

THE NEWBIE MANUAL

2025



A LAW STUDENT'S GUIDE
TO UNIVERSITY AND THE
LAW COURSE



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FOREWORD

JCA would like to welcome you, both to the University of Malta and to the Faculty of Laws. University is the start of a new chapter in your life. Both as a University Fresher and as a law student, you are at the beginning of an exciting life experience that will be filled with new academic challenges, fresh faces and countless opportunities.

As you take your first steps as a law student, the lifestyle will feel like a big change, however, you are not alone in this journey. As current law students and former newbies ourselves, we know what is like to embark on this new journey.

This is why we have come together to create a concise and informative guide to help you through every step of the way.

In this freshers' manual, you will be given all the necessary information about the University and the Faculty of Laws, how you can access both your online and physical resources, an overview of the units you will be sitting for in your first year, the assessment and credit system, as well as our personal list of tips and tricks to helping you transition into your degree; all the things we would have wanted to know on our first day.

Your journey may feel challenging, but it is not insurmountable. Keep your head raised high, make sure to make the most of your opportunities both inside and outside the classroom and never feel that you cannot reach out for help; you will always find it.

WHAT IS JCA ?

ABOUT US

The Junior Chamber of Advocates (JCA) is a student organisation that was established under the auspices of the Chamber of Advocates and a University of Malta Senate recognised student organisation as of 2019. On the 1st of October 2013 the organisation was launched; it was publicly acknowledged by the President of the Chamber of Advocates and endorsed by the Chief Justice on the inauguration of that Forensic year.

In 2018, the Junior Chamber of Advocates obtained recognition by the University of Malta Degree Plus system. Through this initiative, members of the JCA are able to receive extra credits for taking part in events organised by the organisation. This meant that students were finally recognised academically for going the extra mile to attend JCA events. Receiving Senate recognition as a student organisation by the Senate of the University of Malta was yet another milestone for JCA, as it consolidated its position at a University level in order to reach its desired aims.

As a law student organisation, the Junior Chamber of Advocates aims to 'Bridge the Gap' between law students' academic development and the practicality of the legal profession. One way it does so is through the 'Prattika-Link' program, which aims to link law students who wish to be exposed to the practice side of being a lawyer, with law firms and lawyers working in private practice, and also through the 'Warrant Revision Sessions', which are held to provide LLM students proper revision for the legal warrant examination. For more information on the 'Prattika-Link' Programme, kindly ask the JCA team for a copy of the Prattika Manual.

A variety of events are hosted throughout the year, most notably 'Seminars' that cover a variety of topics and legal fields, and 'Moot Courts' that serve to simulate the experience of court proceedings, all of which are done to supplement the academic learning that is done in the LLB/LLM courses, thus giving students the opportunity to cover topics in more depth.

The Junior Chamber of Advocates actively involves itself in ongoing and topical issues in the legal field, both locally and internationally through means of policy papers that are launched throughout the year. Our involvement in local and international affairs also extends itself to our charitable project, 'JCA Gives', that serves to support charities through organising events, and by means of providing food, clothes or monetary donations.

Assisting and providing support to the students within the Faculty of Laws is at JCA's forefront, as is bringing students together. We offer a number of social events that provide networking opportunities for both current law students and prospective students at sixth form level. Above all, the JCA continuously seeks to provide support to law students in any way it can.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2025-2026



The Junior Chamber of Advocates' Executive Committee 2025/2026 is made up of 13 members:

