

General Introduction to Law (K001066)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)	Dutch	Gent	independent work
			seminar
			lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Cannoot, Pieter	RE21	lecturer-in-charge
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Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in History	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences	5	A
Bachelor of Science in Communication Science	5	A
Bachelor of Science in Political Science	5	A
Bachelor of Science in Sociology	5	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in Gender and Diversity	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

law, legal institutions, sources of law, the basic principles of the various fields of private and public law

Position of the course

Law plays a key role in society. For instance, sociological evolutions may trigger the adoption of new legislation, and the outcome of political decision making processes is often concretized in legal rules. This course aims to familiarize students with a number of fundamental concepts within law, the different legal institutions, the specificity of legal reasoning, and the general principles of some main fields of law.

Contents

First, the concept of 'law' is discussed, as well as the role of law in society. Then, the sources of law and a number of fundamental concepts are reviewed. Subsequently, the political and legal institutions at international, European, federal and regional level are discussed, as well as the course of a legal procedure. Thereinafter, the basic principles of some main fields of law are discussed, including fundamental rights and freedoms, constitutional law, family law and the law of persons, criminal law, procedural law and the law of obligations, contracts, property law and corporate law. The choice for particular fields of law is based on the students' profile and study programme. Particular attention is paid to recent evolutions.

Initial competences

No particular prior knowledge is required; only general secondary education knowledge.

Final competences

1 Students must have a thorough knowledge of the basic legal concepts and terminology and must have an insight in the function of the most significant rules of law in society and in how they work.

- 2 Students will develop ready knowledge of the main aspects of the political, legal and judicial institutions in Belgium and at the European and international level, and of the principles of private and (national and international) public law.
- 3 Students must be able to fluently apply these principles to uncomplicated practical cases.
- 4 Students must acquire basic skills in recognising legal problems.
- 5 Students develop a basic awareness about the societal role of law and legal actors, and the values reflected by law.

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

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures in which the course content is taught and examples are addressed.
The seminar takes the form of a response lecture, in which mock exam questions are solved in the classroom.
In light of the students' programme, some parts of the course may become independent work.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Manual General Principles of Law
Indicative price: € 65
Optional: no
Language : Dutch
Author : Georges Martyn, Pieter Cannoot, Sylve Tack, Sebastiaan Vandenbogaerde
ISBN : 978-9-04864-768-2
Number of Pages : 480
Oldest Usable Edition : 2023
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 : one-time
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : not

Type: Syllabus

Name: Sources of General Principles of Law
Indicative price: € 15
Optional: no
Language : Dutch
Number of Pages : 700
Oldest Usable Edition : 2025
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No

Type: Slides

Name: Slides General Principles of Law
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Dutch
Number of Slides : 12
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No

References

G. Martyn, P. Cannoot, S. Tack, S. Vandebogaerde, *Kennismaking met het recht en de rechtspraak*, Brugge, die Keure, 2024.

Course content-related study coaching

Questions can be asked before or after the class, during the breaks, via e-mail or upon appointment, with the lecturer and assistant. Mock exam questions are available on 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: multiple choice questions and discussing cases. The multiple choice questions assess the students' knowledge and understanding of legal terminology, structures, principles and rules. The cases test the students' ability to apply legal principles to a concrete situation.

Calculation of the examination mark

Written exam consisting of multiple choice questions (12 points) and discussing cases/exercises/open questions (8 points).

Facilities for Working Students

End-of-term assessment. No special arrangements for working students. Students may ask the professor or assistant questions about the course at any time.