LAWS564

Advanced Legal Research Project

FY2 External 2016

Dept of Law

Contents

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
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W3A 441
Any time by appointment

Alexander Zahar
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Credit points
6

Prerequisites
48cp in LAW or LAWS or LAWZ units and (GPA of 3.25 (out of 4.0) in LAW or LAWS or LAWZ units) and permission of Executive Dean of Faculty

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit provides students with an opportunity to develop and demonstrate advanced research skills through a series of seminar presentations and supervised research, leading to the submission of a 15,000 word thesis. Students formulate their own research question or argument in any area of legal scholarship or regulation. The thesis must be presented and defended within the broader conditions of its relevance, for example: social, historical, philosophical, economic or environmental contexts.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Choose an appropriate topic for a legal research project

Use appropriate legal research methodologies, carry out independent research and analysis, and think creatively about legal problems

Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing

Undertake a legal research project that can lead to a high quality scholarly paper suitable for publication

Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments

Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments

Give an oral presentation of a research argument in an academic environment

Formulate and present oral and written arguments appropriate to a legal research project

General Assessment Information

In the absence of a successful application for special consideration due to a disruption to studies, any assessment task submitted after its published deadline will not be graded and will receive a mark of zero. Applications for a Disruption to Studies are made via ask.mq.edu.au and should be accompanied by supporting documentation. Students should refer to the Disruption to Studies policy for complete details of the policy and a description of the supporting documentation required. Word limits will be strictly applied and work above the word limit will not be marked. All assessments in the unit are to be submitted electronically. Plagiarism detection software is used in this unit.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Research proposal	10%	11:55 Monday Week 4, S2
3-minute thesis	10%	Week 7 tutorial, S2
Thesis	80%	11:55 Friday Week 13, S1

Research proposal

Due: **11:55 Monday Week 4, S2**
Weighting: **10%**

Students are required to submit a three-page research proposal, 700-1,000 words, in accordance with instructions provided on the unit iLearn page. Failure to submit by the due date will result in zero marks being awarded for this assessment, unless an extension is granted on the basis of an application under disruption to studies policy.

On successful completion you will be able to:

• Choose an appropriate topic for a legal research project

• Use appropriate legal research methodologies, carry out independent research and analysis, and think creatively about legal problems

3-minute thesis

Due: **Week 7 tutorial, S2**
Weighting: **10%**

Students are to present the main argument of their thesis in three minutes. A single powerpoint slide with your name and title of your thesis including an image (no animation) is permitted.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments
- Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments
- Give an oral presentation of a research argument in an academic environment
- Formulate and present oral and written arguments appropriate to a legal research project

Thesis

Due: **11:55 Friday Week 13, S1**
Weighting: **80%**

The research paper is to be submitted through Turnitin. Length: 13,500-16,500 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography. Five marks will be deducted for every 100 words (or part thereof) below or above the range. The paper will be marked independently by the student's supervisor (40% of your mark) and the unit convenor (the other 40%). Where the convenor is the student's supervisor, the second marker will be another academic in the Law School. The paper is to be submitted in **Word format**. **NO PDFs will be accepted**. Failure to submit by the due date will result in zero marks being awarded for this assessment, unless an extension is granted on the basis of an application under the disruption to studies policy.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Use appropriate legal research methodologies, carry out independent research and analysis, and think creatively about legal problems
- Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing
- Undertake a legal research project that can lead to a high quality scholarly paper suitable for publication
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments
- Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments
- Formulate and present oral and written arguments appropriate to a legal research project

Delivery and Resources

1. **Delivery mode**

All students (internal and external) must attend the scheduled seminar in week 7 to present their three-minute thesis.

Attendance at all other seminars (see iLearn for schedule and activities) is optional.

2.   Lecture times and locations

For current updates, lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetables website: http://students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/timetables/

3.   Required and recommended resources

Required:

Readings posted on iLearn.

Australian Guide to Legal Citation (latest edition, available online). Theses MUST comply with the AGLC.

Recommended:

Hutchinson, Terry. *Researching and Writing in Law* (3 ed.) (Thomson, 2010).

Craswell, G. and M. Poore. *Writing for Academic Success* (Sage, 2012).

Halliday, S., and P, Schmidt. *Conducting Law and Society Research: Reflections on Methods and Practices* (CUP, 2009).

Punch, K. F. *Developing Effective Research Proposals* (Sage, 2007).

Watt, R., and F. Johns. *Concise Legal Research* (Federation Press 2009).

Unit Schedule

Students should consult iLearn for the schedule of tutorials.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The*

Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing
- Undertake a legal research project that can lead to a high quality scholarly paper suitable for publication
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- Thesis

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments
- Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments

Assessment task

- Thesis

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Choose an appropriate topic for a legal research project
- Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing
- Undertake a legal research project that can lead to a high quality scholarly paper suitable for publication
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments
- Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- 3-minute thesis
- Thesis

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Choose an appropriate topic for a legal research project
- Use appropriate legal research methodologies, carry out independent research and analysis, and think creatively about legal problems
- Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing
- Undertake a legal research project that can lead to a high quality scholarly paper suitable for publication
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments
- Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments
- Give an oral presentation of a research argument in an academic environment
- Formulate and present oral and written arguments appropriate to a legal research project

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal

- 3-minute thesis
- Thesis

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Choose an appropriate topic for a legal research project
- Use appropriate legal research methodologies, carry out independent research and analysis, and think creatively about legal problems
- Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments
- Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments
- Formulate and present oral and written arguments appropriate to a legal research project

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- Thesis

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Choose an appropriate topic for a legal research project
- Use appropriate legal research methodologies, carry out independent research and analysis, and think creatively about legal problems
- Undertake a legal research project that can lead to a high quality scholarly paper suitable for publication
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments

- Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments
- Formulate and present oral and written arguments appropriate to a legal research project

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- 3-minute thesis
- Thesis

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Critically analyse legal arguments orally and in writing
- Undertake a legal research project that can lead to a high quality scholarly paper suitable for publication
- Raise claims and support them with logical, evidence-based arguments
- Evaluate and, if justified, refute counter-arguments
- Give an oral presentation of a research argument in an academic environment
- Formulate and present oral and written arguments appropriate to a legal research project

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- 3-minute thesis
- Thesis

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Choose an appropriate topic for a legal research project

Assessment tasks

- 3-minute thesis
- Thesis

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Undertake a legal research project that can lead to a high quality scholarly paper suitable for publication

Assessment task

- Thesis

Changes from Previous Offering

Weighting of Assessment Task 1 reduced to 10% (from 20%), with that for Assessment Task 2 increased to 10% (from 0%). Word length for thesis changed from 15,000-20,000 words to 13,500-16,500.

Technologies Used and Required

Unit webpage and technology used and required

The unit can be accessed at: http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/.

PC/Mac and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills and skills in word processing are also a requirement.