

LEG 106 Legal English/Law in Action

Semester and year: 2017/18

Day and time: Monday: 18:30 – 21:15, room 2.04

Instructor: James M. Heller, Esq.

Instructor contact: James.Heller@aauni.edu

Consultation hours: By appointment in the Faculty Lounge

AAU credits	12 ECTS/6 US	Level	4
Length	Two semesters	Course type	AAU support course

1. Course Description

This course is intended for first year LLB and CertHE students. It will introduce and familiarise students with both written and spoken legal English, expanding not only their general language abilities, but also giving them the opportunity to advance their technical skills and identify the differences between the UK, US, and other international systems' usage. It will serve as a complement to the other first year core legal classes and as a general introduction to law. Through classroom discussion, exercises, writing and moots students will transition from being new to the law and Legal English to being future lawyers.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

This course is focused on writing and oral legal development, seeking to instil analytical skills and the ability to concisely and coherently develop responsive writing and oral argumentation.

Aims and objectives

- To familiarise students with legal terminology, legal writing and provide exposure to their practical applications.
- To allow students to explore legal writings from different systems while developing their analytical skills.
- To develop the ability to write and argue concise material based upon proposed fact patterns.
- To give students the opportunity to hear people with a variety of different native and non-native accents speak on a various legal or law related topics.
- To allow students to engage in public speaking and legal mooting.
- To develop the writing and analytical skills necessary to succeed in core LLB courses and other legally oriented undertakings.
- To develop presentation and argumentation skills.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the module students will be able to

- identify and differentiate legal terms of art from layman English;
- integrate legal English and terms of art in their technical writing;
- engage with and present research;
- compare and contrast various legal systems and functions;
- evidence understanding of topical legal issues;
- analyse facts and produce appropriate and concise written response;
- identify and compose common legal texts such as letters and memorandum; and
- present and defend legal arguments in writing and orally.

3. Course Materials

Required material for purchase in the print center/bookstore/online

International Legal English, 2nd Edition, Amy Krois-Linder, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

A Dictionary of Law (Oxford Quick Reference), 7th Edition, Elizabeth Martin and Jonathan Law, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Other Sources

Oxford Guide to Plain English, 4th Edition, Martin Cutts, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Fowler's Modern English Usage, 3rd Revised Edition, R. W. Burchfield, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Introduction to International Legal English, Student Guide ed. edition, A Krois-Linder, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Legal English, 3rd Edition, R Haigh, Oxford University Press, 2012.

Oxford Handbook of Legal Correspondence, R Haigh, Oxford University Press, 2006.

Professional English in Use: Law, Gillian D. Brown and Sally Rice, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

4. Teaching methodology

The majority of the class will be directed by your abilities. We will draw heavily from topical legally related global activities. We will use the textbook, handouts, film, video, student presentation and other methods as the basis of each session. The start of the year will move at a more leisurely pace while the second half of the year will have a faster pace. You may expect to write on a weekly basis.

On occasion we will be attending various events. You are expected to be present, appropriately dressed, follow the topic of discussion and write responsive papers. Regarding regular classroom sessions, you are expected to have completed all assigned work prior to coming to class. A typical class session will be broken in to various components: a review of the previous week's material, an introduction of new material, topical issues which generate discussion and/or oral and writing exercises. Depending on what assignments were due and have been reviewed the class may end with individual student work review.

Some of this course will be taught from the workbook. If you have taken a language class before you will find this to be a similar experience. There will be audio recordings

and fill in the blank exercises. I ask that you do your work in either blue or black ink and correct it in red ink. The objective is not that it be correct on the page when I review it, but that you learn – learning is a process and allowing yourself to view your errors will help you to identify and strengthen your weaknesses and therefore enable you to focus when it comes time to study.

If English is your native language, looking at the book you may feel a little dismayed. At times, depending on your language skill and familiarity with legal terminology, those feelings may be justified. However there will be times when having English as your native language will work to your disadvantage. The years have proven that native speakers do not necessarily receive the highest marks in this class nor does it mean they have the best papers. No one is a master of all Legal English, not even working lawyers. Learning as much Legal English as you can, at this early stage in your legal studies, will have compounding benefits as your studies and career progresses.

5. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assessment	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance, Participation and Corresponding Weekly Assignments	33.3%	Integrate legal English and terms of art in technical writing; engage with and present research; compare and contrast various legal systems and functions; evidence understanding of topical legal issues; analyse facts and produce appropriate and concise written response; identify, compose, present and defend legal arguments in writing and/or orally.	1,2,3
Autumn Mid-Term Assignment	16.65%	Integrate legal English and terms of art in technical writing; engage with and present research; compare and contrast various legal systems and functions; evidence understanding of topical legal issues; analyse facts and produce appropriate and concise written response	1,2,3
Autumn Final Assignment	16.65%	Integrate legal English and terms of art in technical writing; engage with and present research; compare and contrast various legal systems and functions; evidence understanding of topical legal issues; analyse facts and produce appropriate and concise written response	1,2,3
Spring Mid-	16.65%	Integrate legal English and	1,2,3

Term Assignment		terms of art in technical writing; engage with and present research; compare and contrast various legal systems and functions; evidence understanding of topical legal issues; analyse facts and produce appropriate and concise written response; identify and compose common legal texts such as letters and memorandum; present and defend legal arguments in writing and/or orally	
Spring Final Assignment	16.65%	Integrate legal English and terms of art in technical writing; engage with and present research; compare and contrast various legal systems and functions; evidence understanding of topical legal issues; analyse facts and produce appropriate and concise written response; identify and compose common legal texts such as letters and memorandum; present and defend legal arguments in writing and/or orally	1,2,3
TOTAL	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

6. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules available in AAU's Student Handbook, and the School of Law Handbook.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication. **You must list a subject line in your email communication. This is standard professional practice and should be utilised with all electronic communication.** Emails without a subject line may not be answered.

Electronic documents will be submitted via NEO; a physical copy is due at the start of class.

Attendance

Attendance is required, absent prior written approval from the lecturer. Students falling below this threshold may be failed or administratively withdrawn from the course.

Students absent for urgent unexpected matters (illness, serious family matters) must submit an Absence Excuse Form supplemented with documents proving the reasons for absence to the Dean.

Cheating and disruptive behaviour

If a student engages in disruptive or other conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the activity or for the day and may be required to explain their actions and how they will not recur. In the case of ongoing generally disruptive or egregious behaviour, any or all of the following may happen: the student may be expelled from the room; and the student may face the dean and/or the disciplinary commission.

Students engaging in behaviour which is suggestive of cheating or unfair practices will have their behaviour evaluated for disciplinary consideration

Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Centre

AAU strictly enforces its policy against cheating and plagiarism. This is applicable not only to course work submitted to London but work internally developed as well. Full policy is available in the Student Handbook.

Briefly: Cheating and plagiarism results in the failing grade from the assignment at a minimum, it may lead to suspension from the university.

To prevent any misunderstanding, plagiarism is defined:

PLAGIARISM – “the unauthorised use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.”

- Taken from the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993.

Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism require disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

For further guidance regarding the technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors at the AAU Academic Tutoring Centre. For more information and/or to book a tutor, go to: atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities must inform the dean immediately in order to discuss possible reasonable accommodations available from both AAU and the University of London.

7. Grading Scale

This class is offered on a pass/fail basis. Should you desire a concrete mark inform me within the first two weeks.

Assignments will be assigned a classification for indicative purposes. If a failing piece of written work is submitted on time you may be given the opportunity to develop it for a higher mark.

The classification and criteria of the British grading scale are elaborated in the Law School Handbook.