



Course Outline

Course number	RBE331
Course title	Legal Interpretation
Credit points	3 ECTS
Total hours	75
Lecture hours	32
Seminar hours	
Independent studies (hours)	43
Course level	Bachelor
Prerequisites	A student must have passed the course RBA127 "Introduction to Law". ¹
Category	B (Restricted elective) course

COURSE RESPONSIBLE

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Laura Ratniece	MA (<i>cum laude</i>), PhD	

COURSE TEACHERS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Laura Ratniece	MA (<i>cum laude</i>), PhD	

COURSE ABSTRACT

This course focuses on various issues related to legal interpretation. The students will study the key issues of legal interpretation and the classical legal interpretation methods. The students will focus on selected issues related to interpretation of national law, international law, EU law, the European Convention on Human Rights, contracts, and internal legal acts.

Elements of a student-centred teaching approach are adopted in this course.

¹ Students who study at RGSL as Erasmus exchange students or within a framework of any other exchange programme are exempt from this requirement.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has the following main objectives:

Knowledge:

1. Students are aware of the key issues related to legal interpretation. Students can name and explain some examples.
2. Students are aware of the different approaches to legal interpretation, and students can distinguish among them.
3. Students have acquired knowledge and understanding (corresponding to the bachelor level) about interpretation of national law, international law, EU law, contracts and internal legal acts.

Skills:

1. Students have improved their argumentation and presentation skills.
2. Students have improved their legal interpretation skills.
3. Students have improved their legal research skills.

Competences:

1. Students are able to apply the knowledge gained during the course by analysing a court decision (of a student's choice). This *inter alia* requires an ability to assess and evaluate facts of the case, identify the legal interpretation methods which the court has applied, discuss the court's argumentation and comment on the court's interpretation of the relevant legal norm(s).
2. Students are able to critically analyse issues related to legal interpretation. The students are able to formulate problems related to legal interpretation, and to give an opinion and provide reasonable arguments about issues related to the topics studied in this course.
3. Students are able to explain how they would approach interpretation of different legal norms and discuss challenges related to their interpretation. The students are able to independently interpret legal norms.

GRADING CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighting
Exam (a student may choose among in-class closed-book, in-class open-book, take-home and oral exam)	70%
Presentation (in-class)	30%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass the course, a student must: 1) give a presentation; 2) pass the exam. The final grade of the course will be the average grade of the exam and the presentation (based on the 70%-30% proportion). In case the presentation is graded below 4, it is not possible to retake it / compensate for it. If a student fails the exam, a student is entitled to do a re-exam. If at the end of both components, the final grade turns out to be negative (1 – 3), a student needs to re-take the course.

Mandatory attendance requirement: taking into account the characteristics of this course (it is based on the student-centred teaching approach), it is mandatory to attend at least 9 (nine) classes. If a student misses more than 7 (seven) classes, the student will not be admitted to the exam. It is not possible to compensate for missed classes. If a student misses more than 7 (seven) classes due to a justifiable reason, the student can submit a request to the Study department not to count this course as an academic debt (such request needs to contain evidence which proves that the absence was due to justifiable reasons).

COURSE PLAN – MAIN SUBJECTS

No.	Main subjects	Planned hours
1.	The meaning and challenges of legal interpretation.	4
2.	Interpretation of law.	24
3.	Interpretation of contracts.	2
4.	Interpretation of internal legal acts.	2