President : Michela Soler

Vice President : Giacomo Giglio

Secretary General : Jasmin Attard

Financial Officer : Julie Ann Camilleri

Public Relations Officer : Liliana Xerri

Media Coordinator : Katrina Cachia

Projects Officer : Martina Caruana

Projects Coordinator : Gaia Martina Balzia

Academic Officer : Neil Casha

Academic Coordinator : Enrique Ciappara

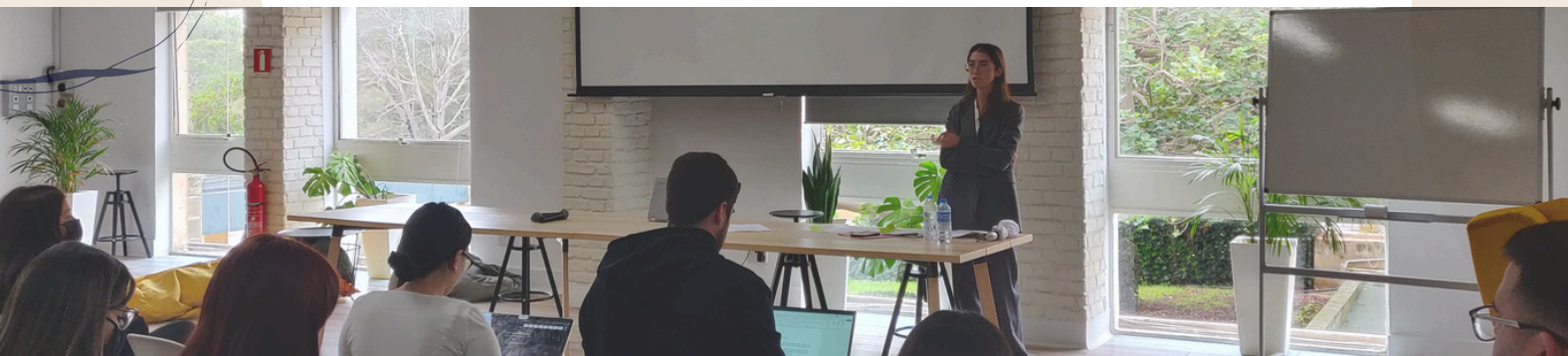
Social Policy Officer : Alize Zorban

Introductory Officer : Alicia Mifsud

Leisure Officer : Thomas Reese Borg

EVENTS

JCA holds a number of different events throughout the academic year. The Annual JCA Moot Courts, held at the Law Courts of Malta, provide the perfect set-up for law students to start practising their Advocacy Skills in a realistic scenario. Participants are given the opportunity to prepare written submissions, examine and cross-examine witnesses, and also make their oral submissions before the Court, which ultimately delivers its judgement.



In 2017, the JCA organised its first Moot Court on the basis of a Trial by Jury. Every year, Trial by Jury moot courts are held, giving students the opportunity to act as jurors and deliver their judgment following deliberations between them.



**MOOT
COURTS**



Another project which the JCA executive members take pride in is the development of 'Prattika-Link', which serves to facilitate the placement of students to find the most suitable internship for their 'prattika' requirements, hopefully resulting in more feasible employment upon completion of the law course.



Another primary activity of the JCA is that of organising seminars. These are conducted throughout the academic year and are chaired by different lawyers treating various academic topics from a practical point of view.



Ultimately, JCA also organises a number of social events for both university students and prospective law students still at sixth form.

ACADEMICS


THE CREDIT SYSTEM

What is a Credit System?

A Credit System expresses the volume of learning as well as the associated workload related to a Unit or Course. ECTS stands for European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and it is the credit system used within the University of Malta. The system is used to grant universal academic qualifications between countries within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), so that study periods abroad such as those under the Erasmus Program are academically recognised.

How are ECTS quantified?


It is understood that one ECTS is equivalent to 25-30 hours of work. It follows that 60 ECTS credits correspond to a full year of study or work within a student's academic year, of which these credits are then broken down into several units.



For a student to progress onto the next year they must attain all the credits they have read for by passing the assessments for those Units. Students who do not manage to pass these assessments are given the opportunity to complete a resit examination. If they pass the resit, the highest mark they may attain is 45%, a grade D. Students who after the September resit exam sessions do not manage to obtain up to 12 credits, may either:

- 1 Complete the Study Units they have not passed the following year of their Course;**
- 2 Take an extension year; or**
- 3 Repeat that year in its entirety.**

If students opt for the first option, they shall be considered to have progressed conditionally and shall not be allowed to continue with the Course if after the September assessment session they would have not obtained the required credits for any of the referred units. This ultimately means that a student must have an overall average mark of 55% or better to complete their Master of Advocacy Course.



METHODS OF

ASSESSMENT

Throughout your LL.B. you will be faced with a number of assessment types that study units have to offer. The two main forms of assessments typically consist of assignments and examinations.

