



Bachelor's courses Faculty of Law

VU University Amsterdam - Student- & Onderwijszaken - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2019-2020

Blockchain and Other Disruptive Business-tech Challenges to the Law

Course code	R_IBIT ()
Period	Period 4
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Law
Coordinator	dr. mr. M. van der Linden
Examinator	mr. T.H.A. Wisman
Teaching staff	dr. mr. M. van der Linden
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar
Level	500

Course objective

At the end of this course, students are expected to be able to:

- Understand, at a functional level, how these (and possibly other) disruptive technologies work, how they circumvent or defeat tradition regulation.
- Understand and critically evaluate the traditional legal approaches in the areas covered by these disruptive technologies.
- Explain their own well-founded opinion on the tasks and challenges for the law.

Course content

New technologies, such as, inter alia, blockchain, the sharing economy and fintech challenge the existing order, by posing new questions concerning responsibility, liability, compliance with existing rules, governance, and ultimately a state's power to regulate and enforce within its own territory.

Technologies challenge us to re-consider: why do we have regulation covering these respective areas in the first place. What do we want to achieve? Is that still relevant? If so, is there any way in which we still can strive to these goals?

For example, blockchain technology underlies phenomena like cryptocurrencies and smart contracts, effectively undermining the need for trusted third parties like banks, public notaries, etc. As things are today, what do we need trusted third parties for? Is the regulation that empowers them still relevant and necessary? How can we protect consumers, how can we guarantee financial stability?

The course is not just about the challenges that use of new technologies pose to the law, but also about how the law can enable and shape new technologies and maybe steer developments in a certain direction.

In this course an attempt is made to map the area, to discuss the issues with the students, in order to shape our understanding of what is going on and form an opinion.

Form of tuition

Weekly lectures, and three seminars. For the seminars, students are expected to have prepared assignments.

Type of assessment

Two written assignments: one that may be done in pairs and one that must be done individually. Each assignment contributes 50% to the final grade.

Course reading

The required literature will be made available on Canvas.

Target group

Apart from regular students, the course is also available for:

Students from other universities/faculties

Exchange students

Contractor (students who pay for one course)