Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I register for Gressman if I haven't completed Appellate Advocacy?

A: Yes. Appellate Advocacy is a co-requisite. You may take both courses concurrently.

Q: Can I compete in Gressman more than once?

A: Yes, provided you did not advance to the quarterfinal (Elite Eight) round during your first enrollment and meet all other eligibility requirements.

Q: Can I register after the competition problem is released?

A: Yes. However, you will not receive an extension. Your brief will still be due five weeks after the problem is released.

Q: How do I find a partner?

A: You are encouraged to find your own partner to ensure you work with someone whose approach to the competition aligns with yours. The Gressman director can help match you with another student who is also registering without a partner.

Q: Can I drop the course after registering and selecting a partner?

A: You may drop the course through the end of the Add/Drop period. However, withdrawing also affects your partner. Please consider your commitment carefully before selecting a partner.

Q: When will the competition problem be released?

A: The Gressman competition packet will be released on the first Friday in January.

Q: Can I choose which side to argue?

A: No. You will be assigned to represent either the petitioner or the respondent.

Q: How much time will I have to write the brief?

A: You will have five weeks from the release of the competition problem.

Q: What must I do to earn the one credit?

A: You must submit a brief demonstrating a good-faith effort to argue the case on behalf of your client and participate in oral arguments through the round in which you are eliminated.

Q: Are class meetings required?

A: You must attend one Teams meeting to review the competition rules and timeline. Two meeting times will be offered during the first full week of classes in January.

Two additional Teams sessions are optional:

- **Brief-writing seminar:** Held in January for students taking Appellate Advocacy in the spring who want guidance on writing appellate briefs.
- **Oral argument seminar:** Held in February for students seeking tips before the oral argument rounds begin.

Q: How are briefs and oral arguments scored?

A: Appellate Advocacy E-Board members score briefs anonymously under the supervision of the Gressman faculty director. Brief scores carry forward through the competition. Attorney judges score oral arguments separately in each round, and oral argument scores do not carry forward.

The weighting of brief and oral argument scores varies by round:

- **Through the round of 16:** Brief score accounts for 40% of the team's total score; oral argument accounts for 60%.
- **Round of eight:** Brief score accounts for 30% of the total score.
- **Round of four:** Brief score accounts for 20% of the total score.
- **Final round:** Scoring is based entirely on oral argument.

Q: When do oral arguments begin and end?

A: Oral arguments begin in late February and conclude by April 1.

Q: Will I always argue the side to which I was originally assigned?

A: Not necessarily. Although you will initially be assigned a side and prepare your brief accordingly, oral argument pairings follow a seeded competition format. If two teams assigned to the same side meet in a subsequent round, a coin flip determines which team argues for the petitioner and which argues for the respondent. You may therefore need to argue the opposing side, presenting arguments you did not prepare in your brief. All participants must be prepared to argue both sides.

Q: What if an oral argument conflicts with my evening class?

A: You must attend your scheduled Gressman oral argument. Missing your regularly scheduled class will result in an unexcused absence.

Q: What if I have an emergency conflict during an oral argument round?

A: Contact the Gressman director as soon as you become aware of the conflict. The director will attempt to reschedule your argument. However, because attorney judges are recruited and scheduled in advance, rescheduling may not be possible. If your argument cannot be rescheduled, you will forfeit.