Assignments are generally an essay form of work that require the students to research in-depth about a particular topic or series of topics which would have been covered in your lectures. Word limits are common with assignments and it is very important to adhere to them as not doing so can reduce your grade substantially. In certain cases you may be asked to write a seminar paper, which combines research conducted to answer a seminar question and a presentation. You may also be asked to present your findings through a symposium which is a public presentation that is adjudicated by a number of lecturers.



Examinations have traditionally been written, with the number of hours to complete your exam varying from unit to unit. Exams sum up all that you have learned throughout the scholastic year in the lecture hall and through your readings. As of the scholastic year of 2019/2020, we were introduced to a new form of examination, that being online exams, which were held through the use of WISEFlow, an online examination tool or through a submission on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

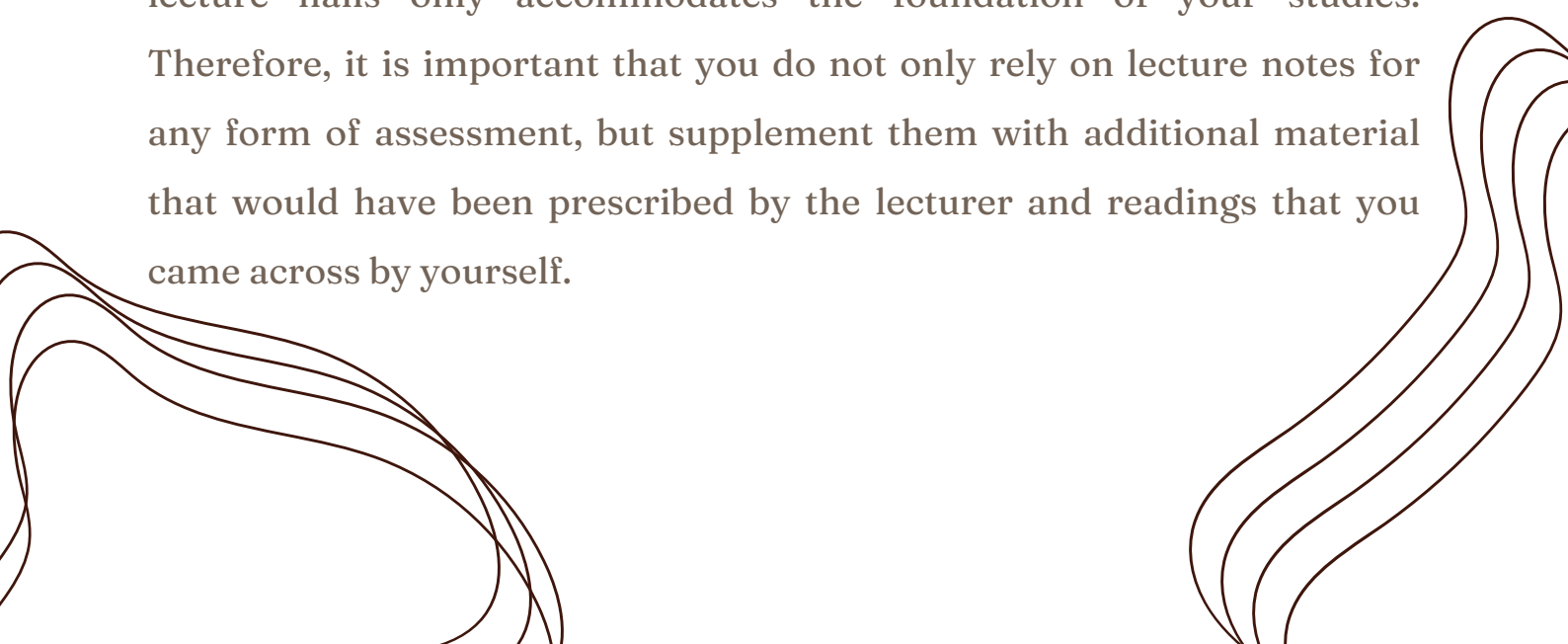
Over and above the mentioned forms of assessments, it is important to know that certain study units may opt for one of the following instead:

Class presentations: This would typically be in the form of a Symposium or a standard class presentation where the student would need to display their research for a given topic.

Portfolio: Certain classes might ask its students to create and continuously update a portfolio with research on a variety of topics.

