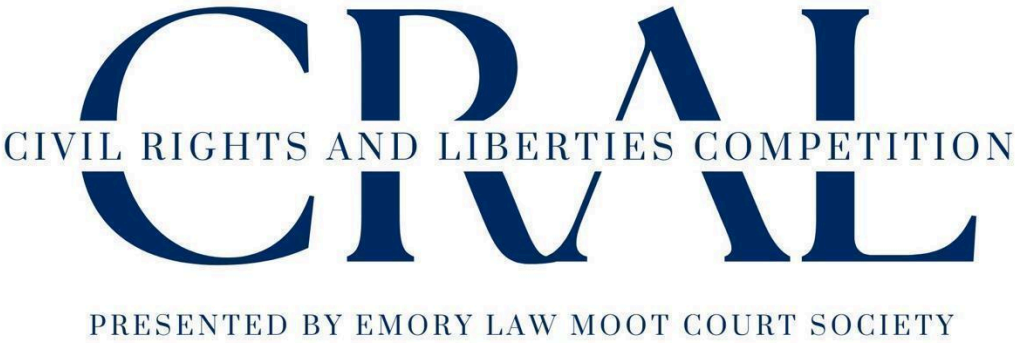
TWENTIETH ANNUAL CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES COMPETITION



PRESENTED BY EMORY LAW MOOT COURT SOCIETY

COMPETITION RULEBOOK

Emory Moot Court Society CRAL Co-Directors

Nikita Patel, Jason Suh, and Avadhut Khade

Emory Moot Court Society Faculty Advisors

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EMORY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Welcome to the 2026 Civil Rights and Liberties Competition (CRAL)!

CRAL will take place at Emory University School of Law in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia. Atlanta has a rich historical connection to the Civil Rights Movement, and each year Emory Law honors that tradition through hosting this competition. Emory Law Moot Court Society believes firmly that we must use our positions as advocates to work towards a more equitable society.

The following Rules are intended to ensure that all competitors, judges, and competition staff act with the utmost integrity and professionalism. They will be strictly enforced. The CRAL Co-Directors reserve the right to make decisions regarding any aspect of the competition, including modification of these rules. Any such modification will be communicated to all competitors as quickly as is feasible.

A team may make a request for clarification or interpretation of these Rules. Any such request must be emailed by a team member or student coach to emorymootcourt@gmail.com with the subject line "Rule Clarification for [Rule XX]" by **Monday, September 14th, 2026, at 11:59 p.m**. All times listed in these Rules are in Eastern Standard Time. All clarifications and interpretations will be posted on the CRAL website: www.law.emory.edu/cral.

We look forward to reading your briefs, hearing your arguments, and hosting you on October 16th–October 18th, 2026, at Emory University School of Law!

Nikita Patel, Jason Suh and Avadhut Khade, CRAL Co-Directors

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Rules

I. Important Dates

- July 6, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. EST — Registration Opens
- July 31, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. EST – Waitlist Notification Deadline
- August 3, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST — Registration Deadline
- August 17, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. EST – Problem Drop
- September 4, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST — Competitor Registration Form Due
- September 14, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST — Problem and Rulebook Clarification Request Deadline
- September 21, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST — Briefs Due
- (By) September 28, 2026 — Briefs Published
- October 12, 2026 — Preliminary Round Pairings Announced
- October 16–18, 2026 — Competition

The CRAL Co-Directors will strive to honor these dates, but they may be subject to change. All competitors will be notified of any date changes as soon as they are made. **All listed times are in Eastern Standard Time (EST).**

II. Registration

The deadline for competition registration is **August 3rd, 2026, at 11:59 p.m**. The link for registration will be posted on the CRAL website, www.law.emory.edu/cral and will go live on **July 6th, 2026 at 12:00 p.m**. Team registration will be capped at the first **thirty (30)** schools to register. Team registration is complete once the Co-Directors have received both a team's registration form and Emory's confirmed receipt of the registration fee. Per the registration form, registration fees are due within **thirty six (36)** hours of submitting a registration form.

To accommodate wide participation and the preference by some schools for sending two teams to moot court competitions, the **first five (5) schools** to register indicating they wish to register two (2) teams will be allowed to do so. After five schools have each registered two teams, additional requests to bring a second team will be placed on a waitlist. Schools whose second teams are waitlisted will be notified of registration status by July 31, 2026.

