**DOPP5374 Skills for Impact - Practical Legal Skills for Public Policy and Public Administration Students 2023/24 Spring**

**Syllabus 2023/24**

**Course level: MA**

**Credits: 2 credits/4 ECTS**

**Course type: Mandatory elective**

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**PLEASE CHECK MOODLE FOR THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION**

**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 and public administration 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-based 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 individual and 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.

**Workload**

Per CEU policy, the total student workload (for in-class and out of class work combined) is estimated to be approximately 30 hours per ECTS credit. This is a 2 ECTS course. Readings and the assignments have been prepared with this in mind. If you are struggling with the workload, please reach out as early as possible.

**Readings (required)**

The core text used for this course will be: Emily Finch & Stefan Fafinski, *Legal Skills*, (6thedn.) Oxford University Press 2017. **\*\*PDF copies of the relevant chapters are provided in the "reading" folder in Moodle\*\***

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 this short piece on legal arguments:

* legal arguments (just parts I-III) <https://groups.csail.mit.edu/dig/TAMI/inprogress/LegalReasoning.html>

**Sample Course Outline \*\*This will be modified depending on the final dates/times for the course, so PLEASE CONSULT EMAIL SENT PRIOR TO THE START OF THE COURSE FOR FINAL VERSION\*\*\***

***Day 1*9:30 - 4:00pm**

**Session: 9:30- 10:30      Introduction to the law**

* What is law?
* Access to justice
* Classification and fields of law
* Legal traditions (Common Law, Civil Law)
* Utilitarianism
* Sources of law

**Break (10:30-11:00)**

**Session: 11:00 – 12:30   Writing for law**

* Identify the issue (Asking the right questions)

**10 minute comfort break (approx 11:55 - 12:05)**

* The importance of precision in writing
* Evidence-based argumentation
* Practical exercise: Presenting your argument in writing

**12:30 – 1:30                Lunch break**

**Session: 1:30 – 3:00       Legal Research and Analysis skills**

* Accurate referencing
* Developing definitions
* Evidence based arguments

**3:00 - 3:30 Break**

**Session: 3:30 - 4:30 Legal Reasoning**

* Team Exercise

**Day 2 9:30 - 5:10**(working out of the classroom in teams from 3pm)

**Session: 9:30- 10:30      Legal Reasoning**

* Discussion of team exercise from Day 1
* Legal reasoning
* practical exercise

**10:30 - 11:00 Break**

**Session: 11:00- 12:30 Legislative review skills**

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

**12:30 – 1:30                Lunch break**

1:30 – 3:00         Legislative review (contd) and Judicial Reasoning

Practical exercise: Legislative review

3:00 – 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 during class time in day 3 and teams will have to argue their cases in an oral legal arguments session.

***Day 3 9:00 (starting in your teams outside of class) - 4:20pm***

9:00- 12:00       Inter-class task continuation (outside of class)

* 9:00 - 10:30 Student teams finalise their briefs and continue preparing oral arguments
* **10:30 briefs submitted & shared with 'opposing' side**
* 10:30 - 12:00 Teams review opposing sides briefs & prepare additional arguments (time for comfort breaks included here)

\*\* **In Class** \*\*

* 12:30- 13:30  Hearing of the first case

**13:30 - 14:00 Break**

* 14:00- 15:00  Hearing of the second case

**15:00 - 15:20 wrap up**