Classwork/Coursework: Similar to an assignment, however, this may either be broken up into a series of smaller tasks or simply one task that contains a lesser word count than a standard assignment.

Like the majority of your learning experience, what you learn in the lecture halls only accommodates the foundation of your studies. Therefore, it is important that you do not only rely on lecture notes for any form of assessment, but supplement them with additional material that would have been prescribed by the lecturer and readings that you came across by yourself.



FIRST YEAR STUDY UNITS



There are two types of study units that the course offers:

COMPULSORY STUDY UNITS

ELECTIVE STUDY UNITS

Whilst compulsory units are fundamental subjects to the development of your legal knowledge, electives are the perfect opportunity for students to learn about more specialised topics that they might want to delve into later on in their legal careers. It is important to note that study units can incorporate either one assessment type or a number of different types of assessments. In your first year you will be required to take 60 ECTS. In addition to the compulsory study units (56 ECTS), you are required to choose 4 ECTS from the elective study units.

COMPULSORY STUDY UNITS

YEAR-LONG



PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINAL LAW



CRL1010 | 10 ECTS | NC*

The aim of this study-unit is to examine the principles of Criminal Law, the Theory of Responsibility, Limitations of Criminal law and General Defences, which will be critically examined.

Assessment: Examination (3 Hours) in Semester 2

PHILOSOPHY OF LAW



CVL1024 | 6 ECTS | NC

The study-unit aims to offer students the opportunity to engage meaningfully and critically with theoretical discussions on the nature of law and their practical implications and applications. It also aims to provide them with the opportunity to develop analytical and critical skills, research and organisational skills, teamwork, as well as oratory and presentation skills.

Assessment: Examination (2 Hours) in Semester 1 + Seminar Paper in Semester 2

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW



PBL1015 | 8 ECTS | NC

The aim of the study-unit is to give an overview of the historical developments of the Maltese Constitution, and discuss the general principles of Constitutional Law as applied in Western European Democracy with particular focus on the general theories at the basis of constitutional systems. The unit will also focus on the organs of state, both locally and of select international countries, as well as the Human Rights Law from a local and international level.

Assessment: Examination (3 Hours) in Semester 2

COMPULSORY STUDY UNITS

SEMESTER 1



ROMAN LAW 1



CVL1018 | 4 ECTS | NC

This study-unit will cover the introductory topics of Roman Law, focusing particularly on the history of Roman Law (which cannot be divorced from the study of the history of the Roman Empire) from its Republican beginnings, through to its Byzantine phase and beyond. Particular attention will be paid to outlining the influence Roman law has exerted on modern legal systems, especially the Maltese. An overview of the history of Roman law in Malta will conclude this unit.

Assessment: Examination (2 Hours) in Semester 1

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



ERL1002 | 4 ECTS | NC

The aim of the study-unit is to provide a comprehensive grounding of the current legal issues concerning environmental justice and how this concept features in national and international law.

Assessment: Presentation and Workbook in Semester 1

INTRODUCTION TO LAW



MCT1005 | 6 ECTS | NC

The study-unit aims to introduce the Maltese Legal System to the student. This will provide grounding for further study-units offered in the LLB degree course. The legal research methods and legal writing skills will also enable students to write good legal works such as assignments, presentations, etc.

Assessment: Examination (2 Hours) + Report in Semester 1

COMPULSORY STUDY UNITS

SEMESTER 2



BASIC NOTIONS OF COMMERCIAL LAW



CML1001 | 4 ECTS | NC

This study-unit examines the nature of Commercial Law, the place of commercial law in the private law sphere, and investigates the sources of commercial law in their order of priority, namely written commercial law, usages of trade and civil law.

Assessment: Examination (2 Hours) in Semester 2

COMPARATIVE LEGAL SYSTEMS AND LEGAL PLURALISM



CVL1000 | 4 ECTS | NC

This study-unit provides an understanding of the methods of comparative law and how these can be applied to enhance students' knowledge of major 'Western' private and public legal systems, both historical and contemporary. These systems will be compared to one another and also to "non-Western" systems, such as the Islamic legal system.

