



Course Outline

Course number	RMC102
Course title	Legal Research
Credit points	2
Total hours	20
Lecture hours	6
Seminar and other hours	14
Course level	Masters

COURSE TEACHERS

No.	Name	Academic degree	Academic position
1	Ligita Gjortlere	M.Sci.Soc.	Lecturer
2	Kristaps Tamužs	LL.M	Lecturer
3	Anita Zikmane	LL.M	Lecturer
3	TBC		

COURSE ABSTRACT

These course elements are “theme based” activities that are meant to equip students with course study skills. Focus is placed on research strategies in an electronic information society, using the wide range of resources available to the RGSL as the teaching basis. The practical use of other sources in relation to thesis work is also dealt with, and the course elements contribute to efficient thesis work in creating a platform for cooperation between the student body and the library staff.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims to:

- provide the students with an introduction to research skills and research methodology so that they understand the range of available library and other relevant resources and gain confidence in using these.
- enable the students to acquire confidence in exploring their research ideas and the skill to put together a research proposal.
- introduce students to the research guidance.
- provide the students with the skills to research and to write up thesis and/or research papers.

- introduce students to computer techniques related to the usage of various information resources.

GRADING CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighting
Practical tasks	50%
Exam	50% (25%+25%)

The course grade will be composed 50% of the grade for practical tasks and 50% of the grade for a final exam, which will consist of quiz (25%) and final research task on selected legal research issues related to the Masters thesis (25%).

For the practical tasks, each passed task will give 1 or 2 points towards a grade on the 10 point scale. In order to have access to the final exam a student must complete, but not necessarily pass, at least 8 points out of 10 for the practical tasks, as specified in the course plan.

COURSE PLAN – MAIN SUBJECTS

No.	Subject	Planned hours
1	Information resources available at RGSL	2
2	Research International law	2
2	Westlaw databases	4
3	Research European Union law	4
5	Legal and multidisciplinary databases	2
6	Master Thesis preparation guidelines	2
7	Legal research techniques	2
8	Individual consultations on Master thesis research topics	2

COURSE PLAN – SESSIONS

Session	Subject	Lecture/seminar
1	Finding books, journals and official materials. Information available on the RGSL Intranet portal (course materials, master thesis). General introduction to the full text databases (Westlaw, EBSCO, HeinOnline, various publishers). Tasks: Searching the library catalogue, intranet portal and other indexes to locate resource – 1 point.	Lecture/Seminar (LG)
2.	Research International law (cases, treaties, databases). Tasks: Finding primary and secondary international materials, topical research – 2 points.	Lecture (KT)
3.	Thomson Reuters Westlaw International database. Search techniques using Westlaw International and Westlaw UK. Tools for finding legislation and case law. Tasks: Finding primary resources (case law, legislation) and topical resources on Westlaw – 2 points.	Seminar (LG)
4.	Thomson Reuters Westlaw and Westlaw UK databases. Search techniques using Westlaw and Westlaw UK. HeinOnline specifics. Tasks: Finding and evaluating information resources - 1 point.	Seminar (LG)
5.	Research European Union (cases, legislation, databases). Tasks: Finding primary and secondary EU and international materials, draft legislation, topical research – 2 points.	Seminar (LG)
6.	Specifics and recent developments of EU information resources.	Lecture (AZ)
7.	Legal and multidisciplinary databases. Scholarly publications. Tasks: Finding secondary materials using citation and making independent research on defined topic – 2 points.	Seminar (LG)
8.	Master Thesis preparation guidelines. Choosing the topic of a Master's Thesis. Legal research strategy - finding and collecting information. Planning the research and writing process.	Lecture (TBC)
9.	Legal research techniques. Tasks: Compiling preliminary bibliography on the master thesis topic.	Seminar (LG)
10.	Individual consultations on Master thesis research topics. Tasks: Identifying available information on chosen master thesis topic. Analyzing available information on chosen master thesis topic	Seminar (LG)

COURSE LITERATURE

No.	<i>Author, title, publisher</i>
1	Finch Emily. Legal skills / Emily Finch, Stefan Fafinski. - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
2	Albright Jennifer, Putman William H. Legal Research, Analysis and Writing, 3rd Clifton Park: Cengage Learning, 2014.
3	Information sources in law / ed.by Jules Winterton and Elizabeth M.Moys. - 2nd ed. - West Sussex : Bowker-Saur, 1997. - xxii,673 p. - (Guides to information sources).
4	Raistrick Donald. Index to legal citations and abbreviations / Donal Raistrick ; foreword by Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury. - 3rd ed. - London : Sweet & Maxwell, 2008. - ix, 542 p.
5	Bluebook: A uniform system of citation. - Harvard Law Review Association, 2015.
6	Westlaw User Guides http://legalsolutions.thomsonreuters.com/law-products/support/user-guides