



NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY ODISHA



4TH NLUO-CLS ESSAY *Writing Competition*

presented by

The Constitutional Law Society



OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

National Law University Odisha, Cuttack was established by Act 4 of 2008 by the Odisha State Legislature keeping in mind an enunciated vision of advancement of learning, teaching, research, diffusion of knowledge in the field of law and catering to the needs of society by developing the professional skills of those intending to take up the professions of Advocacy, Judicial Services, Legal services, and so on. National Law University, Odisha is committed to providing an atmosphere in which academic excellence is the foremost priority for students. Along the lines of this vision, NLUO has significantly catered to the needs of the research in various legal fields by paving way for various dedicated research centres and societies. Such endeavours enable students to pursue individual interests and take part in various literary and recreational activities throughout the academic year.

The Constitutional Law Society is one of such initiatives of NLUO which aims at promoting study, research, and informed deliberation in the field of Constitutional Laws, and its allied subjects with a policy and application-oriented purpose.

EVENT DETAILS

The 4th NLUO-CLS Essay Writing Competition invites participation from all students of law in the form of essays containing deliberations over various topics of contemporary relevance.

MODE

The competition shall be conducted in Online mode.

ELIGIBILITY

- Students pursuing Five-Year/Three-Year LLB Discipline
- Students pursuing One-Year/Two-Year LLM Discipline
- Students pursuing any other undergraduate or postgraduate law degree from any recognized university

THEMES FOR THE ESSAYS

The themes for the event have been underlined below. Participants are thus, encouraged to demonstrate their understanding of any one of the themes that they choose through short and succinct essays according to the submission guidelines. However, the participants shall note that the given list of topics is completely indicative and not mandatory. Participants are free to write on any other topic falling within the ambit of the main theme.

ESSAY THEMES

I. The Proportionality Test: Rights, Restriction, and Dissent in Constitutional India

The Indian Constitution treats liberty as a foundational value while allowing the State to impose reasonable restrictions on certain specific grounds such as security, decency, morality, and public order. Contemporary practices, however, raise questions about how this balance is practiced in application. Prolonged pre-trial detention under statutes such as UAPA and PMLA, extended internet suspensions, revisions to electoral rolls, and restrictions on public assembly are typically justified on security or public-order grounds, and their consistency with proportionality standards has been debated in both judicial reasoning and academic scholarship.

Central to this debate is whether the proportionality test, as articulated by Indian courts, is applied with the analytical rigour it demands, or if it is invoked as a formal step without the equivalent corresponding substantive scrutiny. Participants are invited to critically examine how proportionality functions as a doctrinal safeguard in Indian constitutional law.

INDICATIVE TOPICS

I. The Threshold for Bail under the UAPA and the Presumption of Guilt.

II. Regulating Hate Speech in India: Doctrinal Gaps Between Free Expression and Public Order.

III. The Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls: Verification or Disenfranchisement?

IV. Morality and Decency: An Unreasonable Restriction on Freedom of Speech in India?

V. The Right to Protest, Civil Disobedience, and the Doctrine of Constitutional Morality.

ESSAY THEMES

II. Borrowed Constitutions: Transplant, Translation, and Transformation in Comparative Constitutionalism

Constitutions rarely emerge in isolation. They are, more often than not, products of borrowing, adaptation, and reinterpretation across jurisdictions. The Constitution of India itself stands testament to this, having drawn from the British, American, Irish, Canadian and Australian Constitutions, among others. But borrowing a constitutional provision from another country is never a straightforward act of copying and pasting.

When a right or legal doctrine is taken out of the social and political setting where it originally developed, it inevitably changes as it adapts to a new constitutional system. This raises questions of legitimacy and fidelity: does comparative borrowing enrich constitutional interpretation, or does it risk imposing frameworks ill-suited to local realities? This theme invites participants to critically examine the process, promise, and perils of constitutional transplantation, and whether borrowed provisions can ever be said to be truly indigenised.

INDICATIVE TOPICS

I. Judicial Borrowing: Comparative Reasoning and the Use of Foreign Precedent by the Supreme Court of India.

II. Federalism Re-Imagined: Comparative Lessons from Cooperative and Competitive Federal Models.

III. Constitutional Amendment Design: Rigidity, Flexibility, and Comparative Amendment Procedures.

IV. The Use of U.S. First Amendment Jurisprudence in Indian Free Speech Cases: Consistent Doctrine or Selective Application?

V. The Directive Principles of State Policy: An Indigenous Innovation or a Transplant without Context?

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

GENERAL

1. Submissions shall be made in .doc/.docx format (Word 2007 or later versions).
2. All submissions are to be made via google form provided. (Note: write your name and co-author's name as the filename. Example: John Davidson.docx or John Davidson, Jay David.docx)
3. The google form that will be used for submission will ask for the following information: Name, Email, Contact Number(s). Please ensure that the same contact details are used for submission as the registration form.
4. No indication to the Author(s) identity should exist within the submitted manuscript. Such a breach will lead to outright rejection of the submission.
5. Manuscript word limit: 1500-2500 (excluding abstract).