Assessment: MCQ Examination (1 Hour) + Assignment in Semester 2

ROMAN LAW 2



CVL1019 | 6 ECTS | NC

This study-unit will focus on the core institutes of private law, ie the law of persons, property, obligations and succession as they existed in Roman law, particularly in the Classical period and as they were later to be found in Justinian's Corpus Iuris. Students will be given an overview of the structure and functioning of key legal rules and doctrines, keeping an eye on their modern incarnations.

Assessment: Examination (3 Hours) in Semester 2

COMPULSORY STUDY UNITS

SEMESTER 2
(CONTINUED)



INTRODUCTION TO EUROPEAN UNION LAW



ECL2000 | 4 ECTS | NC

The main aim of this study-unit is to show how European Union law establishes its own paradigm, so that the student will be able to approach the study of the legal order of the Union in the second year from this paradigm in full awareness that EU Law is not to be understood in national law (even constitutional) terms or in standard international law terms.

Assessment: Examination (2 Hours) in Semester 2

What is NC?

NC - Non-Compensable units refer to units requiring a 45% overall grade to be awarded the respective ECTS. Units that are compensable allow students who have earned a grade ranging from 35% to 44% to automatically be compensated with enough points to achieve a passing grade (i.e. 45%). Note however that your final classification of the study unit will be marked with a '' (i.e. 45*) to indicate that you were passed based on compensation, which will affect your average.

ELECTIVE STUDY UNITS

SEM 1



FAMILY VIOLENCE LAW



CRL1008 | 4 ECTS

The study-unit lists strategies for controlling family violence, including legal and police intervention, and describes the different approaches to treatment within the criminal justice system as well as the different treatment settings for managing intimate violence. It also describes the intricate role that motivation plays in seeking justice through Malta's legal system.

Assessment: Classwork + Seminar Paper

SELECTED TOPICS IN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW



ERL1003 | 4 ECTS

This study-unit will examine how selected activities may have an impact on the urban and natural environment and how these are addressed by different legal instruments.

It focuses on specific areas of environmental law namely those relating to waste management, construction activities, pollution, water quality, noise and environmental sustainability. It will also identify and look into the remedies available to address disputes.

Assessment: Assignment

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING LEGISLATION



ERL1001 | 4 ECTS

The study-unit aims to familiarise the student with Maltese Development Planning Law with specific focus on the key provisions of the Development Planning Act (Chapter 552 of the Laws of Malta), the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal Act (Chapter 551 of the Laws of Malta) and a selected number of subsidiary regulations flowing therefrom.

Assessment: Examination (2 Hours)

HISTORY OF POLICE LAW



LHM1014 | 4 ECTS

The study-unit is designed to introduce the student to the historico-legal aspect of Police Legislation during the British Period (1814-1964). It will provide an understanding of the main legislation governing the Malta Police Force during the period under review.

Assessment: Assignment

EUROPEAN MEDIA LAW



MCT1003 | 4 ECTS

This study-unit will introduce the student to European Media Law. It will study the audiovisual acquis of the European Union together with the audiovisual conventions of the Council of Europe. Case law of the European Court of Justice will be referred to when discussing the Television Without Frontiers Directive and its substitute the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. In this way the student can better comprehend European Media Law.

Assessment: Examination (1 Hour)

PRESS LAW



MCT2011 | 4 ECTS

This study-unit addresses the laws regulating the press. Emphasis will be placed on the Press Act as well as freedom of expression. The provisions of the Press Act, the Criminal Code, and the European Convention Act will be discussed from a press law point of view.

Assessment: Assignment

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAW



PBL1009 | 4 ECTS

This unit studies the principles of local government law. It starts off by a discussion of local governance in the Constitution of Malta and then studies the provisions of the Local Councils Act, Chapter 363, and the subsidiary legislation made thereunder. It will focus on the administrative machinery of local authorities, the functions of mayor, councillor and executive secretary, the making of by-laws and their enforcement, local authority finance, contract, tort and criminal liability, central government controls on local government, judicial control on local government, legal proceedings by and against local authorities, local authorities, and the planning process.