III. Registration of Two (2) Teams

Up to five (5) law schools may register up to two (2) teams, each consisting of two (2) or three (3) members. To apply, a school must e-mail emorymootcourt@gmail.com to request registration of two (2) teams beginning at 12:00 p.m. on July 6th, 2026 when registration opens. Requests sent prior to the opening of registration will not be counted. The first five schools to request to register two teams will be approved and will be notified via email. Those schools will be sent a link to register their second team.

All further requests for a second team will be placed on a waitlist in order of application. If a school fills out a registration form for two teams without (1) requesting a second team and (2) receiving approval to do so, **the second team will not be registered.**

If a school registers two teams for the competition, the two teams may not confer with one another in any aspect of writing their briefs. The two teams may not share research, arguments, and/or any other knowledge pertaining to their briefs or discuss any aspect of the problem until after the brief submission deadline on **September 21st, 2026 at 11:59 p.m**.

Furthermore, if a school has two teams competing in the competition, then the two teams will not be on the same side: one team will submit a Petitioner's Brief and one team will submit a Respondent's Brief.

For purposes of the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Competition, these two teams will be treated as separate and individual teams and will be scored accordingly.

IV. Roster

A team consists of two (2) or three (3) students attending the same law school. Each team must provide the names of all team members by **September 4th, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.** via the electronic form provided in the registration confirmation email. This competition is limited to those pursuing a JD degree. If a student is pursuing a joint LLM/JD or any other joint JD degree, they may register.

Teams may also provide the names of two (2) alternates. If a team member listed on the team roster cannot compete due to illness, travel cancellations, or other serious emergency, the team's advisor may request that a designated alternate be allowed to serve as a replacement. If no alternates are identified on the above-mentioned form, or if the listed alternates are unavailable, substitutions will be allowed only in extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the CRAL Co-Directors.

V. Ghost Teams

If an entire team is unable to compete due to illness or travel emergencies, their assigned opponent may argue against a "ghost team," which will be composed of volunteer Emory Moot Court Society members. Ghost teams will only be used in preliminary rounds and the octo-final round. Judges will not be informed of the

presence of any ghost teams and will score them regularly. Competition representatives will discard any ghost team scores after argument. Depending on circumstances, it may be necessary for a team to argue without an opponent. If this occurs, judges will be instructed to score the arguing team equitably, without regard to a lack of that team's opponent.

VI. Assigned Sides for Briefing and Arguing

When the competition problem is released, the CRAL Co-Directors will assign each team to act as counsel for either the Petitioner or Respondent; each team will receive its assigned side via email. If space permits a team to register after the problem is released, the team will receive its party assignment within a reasonable time after its registration is completed and paid.

Each team will be assigned a team number. The purpose of the number is to anonymize law school affiliation, so it is important that each team uses its team number throughout the competition and the brief writing process. At no time before or during the competition should a team make its law school known to fellow competitors or judges.

VII. Brief Formatting

Briefs are to be submitted electronically and formatted for 8 ½" by 11" white paper. The team number must be in the top-right corner of each page of the brief. Briefs should be typed. Footnotes and argument headings must be single-spaced. The cover page, table of contents, table of authorities, and appendices must also be single-spaced. All other portions of the brief must be double spaced.

Briefs must be written in Georgia 11-point typeface, and footnotes should be 9-point font. Briefs must have one-inch margins on all sides. Briefs must contain no identifying information; any identifying information included in the brief is subject to a deduction of ten (-10) points. All citations must comply with the form prescribed in the most recent edition of *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (Columbia L. Rev. Ass'n et al. eds., 22d ed. 2025). Briefs must not contain any information identifying competitors' law schools.

VIII. Brief Sections

A brief must contain the following items in the order indicated:

A. A cover page;
B. A table of contents with page references;
C. A table of authorities (arranged alphabetically within each source type)—cases, statutes, and other authorities—with references to the pages of the brief where they are cited;
D. A statement of the issues presented for review;
E. A statement of facts relevant to the issues presented for review with appropriate references to the record;
F. A summary of the argument;
G. The argument; and
H. A conclusion.

Briefs should omit a formal statement of jurisdiction and a formal standalone standard of review section. Appendices may be used to recite the text of statutes, provisions, or regulations but are not mandatory.

