST IMPRESSIONS ESSAY COMPETITION 2012

OFFICIAL RULES

1. Eligibility. Any student enrolled at Michigan Law School on February 17, 2012, and any December 2011 graduate of the Law School, excluding current or former members of the *Michigan Law Review*, may enter the competition. Any dual-degree student enrolled outside the Law School as part of the dual-degree program on February 17, 2011, may enter, as long as he or she has started the required studies at, and not yet graduated from, the Law School.

2. Prize and Publication. One winner of the competition will receive a cash prize of \$100, and *First Impressions* will publish his or her entry. The Executive Editors of *First Impressions* may also select for publication up to four other entries from among those designated as finalists in the competition. Regardless of the number of entries selected for publication, only one winner will receive the cash prize. The Executive Editors of *First Impressions* must approve the final copy of each selected entry before publication. Once published, each selected entry will appear on the *First Impressions* website as a Commentary article and can be cited like an article in any other academic legal journal. *First Impressions* will designate the winning entry as "Winner of the Michigan Law Review First Impressions Essay Competition 2012," and any other published entry as "Finalist in the Michigan Law Review First Impressions Essay Competition 2012."

3. Entry. To enter, simply write and submit an op-ed style essay on an interesting and timely legal topic of your choice. Your entry will be assessed for both content and style, and your choice of topic will factor into the assessment. You will not be graded on your compliance with Bluebook rules of citation. You must choose a topic and thesis of a legal nature, but your entry may incorporate nonlegal sources, issues, or policy considerations as appropriate. Announcements of the competition may include suggested topics, but we encourage you to write an essay on any topic that you prefer. Choosing a topic other than one suggested will not weigh either for or against your entry in the selection process. We both allow and encourage you to submit an entry based on work previously completed for academic credit during your enrollment at the Law School.

4. Format. Please read the formatting rules carefully. We do not believe they are particularly onerous, but they are essential to preserving a fair competition. Any deviation from these rules will automatically result in disqualification.

- Your entry must include no more than *nine pages of text* and *one page of citations as endnotes* (this means no footnotes!). Even if your entry has no endnotes, it may not include more than nine pages of text.
- Endnotes may not appear on the same page as any text.
- Format all text and any endnotes with double line spacing, one-inch margins, and twelve-point Times font.
- Number all pages at the bottom, and include no text other than page numbers within the one-inch margins.
- Do not include your name or any other identifying information anywhere in your entry.
- Submit your entry as an Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) file.

- Submissions that fail to conform to these rules will be disqualified.

5. Citations. Please include citations as endnotes where reasonably appropriate in order to aid readers and judges in assessing the accuracy of your entry. Note, however, that because essays published in *First Impressions* only minimally include citations or footnotes, your entry will not be graded or judged on citation content or format in any way. Citations should be clear enough to direct readers and judges to the source. For example, where a source is electronic, listing the website url in the endnote would be sufficient.

6. Submission. Send your entry as an attached file to **mlr.fi.essay2012@umich.edu**, with the subject line: MLR FI ESSAY COMPETITION. Include your full name, unickname, and expected or actual Law School graduation date in the body of the email. *First Impressions* must receive your entry by email **no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on February 17, 2012.** Late entries will be disqualified. *First Impressions* will confirm receipt of each timely and qualified entry by email, and the confirmation will include an assigned entry number.

7. Selection. Entries will be graded and judged under strict conditions of anonymity. In Round One, readers selected from the members of the *Michigan Law Review* will read and grade all qualified entries. At least three readers will independently read and grade each entry, and all entries will be graded by the same number of readers. The five entries with the highest combined grades will proceed to Round Two as finalists. In the event of any ties by combined grades that would produce more than five finalists, the committee of all readers will break ties as needed to select the finalists by a simple majority vote. In Round Two, three members of the Michigan Law School faculty will independently review the finalists and assign them exclusive ranks of one through five, using the same criteria followed by readers. The final score of each entry will equal the sum of the ranks assigned by the faculty judges. The finalist with the lowest final score will win the competition. In the event of a tie for lowest final score, the faculty judges will determine the winner from among the tied entries by a simple majority vote.

8. Grading and Judging Criteria. Readers and judges will assess each entry for both content and style.

Content assessments will reflect:

- Selection of an interesting and timely legal topic;
- Presentation of a clear thesis and compelling arguments that support the thesis;
- And accuracy of information as informed by the text and the sources listed in the endnotes.

Style assessments will reflect:

- Organization of arguments into a logical structure;
- Composition of discrete and coherent paragraphs with clear topic sentences;
- And use of the active voice and adherence to proper conventions for grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Each reader will assign one grade for content and one grade for style to each entry. Each entry will receive a content score and a style score composed of the average of grades assigned by all readers of the entry in that category. Both scores will weigh equally in the combined grade for the entry.

9. Certification. By submitting an essay to the competition you certify that it is entirely your own original work and that you received no help from anyone in researching, writing, or editing it. You also certify that your entry has not been published or accepted for publication anywhere in print or electronic form, either in whole or in part. You further certify that you will not submit your entry for publication or consideration anywhere before *First Impressions* announces the winner of the competition. You may submit an entry that was considered for publication and rejected before you submit it to the competition, as long as it is not pending or awaiting acceptance anywhere when you submit it to the competition. The entry of any submitter who does not follow these rules will be disqualified.

10. Dispute Resolution. If the submitter of any qualified entry disputes the outcome of the competition under these rules, then he or she must submit to the Executive Editors of *First Impressions* a written statement including the entry number concerned and describing the dispute and the desired resolution, within seven days after the winner is announced. A committee composed of the executive and managing editors of the *Michigan Law Review* will review and decide the final resolution of all disputes.