

Course Title	Introduction to Legal Concepts and Methodologies
Course Code	DLNLT500
Course Type	Compulsory (Preparatory Seminar)
Level	Master (LLM)
Duration	2 weeks (Intensive Pre-semester Seminar) including 3 teleconferences
Instructor	Dr Dimitrios Devetzis
ECTS	3
Contact Hours	40 hours total (20 hours/week over 2 weeks)
Self-Study Hours	30 hours total (15 hours/week over 2 weeks)
Target Audience	Students from non-legal backgrounds entering the LLM in Law of New Technologies
Prerequisites	None (designed for students with non-legal backgrounds)
Course Objectives	<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>This intensive two-week preparatory seminar is specifically designed for students entering the Master's Programme in Law of New Technologies who come from non-legal backgrounds (e.g., computer science, engineering, business, social sciences). The primary purpose is to equip these students with the foundational legal knowledge and methodological tools necessary to successfully engage with advanced legal studies in the technology domain.</p> <p>Many students entering specialized legal programmes possess strong technical expertise but lack familiarity with fundamental legal concepts, legal reasoning processes, and the distinctive methodologies employed in legal analysis. This knowledge gap can create significant challenges when engaging with complex legal frameworks governing emerging technologies. This seminar bridges that gap by providing a comprehensive yet accessible introduction to the legal world.</p> <p>The seminar covers the essential building blocks of legal understanding. Students will explore the nature and sources of law, understanding how legal systems are structured and how different forms of law (statutes, regulations, case law) interact. They will learn to read and interpret legal texts, developing skills in statutory interpretation and case analysis that are fundamental to all legal work.</p> <p>A central focus is on legal reasoning and methodology. Students will discover how lawyers think, how legal arguments are constructed, and how to apply legal rules to factual situations. They will learn to identify legal issues, analyze precedents,</p>

	<p>distinguish cases, and engage in legal problem-solving. These skills are transferable across all areas of law and are particularly crucial when dealing with the novel legal questions posed by new technologies.</p> <p>The seminar also introduces core legal concepts that recur throughout legal studies: rights and duties, legal capacity and legal personality, contract formation and validity, liability and remedies, jurisdiction and applicable law. Understanding these concepts provides a conceptual framework for approaching specialized topics in technology law.</p> <p>Furthermore, students will gain practical skills in legal research, learning how to locate relevant laws, regulations, and judicial decisions. They will become familiar with legal databases, citation systems, and the structure of legal documents. This practical knowledge is essential for independent study and research throughout the programme.</p> <p>The intensive two-week format allows for immersive learning, combining lectures with interactive exercises, case studies, and practical workshops. By the end of the seminar, students from non-legal backgrounds will have developed a solid foundation in legal thinking and will be prepared to engage confidently with the substantive legal content of the master's programme, particularly as it applies to digital economy, data protection, artificial intelligence, and other technology-related legal issues.</p> <p>This preparatory seminar thus serves as an essential bridge, ensuring that all students, regardless of their academic background, can participate fully and effectively in advanced legal discourse on new technologies, contributing their unique technical perspectives while thinking with legal rigor and precision.</p>
Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon successful completion of the seminar, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the basic structure and sources of law, including the hierarchy of legal norms and the distinction between different types of legal instruments. 2. Read and interpret legal texts (statutes, regulations, judicial decisions) with accuracy and attention to detail. 3. Apply fundamental legal reasoning techniques, including statutory interpretation, case analysis, and legal argumentation. 4. Identify and analyze legal issues within factual scenarios, particularly those involving technological contexts. 5. Understand core legal concepts such as rights, duties, legal personality, contractual capacity, liability, and jurisdiction. 6. Conduct basic legal research using appropriate databases, resources, and citation methods. 7. Analyze judicial decisions by identifying facts, legal issues, reasoning, and holdings.

Course Content

WEEK 1: FOUNDATIONS OF LAW AND LEGAL SYSTEMS

Day 1-2: First online session - Introduction to Law and Legal Systems (14 hours)

What is law? The nature and functions of law in society. The distinction between law and other social norms (morality, ethics, customs). Sources of law: legislation, case law, custom, and doctrine. The hierarchy of legal norms (constitutions, statutes, regulations). Introduction to major legal systems: civil law vs. common law traditions. The European Union legal order and its relationship with national law.

Day 3-4: Reading and Interpreting Legal Texts (14 hours)

The structure and language of statutes and regulations. Techniques of statutory interpretation: literal, purposive, and contextual approaches. Understanding legislative intent and policy considerations. Reading judicial decisions: case structure, ratio decidendi vs. obiter dicta. Identifying legal principles from cases. The doctrine of precedent and stare decisis.