Assessment: Assignment

PARLIAMENT : FUNCTIONS, PROCEDURE, PRACTICE AND FIELD STUDIES



PBL1011 | 4 ECTS

This study-unit will discuss the functions of Parliament: as a debating forum, its business, its procedures, and influence on society. It will study parliamentary privilege, contempt of the House, political party organisation in parliament, the parliamentary group, the whips, financial assistance to the Opposition, the functions of the elected officers – the Speaker and Deputy Speaker and of the House’s staff – the Clerk of the House and her staff, the President’s speech, and the Committees of the House of Representatives. Another aspect will deal with the procedures for the conduct of business contained in the Standing Orders of the House, rulings from the Chair, statutory procedures. The role of the Opposition and of Parliamentary Officers (the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman) will also be highlighted. It will also discuss the new role of Parliamentary Assistants and the workings of the Select Committee.

Assessment: Examination (1 Hour)

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY



PHI1014 | 4 ECTS

This unit offers an introduction to the history of political thought, by presenting some of the most influential political thinkers from antiquity to modernity, along with key concepts in political theory, by discussing some of the major themes in political philosophy. Each session will introduce students to the key ideas of one of the major figures in this history of political thought, which will then be used as a springboard for discussing a central theme in political theory.

Assessment: Assignment

ASPECTS FROM THE LEGAL DEVELOPMENT OF MALTESE COMMERCIAL LAW FROM 1800



LHM1000 | 4 ECTS

This study-unit aims at acquainting the student with the legal history and legislative development of the Commercial Code and commercial laws. It will give the student tools, if not weapons, to research in the opulent archives that criss-cross the Maltese islands and abroad such as England, Sicily (Italy) and so on. It is a study-unit that contributes to the formation of the student by enabling him to tap the right sources of interpretation by digging the foundations of commercial law of the last 200 years without consuming time. It will help him in time-management during painstaking research concerning the subject matter.

Assessment: Assignment

LEGISLATION UNDER THE FIRST RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT



LHM1003 | 4 ECTS

As this study-unit cuts across all other departments of the law studied in the LLB Honours undergraduate programme of studies, it aims to enable the student to complement thematically the main subjects of law studies in this course, such as civil law, criminal law, other branches of public law that deal with themes that are not covered under the main subjects of law taught in this programme of studies.

Assessment: Assignment

INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL HISTORY



LHM1017 | 4 ECTS

The study-unit aims to: (a) teach the salient epochs of Maltese Legal History; (b) establish how Maltese Law has varied over time, very much depending on the historical epoch in question; (c) delve into the sources of Maltese Law; (d) relate better law as made in the past with law as it obtains today; (e) explain how law-making in the past continues to have an influence on current laws; (f) locate Maltese legal history in the context of European legal history.

Assessment: Assignment

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALTESE CRIMINAL CODE



LHM1021 | 4 ECTS

This study-unit aims to delve deeper into the historical development of the Criminal Code by going through the various reports that lead to the codification of the Criminal Code, the drafts of the Criminal Code, its passage in the Council of Government, the contribution of Andrew Jameson and how the Criminal Code has developed from 1855 to date.

Assessment: Assignment

HISTORICAL SOURCES OF THE MALTESE CONSTITUTIONAL LAW



LHM1022 | 4 ECTS

This study-unit traces the historical evolution of Constitutional Law in Malta. It studies the various constitutions during British colonial time and the independence constitution, the reports written thereupon, the discussions and adoption of the various Constitutions as well as subsequent changes made thereto both under the British period and post-independence.

Assessment: Assignment

MENTAL HEALTH LAW



MCT1004 | 4 ECTS

The study-unit will introduce students to the key principles of mental health law, taking into account both legislation in force and, if relevant, past legislation. This will be done by focusing on domestic law and policy, duly substantiated, where appropriate, with international legal norms and principles. The study-unit will hence deal with topics such as, inter alia, voluntary and involuntary admission under the Mental Health Act, capacity, community treatment, and the definition of a mental disorder at law.

Assessment: Assignment + Presentation

MALTA AS A CONTRIBUTOR AND RESPONDENT BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS



PBL1103| 4 ECTS

The study-unit aims are to familiarise students with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights relating to Malta, both as a contributor to the evolution of that case law through the role of Maltese judges sitting on that court, as well as through cases decided by that court where Malta was the respondent state, and where such case law has established important points of principle for the development of human rights law.

