

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE UNIT

1.

Course unit title	Code
THE PROBLEMATICS OF LEGAL PHILOSOPHY	100208

2.

Name of lecturer(s)	Department(s)
Coordinator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. J. Bieliauskaitė Other: Assoc. Prof. Dr. E. Spruogis	MRU Law School, Institute of Public Law vti@mruni.eu

3.

Cycle of course unit	Level of course unit	Type of course unit
Third cycle	Not applicable	Compulsory

4.

Mode of delivery	Year of study and semester when the course unit is delivered	Language of instruction
Face-to-face	Spring semester	Lithuanian, English

5.

Study requirements	
Prerequisites: Master's or equivalent degree	Co-requisites: Not applicable

6.

Recommended optional programme components
Not applicable

7.

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload	Contact work hours	Independent work hours
8	216	32	184

8.

Purpose of the course unit: programme competences to be developed			
The course aims to introduce doctoral students to the classical and contemporary philosophical theories of law, justice and human rights and the possibilities to apply these theories in practice. Interdisciplinary, critical and analytical thinking, ability to identify problems and provide reasoned solutions are developed during seminars.			
Learning outcomes of the programme	Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
	Understanding of the specifics of the methodology of legal philosophy, ability to apply various research methods in practice.	Analysis of scientific literature and legal documents, discussion, group work	Presentation, scientific essay, exam
	Understanding of the place of legal philosophy in the system legal science and its impact on the solution of legal problems.	Analysis of scientific literature and legal documents, discussion, group work	Presentation, scientific essay, exam
	Ability to explain the content and role of legal values and legal principles in legal discourse.	Analysis of scientific literature and legal documents,	Presentation, scientific essay, exam

		discussion, group work	
	Ability to analyze and evaluate different situations from the point of view of legal philosophy, to provide guidelines for solution of practical legal issues.	Analysis of scientific literature and legal documents, discussion, group work	Presentation, scientific essay, exam

9.

Course contents										
Topics	Contact work hours and planned learning activities								Independent work hours and tasks	
	Lectures	Consultations	Seminars	Training exercises	Laboratory work	Internship	Assessment	All contact work hours	Independent work hours	Tasks
1. <i>Introduction to the course.</i> Subject, purpose, objectives and methodology of Legal Philosophy.			4					4	10	
2. <i>Philosophical theories of law.</i> Classical and modern concept of natural law. Legal positivism. Contemporary trends in analytical jurisprudence. Sociological jurisprudence. American and Scandinavian legal realism. Critical Law Studies. Historical and anthropological jurisprudence. Postmodernist jurisprudence.			8					8	49	Presentation Evaluation Case studies
3. <i>Philosophical theories of justice.</i> Legal-procedural justice. Socio-economic justice.			6					6	30	Legislation, case studies
4. <i>Philosophy of human rights.</i> Doctrine of human rights in the context of the relationship between an individual and society. Philosophical genesis of the main human (civil) rights and the problems of their implementation. Procedural approach to politics, law and political human rights. Socioeconomic and cultural human rights in the context of social justice. The philosophical genesis of solidarity rights and the rights of vulnerable social groups.			6					6	45	A scientific essay Presentation (conference) Case studies
5. <i>Philosophical problems of constitutional, administrative, civil, criminal law.</i>			6					6	50	A scientific essay Presentation (conference) Case studies
Overall			30				2	32	184	

10.