Day 5: Second online session - Core Legal Concepts I (7 hours)

Legal rights and duties: the Hohfeldian framework. Legal personality: natural and legal persons. Legal capacity and legal competence. The concept of juridical acts and legal transactions. Introduction to property rights and ownership. Contractual relationships and their formation.

WEEK 2: LEGAL REASONING, METHODOLOGY, AND RESEARCH

Day 6-7: Legal Reasoning and Problem-Solving (14 hours)

The IRAC method: Issue, Rule, Application, Conclusion. Identifying legal issues in factual scenarios. Legal syllogism and deductive reasoning. Applying legal rules to facts. Analogical reasoning and distinguishing cases. Balancing competing interests and principles. Constructing legal arguments: structure, clarity, and persuasiveness.

Day 8: Third online session Core Legal Concepts I (7 hours)

Liability: civil, criminal, and administrative. Fault, negligence, and strict liability. Causation and damages. Remedies: compensation, injunctions, specific performance. Jurisdiction and applicable law. Introduction to conflict of laws and private international law principles.

Day 9: -Legal Research Methodologies (7 hours)

Legal research strategies and techniques. Primary vs. secondary sources. Using legal databases (EUR-Lex, national databases, academic resources). Understanding legal citations (Bluebook, OSCOLA). Finding relevant statutes, regulations, and case law. Evaluating the authority and relevance of legal sources. Academic legal writing: structure, style, and referencing.

	<p>Day 10: Fourth online session- Integration and Application to Technology Law (7 hours)</p> <p>Applying legal concepts to technology scenarios: contract formation in e-commerce, liability for software defects, data protection and privacy rights. Introduction to how law adapts to technological change. The challenge of regulating innovation. Case studies connecting legal principles to real-world technology issues. Final assessment and seminar wrap-up: consolidating learning and preparing for the main programme.</p>
Teaching Methodology	<p>Lectures – Interactive Seminars – Case Study Analysis – Legal Research Workshops – Problem-Based Learning Exercises – Group Discussions – Self-Study Activities</p> <p>The teaching methodology is designed to be highly interactive and practical, recognizing that students are learning an entirely new discipline. Each day combines short lectures introducing key concepts with extensive practical exercises where students apply what they've learned. Case studies drawn from technology-related contexts help students see the relevance of legal principles to their areas of expertise. Small group discussions encourage peer learning and allow students to articulate their understanding. Legal research workshops provide hands-on experience with databases and citation tools. The intensive format enables immersive learning with immediate feedback and iterative skill development.</p>
Bibliography	<p>REQUIRED READING</p> <p>Holland, J. & Webb, J. (2019). Learning Legal Rules: A Students' Guide to Legal Method and Reasoning. 10th ed., Oxford University Press.</p> <p>McLeod, I. (2019). Legal Method. 11th ed., Red Globe Press.</p> <p>Finch, E. & Fafinski, S. (2019). Legal Skills. 7th ed., Oxford University Press.</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY READING</p> <p>Schauer, F. (2009). Thinking Like a Lawyer: A New Introduction to Legal Reasoning. Harvard University Press.</p> <p>Rubin, E. (2015). Legal Reasoning, Legal Process, and the Judiciary as an Institution. California Law Review, 85(2), 265-322.</p> <p>Craig, P. & de Búrca, G. (2020). EU Law: Text, Cases, and Materials. 7th ed., Oxford University Press. [Chapters 1-3 only]</p> <p>Zweigert, K. & Kötz, H. (1998). An Introduction to Comparative Law. 3rd ed., Oxford University Press. [Selected chapters on legal families]</p> <p>Tetley, W. (2000). Mixed Jurisdictions: Common Law vs. Civil Law (Codified and Uncodified). Louisiana Law Review, 60(3), 677-738. (Open Access)</p> <p>Additional readings and case materials will be provided during the seminar for each session.</p>
Evaluation	<p>Class Participation and Daily Exercises (20%)</p>

	<p>Legal Research Assignment (30%) Final Legal Problem-Solving Assessment (50%)</p> <p>The evaluation is designed to be formative and supportive, recognizing that students are building entirely new skills. The emphasis is on demonstrating understanding of basic legal concepts and the ability to apply legal reasoning, not on achieving expert-level analysis. Continuous feedback throughout the seminar helps students develop confidence in legal thinking.</p>
Language	English/Greek