Skills for Impact - Practical Legal Skills for Public Policy Students 2018/2019 Spring

Course Description

Skills that legal practitioners develop and apply in their careers such as analysis of texts, development of evidence-based arguments, accurate writing are invaluable for anyone entering the job market. This course provides an opportunity for public policy students to develop practical legal skills that will be of assistance to them in their future careers.

Skills learned on the course will include the basics of making clear legal arguments and recommendations orally and in writing, legal analysis and legal writing (in particular, referencing and accuracy requirements). The course concludes with a mock courtroom session where student teams will argue either as the prosecution or defence on an assigned case.

The course also provides an opportunity to develop a better understanding of the law, including basic legal principles, how to access legislation and legal texts, how to read a court judgment, and locating legal documents and materials (research).

The course builds on the skills that support and develop the other 'law for public policy students' courses provided by the instructor (including *Rule of Law* and *Human Rights*).

Learning Outcomes

This practical course will provide students with opportunities to apply their skills through a series of in-class individualand team exercises. Students will develop skills of analysis, evidence-based writing, research and clear communication.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand core legal principles, terminology, sources of law and branches of law.
- Understand the core analytical and practical skills necessary for lawyers.
- Work individually and in teams to analyse legislation and legal documents.
- Understand how to draft with precision and based on evidence.

- Develop their ability to communicate clear, structured and effective arguments in writing and orally.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Students are required to do the pre-course readings, and to be present and actively participate throughout the course. Students will be graded on the basis of their active participation during the course, completion of in-class assignments and an inter-class assignment (between day 2 and 3).These assignments will be assessed for quality of analysis, clarity of advice/argument, as well as teamwork, prioritisation, and time-management (where relevant).

The credits for the course are earned on a Pass/Fail basis. Attendance for all sessions is a requirement as per SFI rules.

According to the CEU Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations (Annex 1.), in case of a 1-credit course, students are expected to spend 40-50 hours on non-classroom, autonomous, self-directed learning (homework, consultations with the course instructor and preparing for classes).

Readings (Mandatory)

The core text used for this course will be: Emily Finch & Stefan Fafinski, *Legal Skills*, (6[th]edn.) Oxford University Press 2017. ****PDF copies of the relevant chapters are provided in the "reading" folder at the end of this section****

Please note that it is a requirement to pass the course that you can demonstrate having done the readings.

Please also read about the legal system in your own country, which we will discuss in class, as well as these two short pieces on logical arguments and legal arguments:

- logical arguments: https://www.uno.edu/lrc/writingcenter/documents/MAKING-LOGICAL-ARGUMENTS.pdf
- legal arguments (just parts I-III) https://groups.csail.mit.edu/dig/TAMI/inprogress/LegalReasoning.html

NOTE: Please bring laptops with you to class as they will be required for the in-class exercises.

Course Outline

Day 1

9:00- 10:40　　　Introduction to the law

- Why law matters
- Access to justice
- Discrimination
- Rule of law or rule by law
- Classification and fields of law
- Basic legal principles - civil law

- Basic legal principles - criminal law
- Sources of law

Break (10:40-11:00)

11:00 – 12:40   Writing for law

- The importance of precision in writing
- Accurate referencing
- Developing definitions
- Evidence-based argumentation
- Practical exercise: Presenting your argument in writing

12:40 – 1:30   Lunch break

1:30 – 3:10   Legal Research and Analysis skills

- Accessing and understanding legal texts
- Legal analysis skills
- Practical exercise: Legal analysis

3:30 – 5:10   Reading a court judgment

- Understanding a court judgment

Day 2

9:00- 10:40   Legal Arguments

- Legal reasoning practical exercise

Break

11:00- 12:40 Legislative review skills

- The legislative process and accessing legislation (draft laws and laws in force)
- How to review a piece of legislation

12:40 – 1:30   Lunch break

1:30 – 3:10   Practical exercise: Legislative review

3:30 – 5:10   Argue your case!

- Start of inter-class task

Inter-class task: Students will work in teams (either prosecution or defence) to develop evidence-based arguments for 1) a written legal brief and 2) Oral arguments. These will be finalised in class in day 3 and teams will have to argue their cases in an oral legal arguments session.

Day 3

9:00- 10:40   Inter-class task continuation

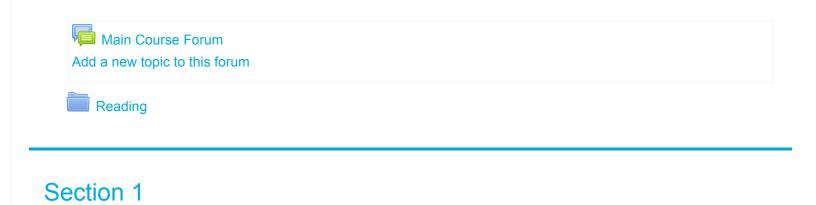- Student teams finalise their arguments and briefs

Break

11:00- 12:40 Mock courtroom

- Team 1
- Team 2

12:40 – 1:30   Lunch break

1:30 – 3:10   Mock courtroom

- Team 3
- Review of all teams arguments and briefs

3:30 – 5:10   Q&A, discussion

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