All briefs must be thirty (30) pages or fewer in length. Any partially filled page will count as one (1) page. Briefs that are overlong will receive a ten (-10) point deduction

for each page over thirty (30). This page limit does not include the cover page, table of contents, or table of authorities. The page limit is inclusive of the statement of the issues, statement of the facts, summary of the argument, argument, and conclusion sections, but should not include appendices. The cover page should not be numbered.

The table of contents and table of authorities should be numbered using Roman numerals (i.e., I, II, III); the remainder of the brief, including appendices, should be numbered using Arabic numerals (i.e., 1, 2, 3).

IX. Brief Certification

Competitors must certify that they prepared their brief in accordance with these rules and that the brief represents the work product and evaluation of only the members of the team named on its roster. These team members do not include any named alternates. All competitors, all listed alternates, and at least one coach must sign and date the certification form found on the last page of these Rules. This certification form must be scanned and emailed as a separate attachment in the same email used to submit competitors' briefs. Not submitting the certification is subject to a deduction of five (-5) points per day after the deadline, and if certification is not submitted prior to the competition date, the team's brief will receive a score of zero (0). A "day" will be assessed as a twenty-four-hour period, including weekends and holidays.

X. Brief Submission

Briefs must be submitted in electronic PDF format. The brief and the certification form must be sent together, but as separate attachments, via email to emorymootcourt@gmail.com by 11:59 p.m. EST on Monday, September 21st, 2026. The

email's subject line must read as follows: "Team [Team Number] CRAL 2026 Brief Submission." Once briefs are submitted, they are final; no revisions to briefs will be permitted.

Any team who submits their brief after the deadline shall be given a late submission penalty of five (-5) points for every day the brief is late. A "day" will be assessed as a twenty-four-hour period, including weekends and holidays.

The CRAL Co-Directors will publish electronic copies of each team's brief on the CRAL website on Monday, September 28th, 2026. After brief publication, teams may view, download, and print other teams' briefs. Schools with two teams shall not share their briefs internally before September 28th, 2026.

XI. Brief Scoring

Each brief will be scored by at least three (3) Emory Moot Court Society members under the supervision of the Emory Moot Court Society faculty advisor. A team's brief score is the average of its individual brief scores. A team's maximum possible brief score is 100 points.

To determine the "Best Brief" for the competition, the five highest-scored briefs will be scored by a panel of three Emory Law School professors or practitioners. These individuals will determine the winner of the "Best Brief" award exclusively – their scores will not affect advancement throughout the competition. Brief scores will be sent to teams following the competition.

XII. Prohibitions on Pre-Competition Assistance

Team members may not receive any outside assistance in researching, writing, or editing the brief. Coach, faculty, or practitioner assistance in preparing the brief in any way is strictly prohibited. Designated alternate assistance is also strictly prohibited. Designated alternates for a team may confer only with each other. If a school has two teams, designated alternates from each respective team may not confer with each other until after each team from that school has submitted its brief.

Teammates may receive assistance **from any source,** including from alternates and from a second team from the same school, **with oral argument preparation** beginning on **September 22nd, 2026 at 12:00 a.m**. **However**, pursuant to Rule X, schools with two registered teams shall not receive or give assistance to one another in the form of a brief or draft of a brief prior to the publication of briefs on September 28th, 2026.

Any use of generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Google Gemini, Meta AI, Grok) **during the brief-writing stage** of the competition is strictly prohibited. Any use of generative-AI during the brief-writing stage will result in automatic disqualification. The use of generative-AI is permitted after September 21st, 2026.

Violations of the Prohibitions on Pre-Competition Assistance will result in deductions and potentially exclusion from the competition; the CRAL Co-Directors reserve discretion in the determination of disqualification or point deduction.

XIII. General Round Information

While three team members may compete in the overall competition, only two members may participate in any single round of oral argument. Two team members must argue in each round. Teams may decide how to allocate arguing time between their two arguing members in any given round.

The competition consists of seven rounds of oral arguments, total. There will be three preliminary rounds: one on-brief, one off-brief, and one randomly assigned round. Then, the competition will proceed to the elimination rounds:

- Octo-final round (16 teams)
- Quarterfinal round (8 teams)
- Semifinal round (4 teams)
- Final round (2 teams)

Timeliness in rounds is of the utmost importance. Please be aware that judges may, at their discretion, deduct points based on a team's tardiness. If a team believes that their tardiness should be excused due to extenuating circumstances, they should consult the CRAL Co-Directors as soon as possible.