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

6. Abstract of 50-100 words (not inclusive within the total word count) must be at the top of the manuscript.
 7. Citations should be done via hyperlinking. For sources where hyperlinks are not available, any uniform method of end-noting may be used..
 8. Submission date: on or before 18th September, 2026.
 9. Your essay should be error-free: grammar, spelling, punctuation etc.– your paper must be original and plagiarism free. Use of AI is strictly prohibited.
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FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- Font style: Times New Roman
- Size: 12
- Line spacing: 1.5
- All text should be justified.

PROCESS OF EVALUATION

- All the essays will go through a double-blind peer-review process.
- The review shall be in two stages:
- Technical Review: The article shall be checked for plagiarism and AI-usage along with language and grammar.
- Content Review: Review on whether it fulfills criteria of contemporariness, relevance, novelty.
- It is recommended that authors visit the CLS-NLUO Blog to get a better understanding on the type of submissions that are approved by the Editorial Board.

Manuscripts not in conformity with these guidelines may be rejected at the sole discretion of the Editorial Board.

The Editorial Board reserves the right to send the manuscripts back to the authors for any modification(s) at any stage, in the event of non-conformity with any of the submission guidelines.

The Editorial Board may, in its absolute discretion, waive any of the above rules or amend the process. In case of any dispute or ambiguity, the decision of the Editorial Board shall be final and binding.

MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Grammar and Language

The language of the manuscript must be crisp and concise. A direct statement or argument would be preferred over an indirect one and minimum usage of passive voice is recommended. Author(s) must be familiar with the usage of a term used in the manuscript. The author(s) may be marked down for unnecessary repetition, long-winded sentences and irrelevant rhetoric.

2. Structure and Logical Coherence

The manuscript must be logically sound and appropriate for the objective it seeks to achieve. Author(s) may be marked down for arguments based on incorrect premises or presumptions, the lack of a clear structure or the lack of a proper logical flow.

3. Referencing and Research

The manuscript must reflect substantial and not just superficial research. The author needs to be aware of what citation is required in the circumstances, when to cite (and when not to cite) and the relevance of that citation.

MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION CRITERIA

4. Contemporary Relevance

Manuscripts are expected to include recent developments on the topic. A manuscript is considered to possess contemporary relevance when it deals with trending societal issues and legal issues that have not been given the attention they deserve. The topic may also be one that has faded from public memory but has reemerged for some reason. The relevance of the particular topic should be highlighted by the author(s) in the introduction.

5. Contribution to Existing Literature

If the topic of the manuscript is one which has been written about extensively in the past, the author(s) must consider what the contribution of the manuscript to the discussion is. Merely quoting and/or summarising precedents would be inadequate. On the other hand, writing in a more innovative manner and providing a novel explanation/interpretation of a concept would be appreciated.

PROCESS OF REGISTRATION & SUBMISSION

Registration to be done via [this form](#) by the **August 28, 2026**.

Registration fee (non-refundable) is as follows for the participants:

NLUO STUDENTS

Single Authorship: ₹250

Co-Authorship: ₹400

NON - NLUO STUDENTS

Single Authorship: ₹300

Co-Authorship: ₹500

Submission must be done via [this form](#) by the **18th September, 2026**.

Please ensure that details provided in the registration form is same as in the submission form.

PROCESS OF REGISTRATION

All participants are requested to pay the registration fee in the following way:

- Visit <https://eazypay.icicibank.com>
- Enter Institution Name as 'National Law University' and click on 'Go'.
- Fill the details.
 - a. Email id
 - b. Mobile No.
 - c. Amount
 - d. Student Name (Enter your name)
 - e. Roll or Enrolment No. (Enter your Roll / Enrolment number for NLUO students and enter 131 for others)
 - f. Semester (Enter your Semester number for NLUO students and enter 11 for others)
 - g. Year of Study
 - h. Payment Date
 - i. Purpose (Mention 4th CLS Essay Competition)
- Once the required data is furnished, click on 'Submit' after entering the captcha and OTP.
- After the payment you will get the auto generated payment receipt, which must be uploaded in the registration form.

PRIZES

WINNERS

Prize: **INR 7,500** Cash Prize + Publication in CLS Blog
(After Incorporating Reviewer Comments) + Certificate
(Ranked)

RUNNERS UP

Prize: **INR 5,000** Cash Prize + Publication in CLS Blog
(After Incorporating Reviewer Comments) + Certificate
(Ranked)

SECOND RUNNERS UP

Prize: **INR 2,500** Cash Prize + Publication in CLS Blog
(After Incorporating Reviewer Comments) + Certificate
(Ranked)

PARTICIPANTS

Certificate of Participation for all the participants

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Constitutional Law Society



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