

Course Syllabus

Introduction to Law

Course code: LEG 101/3
Semester and year: Fall 2024
Day and time: Friday 8:15-11:00
Instructor: Jiří Kašný
Instructor contact: jiri.kasny@aauni.edu
Consultation hours: Tuesday 14:15-15:15

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Bachelor
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisite	None
Contact hours	42 hours	Grading	Letter grade

1. Course Description

This course aims to introduce students to the basic concepts and rules of law. The main objective of the course is to equip students with a theoretical and practical understanding of the law. Students should learn how a lawyer approaches legal problems, and become sufficiently familiar with the relevant rules so that they too can advise a hypothetical client of what his rights and liabilities are likely to be in a particular situation, for example, if he is charged with a crime, or considers that his private rights have been violated and wishes to sue the perpetrator.

Students will become familiar with the main areas of law, i.e., constitutional law, government, property, contracts and treaties, crimes, torts, forms and procedures, legal interpretation, and justice through a comparative approach in European continental tradition and common law tradition.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

- discuss critically the role of law in contemporary societies
- demonstrate a clear understanding of the main concepts of law, in particular the nature of legal rights and the remedies available to plaintiffs when their rights are breached
- evaluate the application of foundational principles of law in his/her future studies
- demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of constitutional, property, contract, criminal, and tort law and comparative approach to the civil law and common law systems
- distinguish clearly between the concepts of public and private law, and between natural persons and legal persons
- use appropriate legal terminology and language with reasonable confidence and accuracy

3. Reading Material

Required Materials (Available in the Library or at NEO)

- Honoré, Tony. About Law. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005

- Simpson, A.W.B. Invitation to Law. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1988
- Apple, James G., A Primer on the Civil-Law System, Washington, D.C., FJC, 1994

Recommended Materials (Available in the Library or via Interlibrary Loan)

- The Avalon Project. Documents in Law History and Diplomacy at <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/default.asp>
- Federalist Papers. New York, 1787-1788.
- Gearey, Adam, et all. The Politics of the Common Law. Perspectives, Rights, Processes, Institutions. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Weinrib, Ernest. The Idea of Private Law. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Pipes, Richard. Property and Freedom. Vintage Books, 1999.
- Fried, Charles. Contract as Promise. A Theory of Contractual Obligation. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Glenn, Patrick. Legal Traditions of the World. Sustainable Diversity in Law. Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 224-272.

4. Teaching methodology

The format of this course is primarily lecture – research – reading – presentation – discussion – writing. The classroom and the NEO website are the main platforms of communication. Students are invited to participate in class, to read and study the required and suggested materials and to do their own research-reading.

The module will be taught over the period of one semester. The module runs for three hours a week for 14 weeks.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
1. 6/9/ 2024	Topic: Introduction to Law Description: What is law and custom? How legal systems protect society’s fundamental interests and the rights of individuals. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 1-21 Assignments/Deadlines: none
2. 13/9	Topic: Constitutional law and Government Description: What are the state constitutions and what function do they perform? Why are some legal limits on the power of government necessary? What are the legal ways of limiting the possible misuse of the power of the government? Reading: Honore, Law, p. 23-34 Assignments/Deadlines: Home Essay 1 – detailed instructions will be distributed and discussed in class
3. 20/9	Topic: Attitudes Toward Law Description: We will study the concept of the attitude toward law and examine a descriptive scale to measure the attitude towards law. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 1-21 Assignments/Deadlines: Home Essay 1 – discussion of the draft
4. 27/9	Topic: Property and Ownership Description: What counts as property from the legal point of view? How and why do laws protect property? Reading: Honore, Law, p. 35-43 Assignments/Deadlines: Home Essay 1 – due

