



**RIGA
GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF
LAW**

Course Outline

Course number	RMC104				
Course title	Legal English				
Credit points	3 ECTS				
Total hours	75				
Contact hours	24				
Independent studies	51				
Course level	Master's				
Prerequisites	None				
Category	Mandatory		Restricted elective		Free elective

COURSE RESPONSIBLE

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Monica Migliarotti	LLM (Tulane Law School)	Visiting lecturer

COURSE TEACHERS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Monica Migliarotti	LLM (Tulane Law School)	Visiting lecturer

COURSE ABSTRACT

The course is directed at law school graduates and legal professionals who want to master and improve their knowledge of this subject and work or are willing to work in an international environment. It consists of an intensive exploration of Legal English for students to use such knowledge during their studies and working lives. The purposes of the course are to:

- introduce specific vocabulary and concepts necessary for their future studies and professional careers;
- review and build an essential English grammar focused on the specific areas of the grammar and syntax of the language used in the Legal world;
- increase the students' awareness of current issues and events from a legal perspective;
- develop students' strategies to take control of their own learning process also through the use of class materials and online law resources;
- train the students to work individually and in small groups to produce oral and written assignments.

The course fosters a collaborative approach to language learning and favours a comparative perspective on legal concepts and areas. Course content consists of a class mix of theory and practice, with practical tasks and tips to reinforce theory.

Each session will be a combination of lectures and seminars to test practical skills and to put into practice what is illustrated during the class. A consistent part of homework will focus on the theory and practice acquired during each session.

Course materials will be handed out or published on 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

<i>No.</i>	<i>Main subjects</i>	<i>Planned hours</i>
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	Organising, summarising, analysing 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

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

<i>Study results</i>	<i>Evaluation criteria</i>		
	<i>(40-69%)</i>	<i>(70-89%)</i>	<i>(90-100%)</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>	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.
<i>Skills</i>	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.
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Please analyse the contribution of defined grading criteria to learning outcomes. Number of grading criteria and learning outcomes should correspond to those previously defined.

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

<i>No.</i>	<i>Author, year, title, publisher</i>
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