Assessment strategy	Weighting percentage	Period or date of assessment	Assessment criteria
Active participation in seminars and completion of tasks	40%	During seminars	<p><i>10-9 points:</i> actively participates in discussions, answers questions, identifies problematic aspects and questions, formulates critical insights, completes all group and individual assignments, attends > 80% of seminars.</p> <p><i>8-7 points:</i> actively participates in discussions, answers questions, identifies problematic aspects and questions, formulates critical insights, completes 2/3 of group and individual assignments at a high quality level, makes occasional minor errors, attends 60–79% of seminars.</p> <p><i>6-5 points:</i> participates in discussions, answers questions, identifies problematic aspects and questions, completes 1/2 of group and individual assignments, makes errors, attends 40–59% of seminars.</p> <p><i>4-1 points:</i> participates in discussions, completes 1/3 of group and individual assignments with acceptable quality, attends < 40% of seminars.</p> <p><i>0 points:</i> assignments are not completed or are completed poorly, seminars are not attended.</p>
Scientific essay	30%	During seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Originality, creativity and presentation of own approach. - The knowledge, understanding the scientific theories studied during the course, ability to apply them in dealing with topical issues. - Ability to express the thoughts clearly, consistently and logically, to argument and summarize. - The level of academic language. The paper should contain minimum of spelling and grammatical mistakes. - Ability to draw the text, to quote, overlook, paraphrase, create a list of bibliographic references. - Ability to present the topic in a clear and concise way, to justify own position, to respond reasonably to the questions of the audience.
Exam	30%	At the end of the course	<p><i>10 points:</i> excellent, comprehensive knowledge. Excellent understanding and application of concepts, ability to analyze them in the broader context of the subject. Original, creative and independent thinking.</p> <p><i>9 points:</i> strong, comprehensive knowledge. Very good awareness of studied material, properly application of concepts. Original and independent thinking.</p> <p><i>8 points:</i> better than average knowledge.</p>

			<p>Familiar with the material, understands the concepts and principles and applies them properly.</p> <p>7 points: average knowledge, there are inessential errors. Acquainted with the basic material. Understands and uses the concepts and principles. 6 points: lower than average knowledge, there are errors. Acquainted with the basic material. Satisfactorily understands the concepts, is able to describe in his/her own words the information received.</p> <p>5 points: knowledge meets the minimum requirements. A simple listing of the concepts, narration of the text.</p> <p>4-1 points: knowledge and skills does not meet the minimum requirements.</p>
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Required reading:

1. Byrne, G. (2025). *Lloyd and Freeman's introduction to jurisprudence* (10th ed.). Sweet & Maxwell / Thomson Reuters.
2. Bix, B. H. (2021). *Jurisprudence: Theory and context* (9th ed.). Carolina Academic Press.

Recommended reading:

1. Adams, D. M. (2012). *Philosophical problems in the law* (5th ed.). Wadsworth Publishing.
2. Coyle, S. (2022). *Modern jurisprudence: A philosophical guide* (3rd ed.). Hart Publishing
3. Donnelly, J. (2013). *Universal human rights in theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Cornell University Press.
4. Dworkin, R. (2011). *Justice for hedgehogs*. Harvard University Press.
5. Ernst, G., & Heilinger, J. (Eds.). (2012). *The philosophy of human rights: Contemporary controversies*. De Gruyter.
6. Finnis, J. (2011). *Natural law and natural rights* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
7. Habermas, J. (2007). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*. Polity Press.
8. Kant, I. (1991). *The metaphysics of morals*. Cambridge University Press.
9. Lucy, W. (2010). *Philosophy of private law*. Oxford University Press.
10. Rawls, J. (1999). *A theory of justice* (Rev. ed.). Oxford University Press.
11. Sellers, M., & Kirste, S. (Eds.). (2023). *Encyclopedia of the philosophy of law and social philosophy*. Springer. <https://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-94-007-6519-1>
12. Simmonds, N. (2018). *Central issues in jurisprudence: Justice, law and rights* (5th ed.). Sweet & Maxwell.
13. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (n.d.). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu>
14. Tebbit, M. (2017). *Philosophy of law: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
15. Wacks, R. (2021). *Understanding jurisprudence: An introduction to legal theory* (6th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Other literature: https://www.mruni.eu/en/university/library/duomenu_bazes/subscribed_databases/

Approved by Mykolas Romeris University and Vytautas Magnus University Doctoral Committee in Law on 4 March 2020, Decision No. 8DS-TK-3; renewed on 23 October 2020, Decision No. 8DS-TK-25 and on 10 March 2022, Decision No. 8DS-TK-3, renewed on 12 February 2026, Decision No. 10-73 (4.4 E-32002)