

City University of Hong Kong

Course Syllabus

offered by School of Law
with effect from Semester B 2015/16

Part I Course Overview

Dissertation

Course Title:

LW6137E

Course Code:

One semester or two semesters as follows

(i) in Semester A and in Semester B of the same academic year; or

(ii) in Semester B and in Semester A of the immediate following academic year; or

Course Duration:

(iii) in one semester

6

Credit Units:

P6

Level:

English

Medium of Instruction:

English

Medium of Assessment:

Dissertation Coordinator's approval of a research proposal submitted by the student

Prerequisites:

(Course Code and Title)

Nil

Precursors:

(Course Code and Title)

LW6137C and LW6137E are equivalent courses.

Equivalent Courses:

(Course Code and Title)

LW6537C/E Dissertation, LW6551E, LW6548C and LW5551 & LW5552 Independent Research (Students who have completed or are taking LW6551E/LW6548C/LW5551/LW5552 Independent Research are not allowed to take LW6137C/E Dissertation.)

Exclusive Courses:

(Course Code and Title)

Remarks: Students enrolled in LW6137C/E are required to attend a seminar on legal research recommended by the course leader.

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course aims to develop students’ ability to carry out independent research and to develop expertise in a given subject area through critical application of theory and techniques provided by the course. Students will be required to undertake individually supervised research and produce a dissertation.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Choose, identify and critically assess an individual legal area and pertinent issues relating to it for research.		√	√	
2.	Pursue a subject area of the programme to substantial depth through independent research.		√	√	
3.	Search, select and critically assess literature and materials relevant to the chosen area.		√	√	
4.	Critically apply selected theory and techniques developed during the programme to the chosen area.		√	√	√
5.	Communicate effectively in writing a programme of work and, if required, orally defend the dissertation in a logical, precise and coherent manner.		√	√	√
		100%			

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.					Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Each student will be required to work independently, undertaking an individual piece of work related to the programme. The scope of the programme will enable the student to select from an extremely wide range of possible topics.	√	√	√	√	√	15 hours of individual consultation per student in total
	The Dean of School will allocate a dissertation supervisor from the academic staff to each student. The supervisor will be responsible for providing guidance to the student. The selection of the dissertation supervisor will be based on staff expertise, interests and research activities. Because many topics will be necessarily cross disciplinary, the supervisor may seek the assistance of practitioners with appropriate experience and academic qualifications or members of the academic staff of the School of Law or from other departments or institutions to provide feedback and comments.	√	√	√	√	√	
	Guidelines for monitoring the progress of the dissertation will be issued. Students will be expected to consult their supervisor regularly. The supervisor and the student will establish a regular schedule of progress reports and consultations. The schedule will depend on the nature of the dissertation. The principal function of the supervision will be to keep the research and dissertation activities focused, relevant and progressing. Students will be expected to be self-motivated and to plan and monitor their progress independently.	√	√	√	√	√	

If LW6137E is taken as a two-semester course, the normal schedule of progress will be:

	Course start in Semester A	Course start in Semester B	Week
1. Approval of the dissertation topic, by the Dissertation Coordinator	Semester A	Semester B	1
2. Approval of an interim report, by the supervisor	Semester A	Semester B	6
3. Approval of a draft dissertation, by the supervisor	Semester B	Semester A	5
4. Submission of the completed dissertation	Semester B	Semester A	13

If LW6137E is taken as a one-semester course, the normal schedule of progress will be:

	Week
1. Approval of the dissertation, by the Dissertation Coordinator	1
2. Approval of an interim report, by the supervisor	4
3. Approval of a draft dissertation, by the supervisor	9
4. Submission of the completed dissertation	13

The interim report is intended to establish a framework for completion of the dissertation. It must show adequate progress in the research project and state:

- the aims and objectives
- literature review
- definition of problems
- methodology
- structure of the dissertation
- development plan including schedule for completion and resource requirements.

Supervisors are not responsible for the production of research material or for the preparation of the dissertation. This is the sole responsibility of students.

Students are expected to be self motivated and to independently plan and monitor their own progress. They should maintain regular contact with their supervisors throughout the period of research and preparation.

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5			
Continuous Assessment: 100%								
The dissertation must be submitted by the end of the 13th week of Semester B or Semester A, whichever is appropriate.	√	√	√	√	√		100%	
The dissertation must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the standards in the “Regulations for the Form of Theses” as contained in the City University of Hong Kong Calendar. The length of the main text of the dissertation shall be in the range of 16,000 to 20,000 words (excluding footnotes). The main text should be supplemented by footnotes as per the <i>Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities</i> (OSCOLA).								

<p>The dissertation will be assessed on the basis of the finished written work. The dissertation will be marked by two assessors, each marking to maximum of 50%, giving a total of 100% for the dissertation. One assessor is the dissertation supervisor. The other assessor, will normally be a member of the academic staff of the School, except that in some cases, where relevant expertise is required, that assessor may be from another department or from an outside organization. Assessment of the dissertation may be moderated by an External Academic Advisor. Where the marks awarded by the two assessors differ widely, the External Academic Advisor's comment will be considered.</p>								
Examination 0% (duration: N/A)								
							100%	

On the recommendation of the assessors, the Dissertation Coordinator may require the student to present and defend the dissertation. This will not contribute to the final mark. The purpose of the oral presentation is to test the student's comprehension of the content and context of the dissertation, and to confirm that the work presented is that of the student. The oral presentation will be made before a panel appointed by the Dissertation Coordinator and normally comprise the Dissertation Coordinator or the Chairman of the Examination Board as Chairman, the dissertation supervisor and the second assessor. The External Academic Advisor may also be invited to participate in the oral presentation.

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Adequate (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Dissertation	Dissertation will be assessed for Originality, Breadth of Research, Citation & Authority, Quality of Presentation, Logic, Accuracy, Independent Thought and Substance.	Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.	Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.	Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.	Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.	Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Dissertation

There is no formal syllabus. Students will be required to undertake individually supervised research and dissertation preparation.

2. Reading List

2.1 Recommended Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

BAHRIJ, John, *Hong Kong Legal Research: Methods and Skills* (Hong Kong: Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2007).

BLACKMAN, Josh, *How To Use Internet For Legal Research* (New York: Find/SVP, 1996)

CANE, Peter and KRITZER, Herbert, *The Oxford Handbook of Empirical Legal Research* (Oxford Handbooks in Law) (2012)

COTTRELL, Jill, *Legal Research: A Guide for Hong Kong Students* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997).

Faculty of Law, University of Oxford, *Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities* (2012).

GARNER, Bryan A, *Legal Writing in Plain English: A Text with Exercises*, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

HANSON, Sharon, *Legal Method & Reasoning*, 2nd ed. (London: Cavendish, 2003)

HOLLAND, James A & WEBB, Julian S, *Learning Legal Rules: A Student's Guide to Legal Method and Reasoning*, 6th ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

HUTCHISON, Terry, *Researching and Writing in Law* (Sydney: Lawbook Co, 2002).

KUNZ, Christina L, et al., *The Process of Legal Research*, 5th ed. (Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Law & Business, 2000).

MARKESINIS, Basil S, (ed.), *Law Making, Law Finding and Law Shaping: The Diverse Influences* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

REIMANN, Mathias and ZIMMERMANN, Reinhard, *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Law* (Oxford Handbooks) (2008)

VOLOKH, Eugene, *Academic Legal Writing: Law Review Articles, Student Notes, Seminar Papers, and Getting on Law Review*, 4th edn (New York: Foundation Press, 2010).

WATT, Robert, *Concise Legal Research*, 4th ed. (Sydney: Federation Press, 2001)