Assessment: Assignment



THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

For more information about each study unit you can refer to the Programme of Study which can be found on the UM website or by clicking the link below:
<https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/overview/ublawhft-2024-5-o/>

STUDENTS' RESOURCES

VLE - VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

VLE is an extremely useful platform that all UoM students use throughout their courses. It serves as a platform where resources are shared with students. Lecturers can now share a 'Zoom' link for their lectures through VLE and often send notes, papers, powerpoints through VLE. It is of utmost importance to keep an eye out on this platform in order to keep up with the material being uploaded.

Moreover, students will have to use this platform in order to upload their assignments. Thus, it is imperative to understand how it works. VLE has an in-built software named 'Turnitin' which scans the work students upload and checks for plagiarism. As a result, students must make sure to cite their sources and not take credit for others' ideas.

RESEARCHING THE LAW

Being in the law course, legislation and legal judgements are your bread and butter. Your lecturers are going to be making reference to them throughout the entire scholastic year and knowing where to research is very important.

Thankfully, the process is a simple one. The new revamped eCourts lets you research all local Maltese judgements, cases, and other legal information, all at the push of a button. The website allows you to search based on keywords and even allows you to search based on the year, so when you find what you are looking for, you can download it and view it at any time.

If you are looking for European case law, legislation, or legal information, Eur-Lex is the place where you will be able to download all the latest EU-based information.



THE LIBRARY

Throughout your scholastic year, staying up to date with your literature is a vital part of your Law and University journey. One of the best ways to do this is at the University of Malta Main Library. This is the large building located right above Quadrangle, at the heart of the University.

The Main Library is home to various study areas, with one of the main areas being the group area which is located on the first floor. This area contains large desks, sofas, and even desktop computers, which is enough space to study in groups. If you are looking for something a little quieter, then you should opt for the Melitensia, which is on the same floor, right outside the group area. From here, Maltese authored books can be found. The top floor is an alternate study area which is used for individual studying. You should note that this is the same floor where you can locate the majority of your Law books.

Law students should note that, whilst the main library hosts the majority of the physical resources, the Faculty of Laws has its own quaint library, the Laws and Theology library. The law library mainly contains student dissertations, with a small number of books. This is located on the second floor within the Faculty of Laws.

Accessing library resources can take place all from the touch of a button. Through the University website, students have access to HyDi, the library resource system. From here, students can search for books that are located in any of the library branches, as well as information about a particular title including the author, length of loan, and shelf location. Once you have located your book, your identity card will serve as your library card which you will need to show to the librarian at the main reception desk.

HyDi gives students access to a large number of international databases which contain online journals, articles, and other forms of information, which includes worldwide legislation and legal databases. Another useful resource that the University offers is that of the O@R, which is the University database for dissertations.

For more information about the resources the University of Malta offers see the 'UM Library Law Resources Leaflet'.