5. 4/10	<p>Topic: Contracts and Treaties Description: What we consider as agreements and which of them are legally binding. The difference between contracts and treaties. How could be contracts and treaties enforced legally. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 45-52 Assignments/Deadlines: Home essay 1 – feedback and evaluation</p>
6. 11/10	<p>Topic: Torts Description: What the aims of tort law are - when it is fair to make someone who harms another pay them compensation - what interests tort law protects - the problem of intentional, negligence and strict liability. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 65-75 Assignments/Deadlines: none</p>
7. 18/10	<p>Topic: Crimes Description: The need for criminal law in society (a cause) - what the aims of criminal law are (a goal) - what type of behavior the state does and should make criminal - when it is fair to hold someone guilty of a crime in a particular case. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 53-64; Case Study Regina v Bentham (2005) Assignments/Deadlines: Home Essay 2 – detailed instructions will be distributed and discussed in class</p>
8. 25/10	<p>Topic: Crime and Tort: Comparison Description: What are the aims of crime and tort law – comparative study. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 53-75 Assignments/Deadlines: Home Essay 2 – discussion of the draft</p>
1/11	Midterm break
9. 8/11	<p>Topic: Legal Forms and Procedures 1 Description: The reasons for having forms and procedures in general; the reasons for having forms e.g., as the birth certificate, driver license, marriage, the will; the function of the right of defense in procedures; the question of fairness in a dispute of the citizen vs. the state. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 77-86 Assignments/Deadlines: Home essay 2 – due</p>
10. 15/11	<p>Topic: European Continental Legal Tradition Description: The key historical moments of Civil Law tradition. Typical characteristics of the legal systems in European Continental law. The influence of Jewish and Christian values on European law. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 9-21 Apple, James G., <i>A Primer on the Civil-Law System</i>, Washington, D.C., FJC, 1994 Assignments/Deadlines: Home essay 2 – feedback and evaluation</p>
11. 22/11	<p>Topic: Common Law Tradition Description: Key historical moments of Common Law tradition. Typical characteristics of the Anglo-American legal system. Comparison of world legal systems. Reading: Honore, Law, p. 9-21 Assignments/Deadlines: Home essay 3 – detailed instructions will be distributed and discussed in class</p>
12. 29/11	<p>Topic: Russian Legal Tradition Description: The key historical moments of Russian Legal Tradition. Typical characteristics of the legal systems in Russian law. Reading: Russian Law at the Encyclopedia Britannica Assignments/Deadlines: Home essay 3 – discussion of the draft</p>

13. 6/12	Topic: Comparative law Description: Comparative approach to the studies of legal traditions, especially to the sources of law, court procedures, legal theories. Reading: individual research Assignments/Deadlines: Home essay 3 – due
14. 13/12/2024	Topic: Final exam Description: Home essay 3 – presentation of home essay 3 – discussion – feedback – evaluation Reading: none Assignments/Deadlines: none

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assessment in this course will be based upon attendance, class participation, presentation and discussion (10%), home essays 1, 2 and 3 (30% each). Preparation and writing of the essays (workload) include participation in classes, reading and individual research reading.

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Class Participation and Presentations	42	10%	Students will participate in class presentation and discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	1, 2, 3
Home essay 1	36	30%	Students will discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	1, 2
Home essay 2	36	30%	Students will discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	1, 2
Home essay 3	36	30%	Students will discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	1, 2
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Class participation and presentations:

Each student will prepare and present two short (5 minutes) presentations in class, first presentation before the midterm break, second presentation after the midterm break. The topics and the schedule of the presentations will be distributed and discussed in the first and the following classes. Each presentation is 5%.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Content	40%
Presentation	40%
Discussion	20%

Home essay 1:

Home essay 1 should be about 6 pages long. The detailed instructions incl. the style, the topics of the home essay will be distributed and discussed in class on September 13, 2024. Submit the essay by September 27, 2024 in electronic version via Neo-Turnitin. Assessed areas include content, resources, structure and argument, and style and form of the essay; the result makes 30% of the final grade.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Content	30%
Resources	20%
Structure and argument	30%
Style and form	20%

Home essay 2:

Home essay 2 should be about 6 pages long. The detailed instructions incl. the style, the topics of the home essay will be distributed and discussed in class on October 18, 2024. Submit the essay by November 8, 2024 in electronic version via Neo-Turnitin. Assessed areas include content, resources, structure and argument, and style and form of the essay; the result makes 30% of the final grade.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Content	30%
Resources	20%
Structure and argument	30%
Style and form	20%

Home essay 3:

Home essay 3 should be about 6 pages long. The detailed instructions incl. the style, the topics of the home essay will be distributed and discussed in class on November 22, 2024. Submit the essay by December 6, 2024 in electronic version via Neo-Turnitin. Assessed areas include content, resources, structure and argument, and style and form of the essay; the result makes 30% of the final grade.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Content	30%
Resources	20%
Structure and argument	30%
Style and form	20%

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work. Please see the AAU intranet for a [summary of key policies](#) regarding coursework.

Course specific requirements

There are no special requirements or deviations from AAU policies for this course.