

Author Guidelines

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Jotwell seeks short reviews of (very) recent scholarly work relevant to the law that the reviewer likes and thinks deserves a wide audience. The ideal Jotwell review will not merely celebrate scholarly achievement, but situate it in the context of other scholarship in a manner that explains to both specialists and non-specialists why the work is important.

Although gentle critique is welcome, reviewers should choose the subjects they write about with an eye toward identifying and celebrating work that makes an original contribution, and that will be of interest to others. New authors may want to look at our [2015 study of what gets reviewed in Jotwell](#) to get some further ideas of what we seek — and what we are missing.

Choosing What to Review

1. **Jotwell reviews works in draft, in press, or published not more than two years ago.** The one exception is the [Classics Section of Jotwell](#), which is open to reviews of unjustly neglected works that are at least 50 years old.
2. Reviews of public drafts and of pre-prints at SSRN or BePress are absolutely fair game, indeed they are particularly welcomed.
3. We're also happy to see reviews of works by less-well-known authors, and pieces that may appear in less-widely-distributed journals, but these are in no way requirements.
4. We review scholarly works of relevance to the law. Thus non-legal articles can certainly be within scope. So can the occasional governmental report. But we do not review judicial decisions.
5. Because Jotwell reviews are so short—typically between 500 and 1000 words (although we will accept more if you insist)—they usually work best as reviews of a single work rather than multiple works.
6. We will not accept reviews of works authored or edited (or co-authored or co-edited) by the reviewer. This ban includes articles in books or a symposium edited or co-edited by the reviewer. We will not accept reviews of works by current school or departmental colleagues or, as of June 1, 2016, by students in your school or department. If you have a relationship with the author of the work you are planning to review, professional or personal, other than the types of relationships identified above, please tell your Section Editors and the Editor in Chief before you start writing. Editors have varying policies on conflicts of interest, so it is best to check in advance. Illustrative examples of relationships we'd like to know about include former students and colleagues.
7. Students are welcome to write for Jotwell, but in addition to the conflict rules described above we do not accept student-authored reviews of articles by your current or recently former professors, or by other students in your school or department, or (other than for the Classics Section) that have appeared or are scheduled to appear in any journal affiliated with your school or department.
8. We would like Jotwell's readers to be able to rely on us for original material. If your review, or even a significant fraction of your review, has already appeared elsewhere, please let us know; and please be aware that more likely than not this will create difficulties.

Writing the 'Jot'

1. In writing your Jot **please keep in mind** that a Jotwell review, unlike a traditional review in a law journal, is primarily about explaining the value of the work being reviewed rather than critique or improvement. We would like readers to leave your review being grateful for being exposed to the main argument(s) of the work. Ideally, readers should be left with the impression that they need to read the work, or at least have an understanding of why you think the work is important. Of course if you have some gentle suggestions to make, those can be

- appropriate. But if you think the work has one or more serious flaws, you probably should not be reviewing it for Jotwell.
2. Reviews need not be written in a particularly formal manner. Contributors should feel free to write in a manner that will be understandable to scholars, practitioners, and even non-lawyers.
 3. Ordinarily a 'Jot' will:
 - be between 500-1000 words;
 - focus on a single work, ideally a recent article, but a discussion of a recent book is also welcome;
 - begin with a hyperlink to the original work — in order to make the conversation as inclusive as possible, there is a strong preference for reviews to focus on scholarly works that can be found online without using a subscription service such as Westlaw or Lexis. That said, reviews of articles that are not freely available online, and also of very recent books, are also welcome.
 4. We usually excerpt the first two paragraphs of every review on the 'front page' at jotwell.com; please write those first two paragraphs with this in mind. In particular, it helps if something about why the work is special appears in those paragraphs.
 5. We accept submissions in any form. Please do not tab or indent paragraphs, and please limit the number of spaces after any punctuation to just one space (i.e. no "legal double space"). Jotwell publishes in HTML, which is a very simple text format and which does not lend itself to footnotes. If you are not comfortable with HTML, just draft the article in your favorite word processor and Jotwell's staff will convert it for you. If you absolutely must use footnotes, do not use the footnote feature of your word processor. Instead, enclose the footnote text in ((double parenthesis)).
 6. Please provide a title for your review in addition to the full citation to the work being reviewed. If the work is available online, we would be grateful for that URL as well.
 7. Authors are responsible for the content and cite-checking of their own articles. Jotwell editors and staff may make editorial suggestions, and may alter the formatting to conform to the house style, but the author remains the final authority on content appearing under his or her name.
 - Please keep citations to a minimum.
 - Please include a hyperlink, if possible, to any works referenced.
 - Textual citations are preferred.
 - Authors are welcome to follow *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*, or the *The Redbook: A Manual on Legal Style* or indeed to adopt any other citation form which makes it easy to find the work cited. We may apply some light bluebooking if needed.

The Editing Process

1. Your 'jot' will be edited for substance and form by your section editors and by the student editors, and also reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief. We try, in most cases, to edit with a light touch.
2. The amount of time between a final edit and publication varies, but can often be 6-10 weeks. Although it uses blog software, Jotwell is run like a law journal, and we strive to ensure a regular flow of content in the sections and on the 'front page' at jotwell.com through which so many of our readers enter the site. If for some reason your contribution needs to run before some date, please mention this when first sending in the contribution.

We look forward to your contribution.

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