1. **Title of the module**

LAWS9881 (LW9881) - Fundamentals of Dissertation and Research 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**

4 credits (2 ECTS) – non-contributory

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

Autumn or Spring

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

Co-requisite: LAWS9880 Dissertation in Law (Brussels)

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. Conceptualise a question for investigation, and to design the appropriate research methodology.
3. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between a problem, theoretical approach, research design, and analysis.
4. 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 research paper.
5. Apply theoretical perspectives in law, politics and international relations to case studies.
6. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
7. Engage theoretical debates with empirical issues.
8. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the ethical, theoretical, and methodological dimensions of the scholarly work done in their discipline in general and in their own work.
9. Undertake an analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge and make carefully constructed arguments.
10. Demonstrate a level of conceptual understanding that will allow them to critically evaluate research, policies, and practices.
11. Be reflective and self-critical in their work.
12. Use the libraries, the internet, bibliographic search engines, online resources, and effectively conduct complex research.
13. Engage in sophisticated academic and professional communication with others.
14. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

This module does not form part of the formal 180 credits (for the standard) or 240 credits (for the extended) LLM. Therefore, assessment of this module does not formally ‘count’ for the degree. The module represents extra learning and an opportunity to gain advanced legal research skills, including transferable skills to enhance employability. The module is built around 12 practical, discussion, and in-class research seminars, delivered weekly over the course of one term. They cover the ethical, ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues in Law and modes of reasoning (deduction, induction) and levels of analysis (agency, structure, and co-determination). The module will problematize how these questions are reflected in different subject-specific contexts that represent the main fields of inquiry at BSIS, including legal analysis, political analysis, historical analysis, and economic analysis. The module also involves practical questions of research and dissertation writing, including the construction of a paper proposal, the Dissertation Proposal, and the Dissertation and research papers themselves, the use of research materials (qualitative and quantitative data) 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)**

* Béland, D. and Cox, R. (2011). *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
* de Vaus, D. (2014). *Surveys in Social Research*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge.
* Husa, J. and van Hoecke, M. (2013). *Objectivity in Law and Legal Reasoning*, Oxford: Hart Publishing.
* Johnstone, I. (2011). *The Power of Deliberation: International Law, Politics and Organizations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
* King, G., Keohane, R., and Verba, S. (1996). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research,* Princeton, NJ*:* Princeton University Press.
* Klatt, M. (2008). *Making the Law Explicit: The Normativity of Legal Argumentation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
* Orcher, L. (2014). *Conducting Research*. 1st ed. Los Angeles: Taylor and Francis.
* Watkins, D. and Burton, M. (eds.) (2013). *Research Methods in Law.* 1st ed. New York: Routledge.

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total contact hours: 38

Private study hours: 2

Total study hours: 40

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

The module is assessed on a pass/fail basis. Seminar attendance of at least 12 out of 14 hours is required to pass. If students fail to meet this requirement, this they must complete a recovery essay 1500 words (100%) as an alternative

13.2 Reassessment methods

Reassessment Instrument: 100% coursework

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 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.7 |
| **Learning / teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lectures | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Seminars | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Workshops | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Private Study | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Seminar attendance (pass/fail) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Recovery essay (pass/fail) | 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:

**a) 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.

**b) 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 encourages comparative discussions of best and established practices of academic research and writing internationally. Furthermore, it advances 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) |
| 06/01/2020 | Minor | September 2020 | 15 | No |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Revised FSO Jan 2018