

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by School of Law
with effect from Semester B 2017 / 2018**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: Law for Smart Consumers

Course Code: GE1126

Course Duration: 13 weeks

Credit Units: 3

Level: B1

1 Arts and Humanities

Proposed Area: (for GE courses only)
 Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations
 Science and Technology

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

Prerequisites: (Course Code and Title) None

Precursors: (Course Code and Title) None

Equivalent Courses: (Course Code and Title) None

Exclusive Courses: (Course Code and Title) None

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

As the course name suggests, this course aims at providing legal knowledge to students to help them become smart consumers. Through role-playing, discussion of current issues concerning consumer rights and real consumer disputes and video viewing, students will discover the legal issues and principles that govern everyday consumer transactions. For example, students will do a “role-play” acting out the facts of a case involving a student being coerced into buying a pair of overpriced glasses. What are the rights of this consumer? Should the consumer call the police or is there any other remedy available to him/her? Through such role plays, students will learn how the law can protect consumers’ rights, the approach of legal reasoning to solve consumer disputes as well as how the Hong Kong legal system and different bodies, e.g. the Consumer Council, can help resolve consumer disputes and protect consumers’ interests.

Discussion of current issues and real cases will encourage students to think about how “real” consumer disputes are dealt with – e.g the lecturer will discuss the case involving a high-risk blood transfusion procedure at the DR Medical Beauty Center which caused the death of one woman and serious bodily harm to three women in 2012, to help students consider whether the victims and their families can have any legal claim against the beauty service provider. The lecturer will also review with students common terms and conditions of different types of consumer agreements, e.g. for internet services or the usage of Facebook.

Hence, students will know the “dos” and “don’ts” whenever they enter into a consumer transaction. They will also become more aware of current issues involving consumer rights and trained to be more inquisitive.

This course aims to provide participants with:

- (a) an insight into the basic legal principles governing consumer transactions and how such knowledge can help protect their interests as consumers;
- (b) training in basic legal reasoning skills and approaches to resolving consumer disputes;
- (c) an awareness of current issues involving consumers’ rights and common consumer pitfalls in various types of consumer transactions;
- (d) an insight into the current consumer protection framework and mechanism in Hong Kong; and
- (e) training in research and presentation skills as well as oral and written arguments throughout.

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.	Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the basic legal principles governing daily consumer transactions.		√	√	
2.	Create and present solutions to problems associated with transactions entered into between a consumer and a more resourceful party.		√	√	
3.	Describe real agreements or terms and conditions in a consumer transaction.				√
4.	Explain the rights of consumers as well the remedies that are available when the other party is in breach.				√

5.	Critically evaluate and apply the basic principles learnt in real-life situations individually and in groups.		√	√	
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* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

Please specify the alignment of CILOs to the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs) in Section A of Annex.

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	
Lectures and video viewing	Students will be guided to apply the concepts and theories to the issues addressed in the particular class. They will gain knowledge through lectures and the lecturer's illustration of how to apply various legal principles to analyse and resolve real consumer disputes from the news.	√			√		2 hours
Role-play interactive scenarios and group discussions	Role-play scenarios will give students an opportunity to discover and understand "real-life" issues and group discussions after such role-play activities will stimulate ideas and thus generate more ideas for discussion with a view to finding solutions for these daily problems.	√	√	√	√	√	1 hour

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%							
Participation and Presentation	√	√	√	√	√	20%	Team and individual contributions to discussion and debate addresses capacity for self-directed learning, critical thinking, interpreting of information and other GE PILOS
Writing task	√	√		√	√	40%	Addresses the student's skills in producing a

						structured well organised and fluent text plus other GE PILOS
Group research and presentation task	√	√	√	√	√	40%
* The weightings should add up to 100%.						100%

To pass the course students must achieve an overall total mark of 40% or above.

Participation and Presentation – students will need to engage in discussions/debates on issues and principles learnt and they will need to present their findings during tutorials. The lecturer will facilitate the discussions and students' presentations will be assessed by the tutors.

A writing task which requires students to draft a letter advising a consumer of his/her legal rights and a draft complaint letter to the Consumer Council in relation to the consumer disputes. The advice and complaint letter will be marked by the lecturer with feedback.

A group research and presentation task: Students are required to do research and give a presentation on common consumer pitfalls and current regulations and agencies in Hong Kong which provide protection and assistance for consumers in one of the following areas: (i) beauty services; (ii) travel services; (iii) insurance services; (iv) banking and financial services; (v) money lending services; (vi) health club services; (vii) Chinese medicine practice; or (viii) product safety.

Students are also required to produce an “end-product” relating to their research topic (e.g. a poster or documentary) to go with their presentation.

The lecturer will have conferences with individual groups to provide guidance on doing this project and some background materials on the research topics. The task will be assessed by the tutors.

