



English Legal System Course Descriptor

Course Title	English Legal System	Faculty	Law
Course Code	NCHLW423	Course Leader	Ursula Smartt
Credit Points	30	Teaching Period	Michaelmas & Hilary
FHEQ Level	Level 4	Date Approved	June 2020
Compulsory/ Optional	Compulsory		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	None		

COURSE SUMMARY

An understanding of the English Legal System (ELS) is the cornerstone of the study of law. This course underpins and complements other core subjects, such as Public and EU Law, Criminal Law, Tort and Contract.

The course assumes no prior knowledge. It introduces students to the principles that the English Legal System is constructed upon, and to the methods of legal research, including the practical use of online legal databases (Westlaw and Lexis), the understanding of the UK courts and tribunal services and the testing of both knowledge and legal research skills to prepare students for the substantive subjects that follow over the course of the law degree.

COURSE AIMS

The aims of the course are to:

- Fulfil the requirement for training in legal research as required by the SRA/BSB Academic Stage Handbook for a Law Degree.
- Provide a sure foundation for understanding the English Legal System through the study of the legal institutions of England and Wales.
- Achieve an overview of the processes of the English Legal System.
- Introduce students to techniques of legal statutory interpretation.
- Prepare students for discursive and analytical legal essay writing and oral advocacy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1a explain judicial approaches to statutory interpretation (and the influence of European law on those approaches), the essential ingredients of the rule of law, the importance of fairness and justice in social and legal systems and the tension between the objectives of crime control and protection of civil liberties and human rights
- K2a explain the purpose, structure and operation of the central institutions of the English legal system, including those of the civil and criminal justice systems, and the constitutional position of judges, in particular the Justices of the Supreme Court
- K3a explain the processes of the civil and criminal justice systems, including the process of alternative dispute resolution

COGNITIVE SKILLS

- C1a apply the techniques of legal reasoning covering precedent and statutory interpretation
- C2a identify key issues in a case, selecting the relevant factors from possible alternatives using reasoned judgment
- C3a recognise ambiguity in the English Legal System

TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1a communicate accurately and reliably, including appropriate use of legal referencing, whilst demonstrating structure and coherence in the use of English and legal terminology
- T2a demonstrate ability to manage personal development essay-writing and legal research skills
- T3a undertake self-directed research using legal (primary and secondary) and other information sources, evaluating and selecting information based on reasoned criteria

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning strategies for this course will include:

- 22.5 hours of full-cohort lectures
- 6 hours of group seminars
- 30-minute one-to-one tutorials per student
- 2 hours consolidation and revision

In addition, students are expected to undertake self-guided observational visits to courts

Course information and supplementary materials are available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

At the end of Michaelmas and Hilary, students will attend Collections (formal meetings) in which they receive comprehensive and collated feedback about their performance over the term.

Students are required to attend and participate in all the formal and timetabled sessions for this course. Students are also expected to manage their directed learning and independent study in support of the course.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- Preparing students to be solicitors or barristers or working as in-house lawyers
- Communication and advocacy skills
- Presentation skills and delivering presentations (incl. team work)
- Due diligence and fact-checking
- Legal essay writing and proof-reading
- Legal research skills (incl. online legal databases Westlaw and LexisNexis)
- Current affairs and commercial awareness
- Understanding and practical knowledge of the English court system: attending trials and hearings (criminal and civil)

ASSESSMENT

FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of set assignments. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback, helping students to become more sophisticated in their analysis of statutes and case law.

SUMMATIVE

Assessment will be in two forms:

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Written Assignment	40%	Yes	N/A	2,000 words
2	Examination	60%	N/A	2 hours	N/A

The examination will consist of a number of questions from which the student will have the choice of answering a specified number. Both the examination and the written assignment will be assessed in accordance with the assessment aims set out in the Programme Specification.

FEEDBACK

Students will receive formal feedback in a variety of ways: written (including via email correspondence); oral (within one-to-one tutorials or on an *ad hoc* basis) and indirectly through discussion during group tutorials. Student's will also attend the formal meeting,

Collections, at the end of Michaelmas and Hilary in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their term's performance.

Feedback is provided on written assignments (including essays, briefings and reports) and through generic internal examiners' reports, both of which are posted on the College's VLE.

INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

BOOKS

Required Reading

Students should refer to the following core texts (only purchase one text):

Elliott and Quinn's English Legal System (2019) (ed. Emily Allbon and Sanmeet Kaur Dua) 20th ed. Pearson/ Longman. ISBN 978-1292251059

Gillespie, A. and Weare, S. (2019) The English Legal System, 7th ed OUP. ISBN: 978-0198830900

Partington, M. (2020) Introduction to the English Legal System. Oxford: Oxford University Press (OUP). ISBN: 978-0-19-8838838

Wilson, S., Rutherford, H., Storey, T. and Wortley, N. (2018) English Legal System. 3rd ed. OUP. ISBN: 978-0198808152

Optional Reading

Holland, J.A. and J.S. Webb (2019) Learning Legal Rules: a student's guide to legal method and reasoning. 10th ed. OUP. ISBN 978-0198799900

Haigh, R. (2018) Legal English. 5th ed. Abingdon: Routledge

JOURNALS

New Law Journal

Modern Law Review

Cambridge Law Journal

Oxford Journal of Legal Studies

Legal Studies

Law & Policy

European Journal of International Law

Harvard Law Review

Social and Legal Studies

Solicitors' Journal

Law Society Gazette

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Westlaw UK

LexisNexis

INDICATIVE TOPICS

Students will study the following topics:

- Introduction to law and the legal system
 - The courts and their work
 - The doctrine of judicial precedent
 - Statutory interpretation
 - The judiciary
 - The civil justice system & access to justice
 - The criminal justice system
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Modifications (As per AQF4)					
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