

**Course Outline**

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| **Course number** | **RMC104** |
| Course title | Legal writing |
| Credit points | 3 ECTS (2 Latvian Credit Points) |
| Total hours  | 16 |
| Contact hours | 16 |
| Independent studies |  |
| Course level | Master’s |
| Prerequisites | None |
| Category | Mandatory for students with a law background  |  | Restricted elective |  | Free elective |  |

**COURSE RESPONSIBLE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Name*** | ***Academic degree*** | ***Academic position*** |
| Monica Migliarotti | LLM (Tulane Law School ) | Visiting lecturer |

**COURSE TEACHERS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Name*** | ***Academic degree*** | ***Academic position*** |
| Monica Migliarotti | LLM (Tulane Law School)  | Visiting lecturer |

**COURSE ABSTRACT**

The course is aimed for Law school graduates and legal professionals to master and improve their writing skills, through the illustration of various types of documents to be redacted. Course content consists of a mix of theory and practice in class, with practical tasks and tips to reinforce theory.

Each session will be a combination of lecture and seminar in order to test practical skills and to put into practice what learnt during the class. There will be a consistent part of homework focused on the theory and practice acquired during each session.

Course materials will be handed or published in the RGSL web throughout the course.

**GRADING CRITERIA**

Assessment will be based on ability to apply legal writing principles to the chosen home task.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

None

**COURSE PLAN – MAIN SUBJECTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***No.*** | ***Main subjects*** | ***Planned hours*** |
| 1 | Legal English. Drafting technique and continuous grammar practice  | 4 |
| 2 | Review of different types of useful documents in legal practice and legal profession and drafting practice  | 4 |
| 3 | Organizing, summarizing, analyzing and structuring techniques  | 4 |
| 4 | Review of basic principles of different types of law (contracts, company, real property, competition and so forth )through documents review and drafting .  | 4 |

**COURSE PLAN – SESSIONS**

| ***Session*** | ***Session subjects and readings*** | ***Lecture/ Seminar*** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Introduction to Legal English. Guidelines to effective Legal writing. In class grammar, vocabulary and style practice.  | L/S |
| 2 | Writing tools. Legal correspondence review and practice. Practice on letter of advice and legal correspondence.,  | L/S |
| 3 | Introduction to summarizing and relevant practice. Understanding and practicing legalese. Paraphrasing. Legal correspondence and informative memoranda.  | L/S |
| 4 | How to organize effective writing. Preparing a checklist. Rules for a presentation. Preparing a presentation.  | L/S |
| 5 | Review presentations. Practice on letters and memoranda of advice, proposals and formal correspondence.  | L/S |
| 6 | The language of contracts. Practice on contract clauses. Examining contract language and drafting exercises.  | L/S |
| 7 | Writing a case brief. Suggestions and overview . Writing practice.  | L/S |
| 8 | General practice and course overview resume through in- class assignment.  | L/S |

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course has the following main learning outcomes:

**Knowledge:** **as detailed in course plan above but in particular:**

**1.** Law: *understand* law’s functions, features, varieties; influences, attitudes & perceptions, challenges in international contexts; comparative law & legal culture

**2.** Legal English for international communication: *familiar with* characteristics; influences; challenges & pitfalls; guidelines/standards

**Skills: as detailed in course plan above but in particular:**

**3.** *Apply* principles of good legal writing and plain English for lawyers, effective writing strategies, *organize* legal texts; *aware of* vital aspects of writing in cross-cultural contexts and grammar as a function of legal English

**4.** *Aware of* ingredients of **e**ffective legal writing & able to implement paragraph development & organization; *apply* principles of sentence structure, connecting ideas & text coherence, transitional expressions; *familiar with* structure of legal discussion, summarizing, paraphrasing; rules of good/effective legal writing; language guidelines

**Competencies: as detailed in course plan above but in particular:**

**5.** *Equipped* with competency to write legal correspondence /legal reports/memoranda/presentations/case briefs

***By completing the study course and successfully passing the home task examination, the student will have achieved the following:***

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| --- | --- |
| ***Study results*** | ***Evaluation criteria*** |
|  ***(40-69%)*** |  ***(70-89%)*** |  ***(90-100%)*** |
| ***Knowledge*** | The student has acquired only basic knowledge of principles of legal writing. The student lacks understanding of some of the core issues of the course subject. | Overall, the student’s knowledge complies with expectations. However, there are legal writing issues that the student does not fully understand. | The student has demonstrated in-depth knowledge and understanding of the legal writing issues related to the course subject.  |
| ***Skills*** | The student has demonstrated only a basic level of legal writing skills.  | The student has demonstrated adequate legal writing skills.  | The student has demonstrated excellent legal writing skills. |
| ***Competences*** | The student (a) can apply the knowledge only at a basic level; (b) struggles with assessment and evaluation of legal (writing) issues; (c) can identify the relevant legal writing standards but cannot correctly apply them.  | The student (a) can apply the knowledge at a reasonably good level but (b) does not have the necessary level to be able to fully apply the acquired knowledge independently and (c) has some problems to correctly apply legal writing standards. | The student (a) can apply the knowledge independently and correctly; (b) can assess and evaluate legal writing issues, identify the relevant legal writing standards, and correctly apply them.  |

***Please analyse the contribution of defined grading criteria to learning outcomes. Number of grading criteria and learning outcomes should correspond to those previously defined*.**

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| --- | --- |
| ***Grading criteria*** |  |
| **1.** | **2.** | **3.** | **4.** | **5.** |
| Class participation /home study | X | X |  |  |  |
| Home assignment (final examination) |  |  | X | X | X |

**COURSE LITERATURE**

***Compulsory literature***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***No.*** | ***Author, year, title, publisher*** |
| 1 | Course compendium (C Goddard) |
| 2 | International Legal English Amy Krois -Lindner and Translegal Cambridge University Press |
| 3 | Class hand- in materials  |
| 4 | Materials posted in RGSL |

***Additional literature and sources***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***No.*** | ***Author, year, title, publisher*** |
| 1 | The elements of style. William Strunk J.R, and E.B. White. Allyn and Bacon  |
| 2 | Comparative Legal Linguistics- Heikki E.S. Mattila-Ashgate, 2006 |
| 3  | English for Contract and Company Law- Chartrand, Millar & Wiltshire -Sweet & Maxwell 1997 |