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-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Participation and Presentation (20%)	1.1 Active participation in class 1.2. Ability to demonstrate understanding of relevant issues and materials	Very active and constructive participation in class and group discussions/debates/presentations. The level of understanding shown is deeper than what was taught in classes or texts. Very concrete and clear explanations.	Active and constructive participation in class and group discussions/debates/presentations. Descriptions and explanations are systematic, clear and concrete .	The level of participation and understanding of issues is average and explanations may either be incorrect or not really applied to the given issue.	Minimal level of participation and insufficient understanding of issues. It is shown by either no description of the social or legal issues involved or disorganised presentation of ideas.	Demonstrates nothing meaningful or involves academic dishonesty .
2. Writing Task (40%)	2.1 Ability to demonstrate understanding of relevant issues and principles 2.2 Ability to write coherently on legal issues	Demonstrates an excellent understanding of the issues involved and exceptional writing and structuring skills.	Demonstrates good understanding of the issues involved and good writing and structuring skills.	Demonstrates sufficient understanding of the issues involved and average writing and structuring skills.	Demonstrates minimal understanding of the issues involved and relatively bad writing and structuring skills.	Fails to address the issues involved and inability to write and structure in a meaningful way.
3. Group Research and Presentation task (40%)	3.1 Ability to undertake research as part of a group, and provide evidence of individual role 3.2 Sharing of research outcomes with audience	The group shows excellent research skills as well as comprehensive and creative findings and insights into the assigned research topic and effective communication of such ideas to their target audience.	The group shows some good research skills and new findings and ideas on the assigned research topic.	The group shows some attempts in generating ideas on the assigned research topic but such ideas may be too general and/or abstract .	The group shows poor effort in completing the task and the content does not focus on the proper issue and/or presentation is disorganised .	The group shows very poor effort and nothing meaningful can be derived from it or academic dishonesty is involved in completing the task.

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.)

Agreement, consumer protection, dispute resolution, compensation, monopolies, smart consumer, case studies looking at legal issues and other issues including ethical issues.

2. Reading List

Recommended Reading:

DK Srivastava, *Business Law in Hong Kong* (Sweet & Maxwell, 4th ed, 2014) - chapters on “Legal System of Hong Kong”, “Contract Law”, “Tort Law”, “Sale of Goods” and “E-commerce Law”

The Choice (Publication of the Consumer Council) (in Chinese)

The Standard

South China Morning Post

Consumer complaint section of *Next Magazine*

Online Resources:

Hong Kong Consumer Council: https://www.consumer.org.hk/ws_en/

Government Hong Kong: <http://www.gov.hk/en/residents/>

Hong Kong Legal Information Institute: <http://www.hklii.hk/eng/> (database of HK legislation and case law)

Consumers International: <http://www.consumersinternational.org/>

Econsumer: <http://www.econsumer.gov/english/>

Consumer reports: <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/index.htm>

Investor Education Centre: <http://www.hkiec.hk>

Financial Dispute Resolution Centre Limited: <http://www.fdrc.org.hk>

Hong Kong Monetary Authority: <http://www.hkma.gov.hk>

Securities and Futures Commission: <http://www.sfc.hk>

Office of the Commissioner of Insurance: <http://www.oci.gov.hk>

Insurance Claims Complaints Bureau: <http://www.iccb.org.hk>

Competition Commission: <http://www.compcomm.hk/>

Annex (for GE courses only)

Please specify the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that the course is aligned to and relate them to the CILOs stated in Part II, Section 2 of this form:

GE PILO	Please indicate which CILO(s) is/are related to this PILO, if any <i>(can be more than one CILOs in each PILO)</i>
PILO 1: Demonstrate the capacity for self-directed learning	One of the CILOs is to enable students to discover solution to problems and to present these solutions in class. This involves self-motivation and self-directed learning.
PILO 2: Explain the basic methodologies and techniques of inquiry of the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, and science and technology	CILO 1 will enable an understanding of the principles involved in agreements and transactions. CILO 6 will enable students to develop structured arguments.
PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills	CILOs 2 and 5 ensure students will be able to discover solutions and apply principles to both hypothetical and real-life situations.
PILO 4: Interpret information and numerical data	CILO 1 – students will be taught how to interpret principles of law.
PILO 5: Produce structured, well-organised and fluent text	CILO 5 – enables students to develop structured arguments.
PILO 6: Demonstrate effective oral communication skills	
PILO 7: Demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a team	CILO 5 – students will need to interpret and apply legal principles through discussions in groups.
PILO 8: Recognise important characteristics of their own culture(s) and at least one other culture, and their impact on global issues	
PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions	CILOs 2, 3 – Through discovery of solutions to suit local needs, student will develop a sense of social ethics and responsible actions.
PILO 10: Demonstrate the attitude and/or ability to accomplish discovery and/or innovation	CILO 2, 5 – students will need to think and discover solutions to both hypothetical and real-life issues.

GE course leaders should cover the mandatory PILOs for the GE area (Area 1: Arts and Humanities; Area 2: Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations; Area 3: Science and Technology) for which they have classified their course; for quality assurance purposes, they are advised to carefully consider if it is beneficial to claim any coverage of additional PILOs. General advice would be to restrict PILOs to only the essential ones. (Please refer to the curricular mapping of GE programme: http://www.cityu.edu.hk/edge/ge/faculty/curricular_mapping.htm.)

- A. Please select an assessment task for collecting evidence of student achievement for quality assurance purposes. Please retain at least one sample of student achievement across a period of three years.

Selected Assessment Task
A writing task which requires students to draft an advice letter and a draft complaint letter to the Consumer Council. Related CILOs: 1-6 Related GE PILOs: 1-5, 10