1. **Title of the module**

LAWS9880 (LW988) – Dissertation in Law

1. **School or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

Kent Law School

1. **The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 7

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

60 credits (30 ECTS)

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Training in research methods and philosophy of Law and the Social Sciences will be provided, collectively, over the course of the Autumn and Spring terms. The precise pattern differs for students beginning their programme in September or in January.

Students who begin in September will undertake their taught modules over the Autumn and Spring terms. The assessed dissertation proposal for which students will receive academic support and feedback will normally be due at the end of the Spring term. Students will prepare the dissertation over the Summer term and long vacation. Pending satisfactory progression in Stage 1, students will write the dissertation independently over the long vacation. The dissertation will normally be submitted in August.

Students who begin in January will undertake their taught modules over the Spring term of their year of registration and the Autumn term of the following academic year. The assessed dissertation proposal for which students will receive academic support and feedback will normally be due at the end of the Autumn term of the academic year following registration. Pending satisfactory progress in Stage 1, students will prepare the dissertation over the Spring term. The dissertation will normally be submitted in March.

Part-time students will normally undertake training in research methods (leading on to completion of the dissertation) in their second year of study, following the appropriate pattern for September or January entrants. Similarly, extended entrants will undertake training in research methods in their first and final taught terms.

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

None

1. **The programmes of study to which the module contributes**

Compulsory to the LLM Specialisation (Brussels)

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
2. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding the ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues involved in the research design of projects in international law and international relations, and the relationship between these concepts.
3. Conceptualise a question for investigation, and to design the appropriate research methodology.
4. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between a problem, theoretical approach, research design, and analysis.
5. Deploy and operationalise successfully the appropriate concepts in the philosophy of social science to inform a research design leading to a successful conclusion in the production of a dissertation.
6. Follow logically the research design, overcoming any anticipated and unanticipated problems in the empirical research, realising the successful conclusion of the product in the form of a dissertation.
7. Apply theoretical perspectives in law, politics and international relations to case studies.
8. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
9. Work with complex theoretical knowledge and critically apply theory to practical issues.
10. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the ethical, metaphysical, theoretical, epistemological, and methodological dimensions of the scholarly work done in their discipline in general and in their own work.
11. Undertake an analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge and make carefully constructed arguments.
12. Demonstrate a level of conceptual understanding that will allow them to critically evaluate research, policies, and practices.
13. Be reflective and self-critical in their work.
14. Use the libraries, the internet, bibliographic search engines, online resources, and effectively conduct complex research.
15. Engage in sophisticated academic and professional communication with others.
16. Demonstrate a highly developed independent learning ability required for further study or professional work.
17. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

The module is built around 16 hours of lectures and 24 hours of seminars over the course of one term. Following on from Fundamental of Dissertation and Research in Law (LAWS9881) which addressed the ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues in the social sciences; the main approaches to social science; analytical approaches, modes of reasoning (deduction, induction) and levels of analysis (agency, structure, co-determination); this module will demonstrate how these concepts are used differently in different subject-specific contexts which represent the main fields of inquiry at BSIS, including legal analysis, political analysis, historical analysis, and economic analysis. The module then moves on to practical questions of research and writing the dissertation, including the construction of the dissertation proposal and the dissertation itself, the use of research materials (qualitative and quantitative data), using research and resources (libraries, documentation, and the internet); and drafting and writing, including the use of appropriate academic style and format.

1. **Reading list (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

* Banakar, R. and Travers M. (eds.), *Law and Social Theory*, Hart Publishing, Oxford, 2014.
* Chatterjee, C., *Methods of Research in Law*, Old Bailey Press, Horsamonden, 2000 (2nd edition)
* Hanson, S., *Learning Legal Skills and Reasoning. Routledge*, London, 2015 (4th edition)
* Hollis M., *The Philosophy of Social Science: An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994.
* Hollis M. and Smith S., *Explaining and Understanding in International Relations*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1990.
* King, G., Keohane, R. and Verba S., *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton University Press, 1996.
* May, T., *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Processes 4th ed.*, OUP, 2011.
* Potter, S. (Ed), *Doing Postgraduate Research 2nd ed.* (Sage/Open University, 2006)
* Sunstein, C. R., *Legal Reasoning and Political Conflict*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000
* Webb, K., *An Introduction to Problems in the Philosophy of Social Sciences*, Pinter, London, 1996.

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total contact hours: 40

Private study hours: 560

Total study hours: 600

Supervision

Students will be allocated a supervisor who will help them gain momentum in their research. Meetings would normally be expected to take place on a regular basis and could be arranged via office hours and/or email. The supervisor will guide the students towards the relevant (general and specialised) literature, help with the design of the project and offer subject-specific advice. Each student is allocated approximately 7-hours of supervision over the course of their dissertation (according to individual needs).

1. **Assessment methods**
   1. Main assessment methods

Dissertation Proposal 1,500 words (10%)

Group Project (5%) – each group participant will be receive one collective group mark.

Dissertation 15,000 words (85%)

13.2 Reassessment methods

Reassessment Instrument: 100% project

1. **Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods (section 12) and methods of assessment (section 13)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module learning outcome** | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 8.6 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.7 | 9.8 |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lectures | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Seminars | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Private study | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Group Project (5%) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Dissertation Proposal (10%) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Dissertation (85%) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The School recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

1. **Accessible resources and curriculum**
   1. Where provided, preference will be given to electronic resources that meet minimum accessibility standards and support the use of assistive technologies.
   2. Module information will be made accessible before the module starts.
   3. Reading lists will be made available sufficiently in advance to accommodate the provision of alternative formats and support those with a slow reading speed.
   4. Where appropriate, slides used during the course of the module will be made available in electronic format in advance or shortly after the session concerned.
   5. In Brussels, lecture recording will be at the discretion of the module convenor.
2. **Learning, teaching and assessment methods**

The inclusive practices in the guidance (Annex B Appendix A, section b (1) and (2)) have all been considered in order to support all students in their assessments on this module.

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered**

Brussels

1. **Internationalisation**

The module continues to encourage comparative discussions of best and established practices of academic research and writing internationally. Furthermore, it continues to advance conversations about the specificity of and variations in ethical and methodological concerns pertinent to data collection, writing, and publishing across different academic traditions.

**FACULTIES SUPPORT OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
| 21/07/2017 |  | September 2017 | 3-17 |  |
| 06/01/2020 | Minor | September 2020 | 15 | No |

Revised FSO Jan 2018