COURSE DETAIL

INTRODUCTION TO LAW AND LEGAL REASONING
Country Netherlands
Host Institution Maastricht University – University College Maastricht
Program(s) University College Maastricht
UCEAP Course Level Lower Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) Legal Studies
UCEAP Course Number 80
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title INTRODUCTION TO LAW AND LEGAL REASONING
UCEAP Transcript Title INTRODUCTION TO LAW
UCEAP Quarter Units 6.00
UCEAP Semester Units 4.00

Course Description

Full course description

This course aims to introduce students to the general content of modern law and to the discipline of legal reasoning. These two go together. Law cannot be fully understood in abstraction of the particular way that lawyers, judges and other expert operators of the legal system look at it. Coming out of the course, students should be able to understand what law is and how it is different from (and similar to) morality, identify the main branches of Law and their basic institutions, recognize and differentiate the principal values underlying those branches and understand the nature of legal reasoning and be able to apply it to legal problems.

It is often assumed that to study law means essentially to study the law of a particular jurisdiction. A Dutch lawyer studies Dutch law and a German lawyer studies German law, and there is little that they share beyond the name of their chosen profession. This picture is misleading. Despite the fact that every country establishes its own legal system, there is much less diversity in law than what one would imagine. A key theme of this course is that law arises naturally as a solution to various social problems and, to the extent that human societies face the same problems, similar responses appear almost everywhere. Even though details may vary, contract, property, inheritance, marriage, constitutions and crimes exist in almost all modern societies. Instead of focusing on specific sets of rules like the Dutch Civil Code, or the French Criminal Code, this course focuses on these widely shared problems and widely shared institutional responses.

With regards to legal reasoning, the course asks students to create a tax, which will help them understand how law can be used as a policy tool for regulatory and redistributive purposes. In this connection, the course will also include a “workshop” where students will be asked to go through a high profile judgment and identify the logical moves taken by a court to justify its decision.

Course objectives

- To introduce students to the basic areas of law (contracts, property, torts, criminal law, international law etc.).
- To familiarize students with the methods of legal reasoning.
- To illustrate to students how law arises in response to social problem and how it is different from other domains such as politics and morality.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
SSC1007

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Host Institution Course Details
https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/education/bachelor/university-college-maast...

Host Institution Campus
University College Maastricht

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department
Social ScienceS

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