

LW8716D: LEGAL WRITING AND SKILLS II

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Legal Writing and Skills II

Subject Code

LW - Law

Course Number

8716D

Academic Unit

School of Law (FL)

College/School

School of Law (FL)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

D8 - Professional Doctorate

Medium of Instruction

Other Languages

Other Languages for Medium of Instruction

Chinese (Putonghua) supplemented by English

Medium of Assessment

Chinese

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This module aims to prepare the candidates (students) in the JSD programme for their doctorate dissertation. It will provide a critical introduction to legal reasoning, research methodologies and legal writing skills from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The training process covers an understanding of the nature of studying law and legal reasoning, the distinctive nature of legal research, identifying legal questions, research design, defining research originality, the variety of research methodologies, searching for research resources and materials, legal referencing and citation skills, plagiarism and academic integrity, and the use of technology in legal research. In this process, students will acquire critical thinking ability and learn to distinguish between analytical methodologies and research methodologies.

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. In most of the seminars, students will be given handouts, including sample writings, to discuss, analyse and criticize. Final assessment will take the form of presenting a writing, usually a chapter of the candidates' thesis, in a workshop in which all the theses will be presented and questioned by a group of established legal scholars and experts.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 app.)		DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Further demonstrate the capability of legal academic writing.		x		
2	Develop the required skills that are needed for writing their own thesis and the ability to evaluate whether appropriate skills have been applied in reviewing other students' writing.			x	x
3	Demonstrate various skills to conduct legal research (including both doctrinal and empirical) in writing their theses.			x	x

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 real-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.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture and In-class Discussions	- Students will need to engage actively in lectures and in-class discussion with regard to their thesis writing.	1	

2	Presentation and Participation in Discussions	- Each student will be given several opportunities to present his/her thesis writings, especially on research topic, literature review, and how to structure the thesis. - Students are required to actively participate during in-class discussions on the presentation of his/he classmates.	2, 3	
3	Readings	- Students are required to meet their supervisors frequently during the semester to select reading materials for their theses. - Students are expected to read around 10 journal articles relevant to his/her thesis topic.	2, 3	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Presentation and participation	1, 2, 3	40	The use of Generative AI tools is not allowed.	No
2	Coursework	1, 2, 3	60	The use of Generative AI tools is not allowed.	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Presentation and participation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Demonstration of understanding of various writing skills. Demonstration of ability to know what skills are needed for which kind of writing in their own thesis writing process. Demonstration of ability to evaluate whether appropriate skills have been applied in reviewing other students' writing.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

Marginal

(D) Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.

Failure

(F) Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

Coursework (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Demonstration of an understanding of various writing skills. Demonstration of the skills to apply different kinds of writing skills in writing their theses, in particular, application of knowledge to specific legal problems, to discuss questions, and to comment on legal phenomenon; engagement in argument-based analysis based on critical thinking; and aptitude for formulating innovative solutions to designated fact-based questions.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

Marginal

(D) Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.

Failure

(F) Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

Presentation and participation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Demonstration of understanding of various writing skills. Demonstration of ability to know what skills are needed for which kind of writing in their own thesis writing process. Demonstration of ability to evaluate whether appropriate skills have been applied in reviewing other students' writing.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

Good

(B+, B) Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

Failure

(F) Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

Coursework (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Demonstration of an understanding of various writing skills. Demonstration of the skills to apply different kinds of writing skills in writing their theses, in particular, application of knowledge to specific legal problems, to discuss questions, and to comment on legal phenomenon; engagement in argument-based analysis based on critical thinking; and aptitude for formulating innovative solutions to designated fact-based questions.

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Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

Failure

(F) Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

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Legal reasoning; legal writing skills; research question; research design; original contribution; doctrinal research; comparative research; empirical research; analytical methodologies; technology in legal research.

Access to Library Resources

Students will have the opportunity to attend a tour of the library during the first few weeks of the course. Students should take full opportunity to take a library tour. The law librarian will instruct students on how to access other libraries and facilities within and outside Hong Kong.

The Law Library has an excellent collection of legal materials in print copy and electronic format. Some important databases include:

- BLIS (Bilingual Laws Information System) which contains the statutory Laws of Hong Kong and selected constitutional documents.
- Lexis/Nexis
- Westlaw
- Heinonline
- Law Library Electronic Databases that include Index to Legal Periodicals and Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals, Latest Judgement Alert, Hong Kong Premium Service, Hansard U.K

CD-ROM' s include British Hansard, LEXIS/NEXIS, the Laws & Regulations of China, and the European Union Laws Library. There are also databases in Chinese as well as print format copies of Chinese law.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	To be assigned in class and by supervisors.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	To be assigned by lecturers.