GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2026-2027

Basic Concepts of Law (B001308)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2027-2028

A (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent
M (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2027-2028

Verschelden, Gerd	RE21	lecturer-in-charge
Cannoot, Pieter	RE21	co-lecturer
Vandenbussche, Wannes	RE21	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2027-2028	**crdts**	**offering**
Bachelor of Laws in Laws	5	A
Micro-credential Basic Concepts of Law	5	M
Preparatory Course Master of Laws in Laws	5	A
Elective Set Laws	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Natural Person - Juristic Entity - Legal Personality - Competence - Agency Right - Nullity - Legally Relevant Facts - Act in Law/Legal Transaction (validity, proof and opposability) - Abuse of Right -Right *in Rem* - Right *in Personam* - Intellectual Property Right - Statute of Limitations - Liability
Legal Protection - Judicial Organization - Jurisdiction - Procedure - Law Enforcement
Judge - Attorney - Bailiff - Notary
Sustainable development - Diversity

Position of the course

At the start of his/her law studies, the course confronts the student with a number of general characteristics of law, allowing him/her to distinguish law from other social phenomena, and this from a social, historical and intellectual point of view. This course aims to allow the student to situate law in relation to other social phenomena and the science of law in relation to other social sciences. After completing this course, the student will have a clear view of the subject matter of his/her further studies and how it relates to other fields of knowledge he/she acquired during his/her high school education and in other general legal courses. This course is in connection with Practical Skills I and presents the basic mechanisms applicable in the different branches of the law, and the basic legal concepts will be clarified.

Contents

This course covers the following major topics:

1. Concepts of Law: in this part some basic concepts of law that are common to different branches of law are explained, paying due attention to their interconnection. Examples are: public and private law, law and rights, mandatory and default rules, legally relevant fact and act in law/legal transaction, contract, dissolution and annulment, evidence, opposability and publicity. The concepts are

presented in a coherent and logically structured story to provide the student providing an insight in their mutual relation.
The function of the most important legal professions is also explained.
The concept of sustainable development is explained with a focus on the possible contribution of the different branches of law to the solution of sustainability issues.
The course also examines the relationship between law and diversity, including the myth of law's neutrality.
2. Introduction to Civil Procedure:The importance of a sound, efficient and affordable legal protection is illustrated by paying due attention to the basic principles governing the proper administration of justice (access to justice, fair trial, party autonomy vs. the role of the judge, ...) and to the (upcoming) methods of alternative dispute resolution. The (recent) make-over of the judicial landscape leads to comments on the current organization and composition of the different courts, their subject matter and territorial jurisdiction. Also the mission of the Constitutional Court and the Council of State is highlighted. The basic concepts of civil procedure are defined and illustrated by walking through the different steps and stages of a court proceedings.

Initial competences

Although no specific previous knowledge is required, the students should be interested in political and legal issues and have a broad social interest. Students are expected to follow the news by daily reading a qualitative newspaper.

Final competences

1 Being able to solve simple hypothetical private law cases after spotting the relevant legal issues and facts.

2 To be aware of the responsibilities of the different legal actors in society.
3 To be aware of the gradation in binding force of legal rules (from default rules over mandatory rules to rules of public policy).
4 To be able to evaluate critically the importance of law and legal institutions for society.
5 Critical attitude towards judicial affairs and awareness for a scientific approach towards content and technicity of the law.

6 Active and passive knowledge of French legal terminology.
7 Knowledge of the basic concept of sustainable development.
8 Being aware that several branches of the law can contribute to the development of a more sustainable society.
9 Realising that law and diversity are interdependent.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

To the extent possible, the students are challenged to participate actively during class sessions.
Particular hypothetical cases involving issues related to the legal (in)competence of natural persons are discussed in plenary exercises, with active contribution of the students.
In the last lecture, students will be shown how the exams are composed (open questions as well as multiple choice questions).
All lectures are recorded. The recordings are available on the same day to all students enrolled on the course and remain accessible throughout the entire academic year.
The micro-credential student (offering M) has the choice of taking the micro-credential on campus, or at their own choice, the recorded classes.
Regular students (offering A) cannot register for the micro-credential and must

take the regular course.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Basic Concepts of Law
Indicative price: € 35
Optional: no
Language : Dutch
Author : Gerd Verschelden | Piet Taelman
Number of Pages : 430
Oldest Usable Edition : 2024 (eleventh revised edition)
Online Available : No
Available in the Library : Yes
Available through Student Association : Yes
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : intensive
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : regularly
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally
Additional information: There is a new edition every year because of the never-ending stream of legislative changes (including very significant regulatory changes such as the recodification of the Civil Code). The authors make every effort to incorporate all changes for students each year.

References

B. Tamanaha, *On the Rule of Law: History, Politics, Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 180 p.
S. Vago, *Law and Society*, Prentice Hall, 2013 (10th ed.), 560 p.
W. Van Gerven and S. Lierman, *Algemeen deel. 40 jaar later. Privaat- en publiekrecht in een meergelaagd kader van regelgeving, rechtsvorming en regeltoepassing* in *Beginselen van Belgisch privaatrecht*, Mechelen, Kluwer, 2010, 603 p.

Course content-related study coaching

Students can post their questions on the discussion forum on Ufora, which the lecturers will continue to monitor until a week after the lectures end. Before, during and after each lecture, the lecturers are available to answer questions in person. In view of the large number of students, student questions will only be answered in person, not by email.
Before every lecture, students will be able to download the projected slides (MS Powerpoint) through Ufora.

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Written exam. The use of a student's codex is permitted, the use of the course materials is not. The exam will consist of various open questions and 20 multiple choice questions. The exam tests the student for knowledge, insight, intellectual capacities on a scientific level, and written communication skills.
Students need to know the used terminology in Dutch as well as in French.
The evaluation of the micro-credential student (offering M) runs concurrently with the evaluation of the regular students (offering A).

Calculation of the examination mark

Open questions: 50% of the examination mark.
Multiple choice questions: 50% of the examination mark.
The multiple choice part of the exam consists of 20 questions with each 4 alternative answers of which only 1 is correct. No correction for guessing is

applied, so an incorrect choice is graded the same way as a blanc. To pass the multiple choice part of the exam, the student needs to correctly answer 13 questions (= standard setting). Students are encouraged to answer all questions.

Facilities for Working Students

All lectures will be recorded.