



Tips for Publishing in the American Journal of International Law (AJIL)

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Subject matter and content of manuscripts:

1. AJIL is a general interest peer-reviewed journal that publishes articles, essays, and current developments focused on international law and U.S. foreign relations law. It generally does not publish manuscripts focused on legal developments within a particular (non-U.S.) country or comparative studies of domestic law issues. Manuscripts that include some treatment of these topics should clearly explain how they are relevant to important developments in international law or U.S. foreign relations issues.
2. For lead articles, AJIL is unlikely to publish purely doctrinal analysis—for example, about whether the reasoning in a particular ICJ decision was correct. It is much more likely to publish articles that analyze cross-cutting issues and/or make bigger picture theoretical, empirical, or prescriptive claims.
3. If you are interested in recent trends in a particular area of international law or U.S. foreign relations law (such as a new multilateral agreement or shifts in doctrines developed by international courts), consider writing an Essay or Current Development, which cannot exceed 11,000 words, including footnotes.
4. Chapters from PhD or SJD dissertations or book manuscripts are unlikely to be suitable for publication in AJIL as written. Such chapters should be revised so that the submitted manuscript's thesis, arguments, and contribution to the existing literature are fully explained within the confines of the manuscript itself and do not require knowledge of or cross-references to other chapters or sources.

The introduction:

1. State your thesis clearly. It is not enough merely to describe your topic or the issue area to which your paper relates. You should succinctly explain your argument and the precise claims that you are making.
2. Explain how your thesis relates to existing literature. Scholarship is in part a conversation with other scholars, and it should be clear to readers how your contribution fits with what has already been written, i.e., how it adds to or differs from that literature.
3. Make clear why your topic and your thesis are important, doctrinally, empirically, and/or theoretically. If readers are to spend time reviewing your paper, they need to be convinced early in the paper that this matters in some way.
4. The last paragraph or two of the introduction should include a “roadmap” that briefly explains what the remaining sections of the paper will discuss.

5. The introduction should be the last part of the paper that you finish, since it should reflect everything that you have learned while researching the project and writing the manuscript. You should consider re-writing the introduction a number of times while working on the paper to help clarify your thesis, arguments, and contributions to existing literature.

The organization and content of the paper and framing of arguments:

1. There should be a clear relationship between the organization of the paper and the thesis. It should be evident to readers why the paper has the sections and subsections that it has, and why those parts appear in a particular order.
2. A scholarly paper should not be overly argumentative or one-sided. It is not supposed to be like a brief to a court. Consider different perspectives on the issues the paper analyzes and openly identify and engage with the most obvious counter-arguments and potential objections to your thesis.
3. Do not over-claim. If there are limits in how certain you can be about your conclusions, based, for example, on empirical uncertainties, note those limits.
4. The paper should be written in clear and accessible prose so that your arguments and analysis are accessible to a generalist international law readership. Avoid excessive use of jargon, passive voice, long sentences with multiple dependent clauses, and extensive use of acronyms.
5. The conclusion should restate your thesis and succinctly explain how the arguments, analysis, and evidence presented earlier in the paper help to prove that thesis. The conclusion should also explain how the paper contributes to existing literature and why its doctrinal, empirical, and/or theoretical findings are important. You might also consider discussing the broader implications of the paper, for example, for another area of international law or for research that you or other scholars might undertake in the future.

Before submitting a manuscript to AJIL:

1. Ask a number of other colleagues to read and comment on your draft before submitting it to AJIL, and take account of their comments.
2. If you are not a native English speaker, consider asking a colleague or editor to review how the paper is written.
3. Make a good faith effort to format the paper and citations in the footnotes in the style used by AJIL. Review articles, essays, or current developments previously published in AJIL and have your paper roughly look like those. This will show a particular level of care in submission of the paper and a genuine focus on AJIL.
4. Ideally, give AJIL at least 14 days for exclusive consideration of the manuscript. Because AJIL is a peer-reviewed journal, we need time to seek reviews of the paper from our Board members and outside experts.