



## Course Outline

<b>Course number</b>	<b>RMC103</b>
Course title	Advanced Legal Research
Credit points	4
Total hours	40
Lecture hours	20
Seminar and other hours	20
Course level	Masters

### COURSE TEACHERS

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Academic degree</b>	<b>Academic position</b>
1	Ligita Gjortlere	M.Sci.Soc.	Lecturer
2	Kristaps Tamužs	LL.M	Lecturer
3	Edvijs Zandars	LL.M	Lecturer
4	Anita Zikmane	LL.M	Lecturer
5	TBC		

### COURSE ABSTRACT

The course will focus on advanced and specialized approaches to utilize the legal resources available in a law library and elsewhere. The course elements are theme based activities that are meant to equip students with course study skills and develop practical research and writing skills. Students will learn how to find and use various legal sources, approach legal questions from an academic or lawyering perspective, and construct sound legal arguments. Necessary attention will be paid also to ensuring proper referencing and avoiding plagiarism.

### 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;
- introduce students to the research guidance;
- enable the students to acquire confidence in exploring their research ideas and the skill to put together a research proposal, draft legal memorandum;
- provide students with the skills to research and to write up thesis and/or various research papers;

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

### GRADING CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighting
Practical tasks	20%
Assignment: Research memorandum	20%
Assignment: Reference for a preliminary ruling	20%
Exam (Quiz + final paper)	40% (20% + 20%)

The course grade will be composed 60% of the grade for practical tasks and writing assignments, and 40% of the grade for a final exam, which will consist of quiz and final research task on legal research issues related to the Masters thesis.

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, and submit the writing assignments on the Research memorandum and the Reference for a preliminary ruling.

### COURSE PLAN – MAIN SUBJECTS

No.	Subject	Planned hours	Schedule YEAR 1
1	Information resources available at RGSL	2	October
2	Research International law	2	October
3	Westlaw databases	4	October/November
4	Research European Union law	4	November/December
5	Practical research techniques	4	January/February
6	Practical research techniques	4	February/March
No.	Subject	Planned hours	Schedule YEAR 2
7	Research memorandum	6	October/November
8	Reference for a preliminary ruling	4	December
9	Legal and multidisciplinary databases	2	January
10	Master Thesis preparation guidelines	2	January/February
11	Legal research techniques	4	February
12	Individual consultations on Master thesis research topics	2	February/March

## COURSE PLAN – SESSIONS

YEAR 1		
<b>Session</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Lecture/seminar</b>
1	<p>Finding books, journals and official materials.</p> <p>How to use library resources for legal research. Information available on the RGSJ Intranet portal (course materials, master thesis).</p> <p>General introduction to the full text databases (Westlaw, EBSCO, HeinOnline, various publishers).</p> <p>Tasks: Searching the library catalogue, intranet portal and other indexes to locate resource – 1 point.</p>	Lecture/Seminar (LG)
2.	<p>Research International law (cases, treaties, databases).</p> <p>Tasks: Finding primary and secondary international materials, topical research – 2 points.</p>	Lecture (KT)
3.	<p>Thomson Reuters Westlaw International database.</p> <p>Search techniques using Westlaw International and Westlaw UK.</p> <p>Tools for finding legislation and case law.</p> <p>Tasks: Finding primary resources (case law, legislation) and topical resources on Westlaw – 2 points.</p>	Seminar (LG)
4.	<p>Thomson Reuters Westlaw and Westlaw UK databases.</p> <p>Search techniques using Westlaw and Westlaw UK.</p> <p>HeinOnline specifics.</p> <p>Tasks: Finding and evaluating information resources - 1 point.</p>	Seminar (LG)
5.	<p>Research European Union (cases, legislation, databases).</p> <p>Tasks: Finding primary and secondary EU and international materials, draft legislation, topical research – 2 points.</p>	Seminar (LG)
6.	<p>Specifics and recent developments of EU information resources.</p>	Lecture (AZ)
7.	<p>Practical research techniques</p>	Lecture (EZ)
8.	<p>Practical research techniques</p>	Lecture (EZ)
9.	<p>Practical research techniques</p>	Lecture (TBC)
10.	<p>Practical research techniques</p>	Lecture (TBC)

<b>YEAR 2</b>		
<b>Session</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Lecture/seminar</b>
11.	Methodology of writing the Research Memorandum. Research Memorandum combines legal research with source and methodology description, and with legal argumentation.	Lecture (EZ)
12.	Research task: A detailed assignment sheet will be issued with full instructions. Mandatory assignment - 20 % of the grade	
13.	Analysis of Research Memorandum	Seminar (EZ)
14.	Methodology of writing of the Reference for a preliminary ruling. Role of the preliminary reference procedure, effect of the preliminary decisions, procedure of the preliminary ruling in the CJEU. Cooperation of the national courts and the CJEU (all stages of the procedure), content of a reference	Lecture (AZ)
15.	Research tasks: Finding national court decisions on application of the EU law without a reference and with reference for preliminary ruling (e-justice, JuriFast, JURE database); analysing the arguments, drafting of preliminary reference. Mandatory assignment - 20 % of the grade	
16.	Analysis of the Reference for a preliminary ruling	Seminar (AZ)
17.	Legal and multidisciplinary databases. Scholarly publications. Tasks: Finding secondary materials using citation and making independent research on defined topic – 2 points.	Seminar (LG)
18.	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)
19.	Legal research techniques. Searching, Citing, Managing Documentation and Information. Zotero Tasks: Compiling preliminary bibliography on the master thesis topic.	Seminar (LG)
20.	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

<b>No.</b>	<b>Author, title, publisher</b>
1	<b>Finch Emily.</b> Legal skills / Emily Finch, Stefan Fafinski. - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
2	<b>Albright Jennifer, Putman William H.</b> Legal Research, Analysis and Writing, 3rd Clifton Park: Cengage Learning, 2014.
3	<b>Information</b> 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	<b>Raistrick Donald.</b> Index to legal citations and abbreviations / Donal Raistrick ; foreword by Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury. - 3rd ed. - London : Sweet & Maxwell, 2008. - ix, 542 p.
5	<b>Bluebook:</b> A uniform system of citation. - Harvard Law Review Association, 2015.
6	<b>Westlaw</b> User Guides <a href="http://legalsolutions.thomsonreuters.com/law-products/support/user-guides">http://legalsolutions.thomsonreuters.com/law-products/support/user-guides</a>