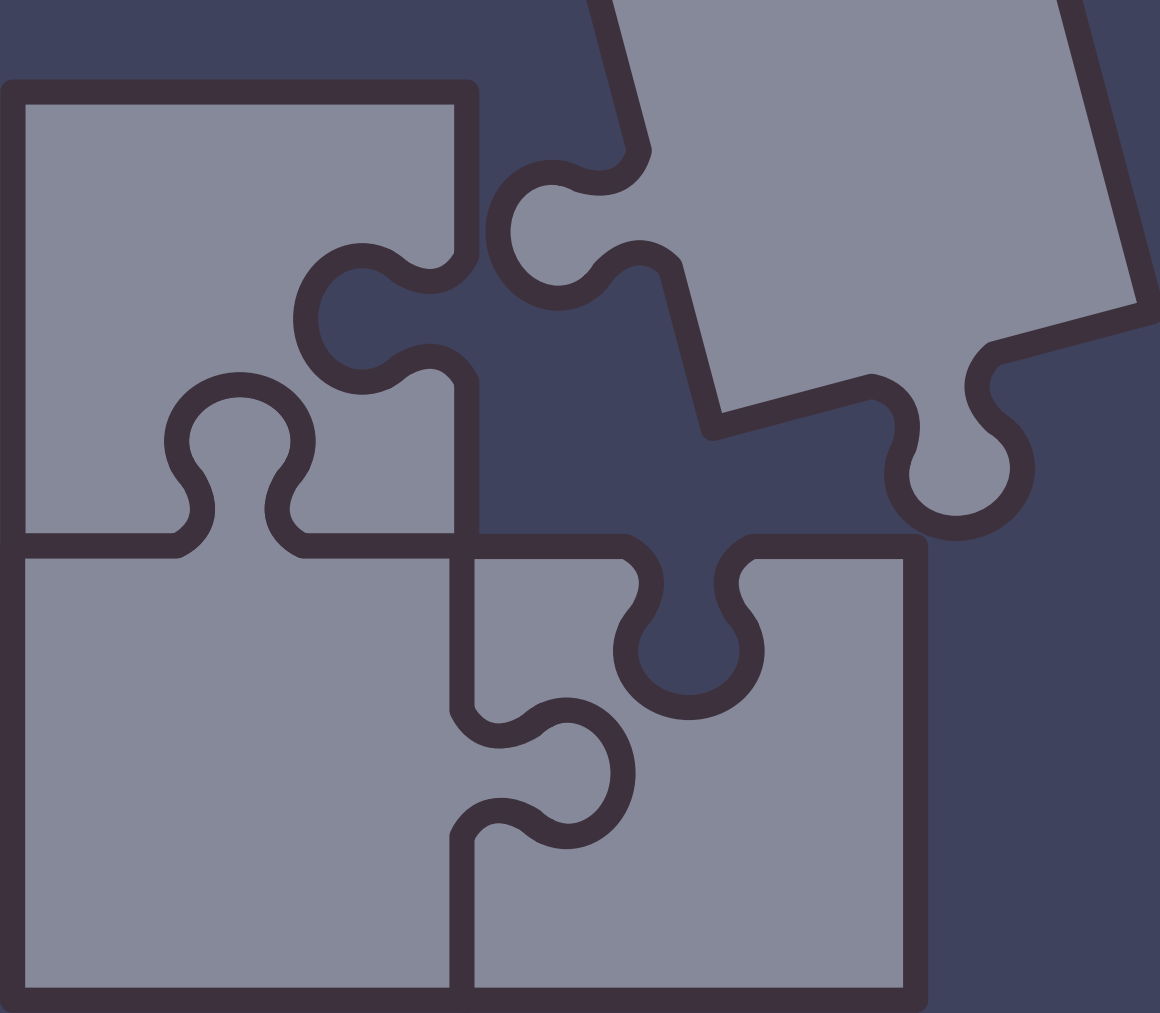
TIPS AND TRICKS

Research is important. It can be done by buying books, using library resources, or online. Do make use of these resources as they will be your tools for the next four years. It is highly beneficial to conduct research of your own and know the subject matter of a lecture well, even before the lecture. Each study unit provides a list of suggested reading material which is then usually found on VLE.

Research further at home to be able to participate in more meaningful discussions during lectures and get a better understanding of what is being discussed.

Stay up to date with local and international current affairs, and any amendments in the law.

Do not panic when it comes to exams - work throughout the year and keep yourself organised at all times to make it easier for yourself.



Participate in events, both academic and social. Your experience as a law student does not start and end in the classroom, but continues through the various events held by student organisations. Applying for JCA's Moot Court is a great opportunity to put what you would have learnt into practice.

and lastly...

Speak up if you have any problems or issues. You may wish to speak to the Dean, your class representative, or a student organisation. JCA is always here to help you and guide you every step of the way! Do not hesitate to contact us through the Junior Chamber of Advocates Facebook Page or Instagram or by sending an email to exec@juniorchamber.net. Alternatively, you can message or speak to any one of the executive members, and we would be more than happy to help you out.

JOIN JCA

Being active within JCA is a great way to meet new people and also provides you with the chance to learn from academics and professionals from various legal fields. Furthermore, if you are a person who likes to take initiative, being a member can open the door to joining the executive board, where you can create and develop projects for current and future law students. From helping out in the organisation and running of events, to developing your research and writing skills in areas of social policy, JCA's various subcommittees are a great way to start getting actively involved if you are hesitant about taking part in student activism.

Make sure not to miss out on any opportunities by becoming a member and signing up for our mailing list.