XIV. Round Order

Advocates will speak in this order:

- Petitioner's Argument (Issue I)
- Petitioner's Argument (Issue II)
- Respondent's Argument (Issue I)
- Respondent's Argument (Issue II)
- Petitioner's Rebuttal (if desired and requested)

XV. Timing

Each team will be given a total of twenty-five (25) minutes of oral argument time during each round. Teams may allocate their twenty-five minutes at their discretion. No team member may argue for fewer than nine (9) minutes. The twenty-five minutes includes any time the Petitioner may wish to reserve for rebuttal. Judges may interrupt arguments to ask questions and may, within their discretion, allow additional time to any participant. The clock does not stop when judges pose questions or while advocates are answering them. Bailiffs will be present in each round and will inform competitors of their remaining time at the following intervals: ten (10) minutes remaining, five (5) minutes remaining, one (1) minute remaining, and when time has elapsed.

XVI. Rebuttal

Petitioners will be given one period of rebuttal per round and must request their rebuttal time with the bailiff during announcements before the round begins. Rebuttal is not required. Petitioners may not request "the remainder of the team's time" in asking for a rebuttal period; they must specify the amount of time they wish to reserve. The Petitioner may rebut as many issues as they choose, but only one team member may give the rebuttal. Judges have the discretion to refuse to allow a rebuttal if it was not requested.

XVII. Scoring

Judges will give each team member an oral argument score out of 100 in the three preliminary rounds and the octo-final round. The recipient of the "Best Oralist" award will be determined by the highest average individual score from the first three rounds. A

team member must argue in at least two of the first three rounds to be eligible to win Best Oralist. Every score an individual team member earns is figured into the average for the Best Oralist calculation, regardless of whether that person argues in two rounds or three.

The team argument score for each round is the average of the individual argument score of each team member. For example, in Round 1, if Team Member A gets a 90 and Team Member B gets a 94, the team argument score for the round will be a 92. The winner of each preliminary round will be determined by a combination of the team's total team brief scores and argument score from that round.

The scores for each round will be computed as follows:

	Brief	**Oral Argument**
Preliminary Rounds	40%	60%
Octo-Final Rounds	30%	70%
Quarter-Final Round	0%	100%
Semi-Final Round	0%	100%
Final Round	0%	100%

Beginning with the quarterfinal round and continuing through the remainder of the competition, teams will advance based on the consensus of the judges of that round. Although judges will not complete score sheets in the quarterfinal and subsequent rounds, they will be instructed to abide by the same scoring criteria used for earlier rounds.

In the event of a tie in any round, the team with the higher brief score will be determined to be the winner of the round.

XVIII. Opponent Determination

During the preliminary rounds, each team will face three (3) different schools. After the preliminary rounds, schools will be ranked by winning records. For purposes of rankings, ties will be broken first by average argument scores from the preliminary rounds and then by brief scores. The top sixteen (16) teams advance to the octo-final round using a seeded bracket; teams advance to the next round by winning head-to-head matchups.

Placement in the octo-finals will be based on rankings from the preliminary rounds. In the octo-finals, the 1st seeded team will argue against the 16th seeded team, the 2nd seeded team will argue against the team seeded 15th, and so on. The CRAL Co-Directors may modify the bracket if absolutely necessary to avoid any conflict that may arise. In each elimination round, teams are randomly assigned to argue for the Petitioner or the Respondent. Teams will learn which side they will argue as close as possible to dissemination of advancement results.

XIX. Observation, Coaching, and Disclosing School Affiliation

Scouting is not permitted. While a team is competing, competitors and coaches of that team may not observe any round in which that team is not arguing. If a competitor is not arguing during a round, that competitor may only observe the round if their teammates are arguing in that round. If only observing oral argument, alternates may only attend rounds in which their teams are arguing. Coaches, non-arguing

competitors, and alternates may not communicate with or in any way aid arguing competitors in-round **as soon as the judges enter the room**. The only round available for general observation will be the final round, which will be open for in-person attendance. Teams who violate these rules are subject to penalties and possible disqualification at the discretion of the CRAL Co-Directors.

During competition, competitors must not indicate the name of their law school. If a teammate, alternate, or coach is observing a round, that person may not display or in any way disclose the school name of any team in the competition.

XX. Requesting Scores and Making Complaints

Oral argument score sheets will be distributed to teams after the conclusion of the competition. Teams may not request score sheets at any point during the competition, but may submit a complaint and request an immediate review of a round due to potential judicial bias.

