

European Media Law (B001758)

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

Credits 4.0 **Study time 120 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1) English Gent lecture
independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Lievens, Eva RE21 lecturer-in-charge
Verdoodt, Valerie RE21 co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Social Sciences(main subject Laws)	4	A
Master of Laws in Laws	4	A
Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject Comparative Law and Transnational Dispute Resolution)	4	A
Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject European Union Law)	4	A
Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject International Business Law)	4	A
Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject International and Human Rights Law)	4	A
Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject International and National Legal Orders)	4	A
Exchange Programme in Law	4	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

European media law, European media policy, freedom of expression and information, media and democracy, journalism, regulation of media and internet, privacy, hate speech, advertising

Position of the course

This course presents, structures and analyses the characteristics of media law and studies the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) with regard to freedom of expression, (traditional and online) media and journalism. The aim of the course is to offer in-depth insights to students into a number of topical questions in the area of media law, from an international, European and comparative perspective. The balance sought between various fundamental rights (including freedom of expression, the right to privacy, the right to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence, religious freedom, intellectual property rights, and the prohibition of discrimination) when regulating media, journalism, the internet, art, culture and entertainment is the central theme throughout the course. The course focuses on European media law, with special attention for the relevant case law of the ECtHR and the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU), the legal framework of the Council of Europe and the European Union and current developments. In addition, international developments and frameworks (a.o. UN, SDGs) are considered, and where relevant, national practices or case-law are used by means of illustration.

Contents

The course focuses on the right to freedom of expression and information and the

most important restrictions in application of Article 10 § 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights, with an impact on media law. This includes o.a. an analysis of content restrictions regarding racism, discrimination, and incitement to violence ('hate speech'), libel and defamation, the relationship between media and justice, including restrictions on court reporting, privacy protection, morals and public decency, protection of children/minors, broadcasting law, advertising regulation, freedom of political, academic and artistic expression, rights of journalists (including the protection of journalistic sources), freedom of expression and religion, and regulation of the internet (a.o. regarding disinformation, content moderation and internet blocking).

The course also studies media law within the context of EU legislation (e.g. the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, public service broadcasting, case law CJEU).

Initial competences

Basic knowledge of public law and human rights law, civil law, criminal law, EU law.

Final competences

- 1 Have a thorough knowledge of the main elements and characteristics of European media law, including the relevant case law of the ECtHR and the CJEU on freedom of expression, media and journalism.
- 2 Critically reflect on questions in the field of media law, and the current media law *de lege lata* and *de lege ferenda*.
- 3 Formulate a substantiated legal reasoning on the relation between freedom of expression and other human rights and actual questions in the domain of media law.
- 4 Critically select and analyse legal sources and literature related to a judgment, case-study, a current topic or development in the area of media law, from an international or European comparative perspective.
- 5 Write a critical essay that situates a judgment, case-study, a current topic or development in the domain of media law within the broader relevant legislative framework.
- 6 Develop a lifelong learning attitude in relation to topics related to media law, by identifying, interpreting and critically reflecting on current developments in this domain.
- 7 Paying attention and respecting cultural sensitivity, diversity, pluralism and tolerance.

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

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Classes are preceded by preparation by the students, and consist of lectures by the lecturers and interactive discussions. Students write a critical essay on a judgment of the European Court of Human Rights or the Court of Justice of the EU or a case-study, a current topic or development in the domain of European Media Law. Students are also required to participate in the annual International Press Freedom Seminar (if it is being organised).

Given the level of interactivity of the course, no class recordings are provided.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Media & Technology Law Codex (2nd ed. - 2024)

Indicative price: € 45

Optional: yes

Language : English

Author : Eva Lievens, Valerie Verdoodt, Aleksandra Kuczerawy, Peggy Valcke (eds)

ISBN : 978-9-49340-933-0

Oldest Usable Edition : 2 (2024)

Online Available : No
Available in the Library : Yes
Available through Student Association : Yes
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

Type: Slides

Name: European Media Law
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: European Media Law
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No

References

See course material.

Course content-related study coaching

The lecturer will provide information and guidance regarding the format of the lectures and the individual assignment. The lecturer is available to answer questions before or after the lectures, or by appointment.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Oral assessment

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

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

End-of-term evaluation (40%):

- Oral examination: students prepare a presentation on a self-selected theme, linked to a subject that was discussed during the lectures, and answer questions about the topic and presentation

Continuous assessment (60%):

- Independent work (40%): on an individual basis, students write a critical essays in which they critically reflect on a judgment of the European Court of Human Rights or the Court of Justice of the EU or a case-study, a current topic or development in the domain of European Media Law.
- Participation (20%): participation in group discussions during each class, on the studied themes and essays, participation in the International Press Freedom Seminar

Guidelines on the use of generative AI tools provided by the lecturers must be respected.

Calculation of the examination mark

- **Continuous assessment:** 60% (20% participation, 40% independent work).
2nd chance: it is only possible to submit a new or modified case-note, points for participation are taken into account.
- **End-of-term evaluation:** 40%

The student is obliged to participate in all evaluations (both non-periodic and periodic); otherwise, he/she will be declared failed for the course. This means that if the final score is ten or more (out of twenty), this score will be reduced to the highest non-passing grade.

Facilities for Working Students

In the course of the academic year, working students can make an appointment with the lecturer to obtain more information on the course material.