If a team wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of the competition, it may do so by sending the Co-Directors an email at emorymootcourt@gmail.com. Complaint emails should be sent with a subject line of "Complaint Filed by Team [Team Number]." Timeliness of rounds is of the utmost importance to the competition; therefore, teams may only make complaints after the conclusion of a round and may not refuse to start a round because of a complaint.

If a complaint is raised that a judge's comments evidence inappropriate bias and that complaint is substantiated, that judge's scores for that round will be dropped for all teams. The dropped score will be replaced by an average of the two remaining judges' scores. Any remedy beyond this is at the discretion of the CRAL Co-Directors.

The competition strives to ensure that no team argues before the same judge twice. Extensive efforts are made to provide three (3) practicing attorneys to judge each round. If needed, and at the discretion of the Co-Directors, 3L members of EMCS may sit in as judges in the event of volunteer cancellations, repeat-judge conflicts, or other unavoidable circumstances. The mere assignment of any judge is not a valid basis for any standalone complaint. Any other remedy or lack of remedy to a complaint is at the sole discretion of the CRAL Co-Directors.

XXI. Awards

Awards will be given for the following categories:

- Top Ten Briefs (Team Award);
- Best Brief (Team Award);
- Top Ten Oralists;
- Best Oralist; and
- First Place Team.

All teams are encouraged to attend the final round, after which awards will be announced in-person and via live-stream. The final round and awards ceremony will be made available via live-stream.

XXII. Competition Schedule

The competition schedule will be emailed to teams on October 12, 2026; it will also be published on the CRAL website. The Co-Directors may make changes to the schedule before and during the competition. Competitors will be notified of any changes to the schedule via email as soon as possible. By October 12th, 2026, at 5 p.m.

EST, competitors will receive detailed instructions regarding each preliminary round in which they will argue, including times, argument locations, and directions. For subsequent rounds, competitors will receive information as soon as possible after advancement determinations are made.

XXIII. Penalties

- **Late Briefs:** Deduction of five (-5) points per day late. *See* Rule IX for further explanation.
- **Long Briefs:** Deduction of ten (-10) points per page over thirty (30). *See* Rule VII for further explanation.
- **Incorrect Formatting:** Briefs that do not comply with the formatting guidelines specified by Rule VI are subject to a deduction of half a point (-0.5) per violating page.
- **Improper Anonymization:** Deduction of five (-5) points for failing to anonymize briefs. *See* Rule VI for further explanation.
- **Use of Generative AI during brief-writing:** Immediate disqualification for any use of generative-AI during the brief-writing stage. *See* Rule XII for further explanation.
- **Failure to Submit Team Certification Form:** Deduction of five (-5) points per day after the deadline. If certification is not submitted prior to the competition date, the team's brief will be disqualified. *See* Rule VIII for further explanation.
- **Improper Assistance or Coaching:** Any brief found to have been written with the direct assistance of any individual outside the designated team members shall be subject to penalties based on the severity of the assistance and at the discretion of the CRAL Co-Directors. *See* Rule XI for further explanation. Any team found to have engaged in improper assistance or coaching during or before oral arguments pursuant to Rules XI and XVIII shall be subject to penalties based on the severity of the assistance and at the discretion of the CRAL Co-Directors.

- **Miscellaneous Penalties**: Any team found to have engaged in behavior that is not explicitly prohibited by these Rules but nonetheless confers an unfair advantage upon that team may be subject to penalties at the discretion of the CRAL Co-Directors.

Certification Form

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that the brief submitted is the work product solely of the undersigned competitors, and the undersigned competitors have not received the aid of any faculty member, nor any other assistance, in connection with the preparation of this brief or the analysis of the problem. We further certify that we have fully complied with the CRAL 2026 Competition Rulebook in preparing our brief and accept any penalties assessed in violation thereof.

AGREED AND ACKNOWLEDGED:

Competitor 1 Name (Print)	(Signature)	Date
Competitor 2 Name (Print)	(Signature)	Date
Competitor 3 Name (Print)	(Signature)	Date
Alternate 1 Name (Print)	(Signature)	Date
Alternate 2 Name (Print)	(Signature)	Date
Coach Name (Print)	(Signature)	Date

In accordance with Rule X of the 2026 CRAL Competition Rulebook, this affirmation should be sent as a separate PDF document to emorymootcourt@gmail.com. Include this document in the same email serving the brief submission.