

UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA

SCHOOL OF LAW

L101 – LEGAL AND ACADEMIC WRITING

PREREQUISITE: None

COURSE AIMS

This course aims to introduce students to basic techniques for locating and understanding legal sources. It is also aimed at equipping students with the ability to incorporate legal information in to their course work, in order for them to perform effectively in their assessments and to prepare them for their professional legal education.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By taking this course, students will:

- (i) Understand where law comes from, how to find it, and how it may be incorporated in to essays and exams, and
- (ii) Understand how to use the law to determine the outcome of a dispute
- (iii) Write their legal essays with ease and to the acceptable standards.

COURSE CONTENT

The topics which will be covered in the course include the following:

UNIT 1: BASIC RULES OF GOOD LEGAL WRITING

- Use of proper grammar
- Use of appropriate words
- Writing in plain English and avoiding legalese

UNIT 2: INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL WRITING SKILLS

- General Writing Skills
- Organisation of an essay

UNIT 3 ESSAY WRITING

- What makes a good essay?
- Rewording the question

- Preparation: research and planning
- Writing the essay
- Proof Reading

UNIT 4: ANSWERING PROBLEM QUESTIONS

- Distinguishing an essay from a problem question
- Problem identification
- Deciphering legal issues
- IRAC standard

UNIT 5: LEGAL REASONING

- What is legal reasoning?
- Simple legal reasoning
- Hard cases
- Approaches to cases

UNIT 6: REFERENCING AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

- Definition and effects of plagiarism
- Avoiding inadvertent plagiarism
- Reference and footnoting
- Oxford Legal Referencing Style (OSCOLA)

UNIT 7: FINDING AND USING LEGISLATION

- Types of legislation
- The law making process
- How to incorporate legislation in to essays and assignments

UNIT 8: FINDING AND USING CASES

- The role of case law as a source of law
- Reported and unreported cases
- Finding cases in the library and online
- Navigating a law report
- The *ratio decidendi* and *obiter dicta*
- Preparing a case summary

UNIT 9: FINDING AND USING BOOKS JOURNALS AND OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

- Finding and using recommended books
- Finding and using journals and official publication

- Finding and using parliamentary bills and debates

METHOD OF TEACHING

Four weekly hours of lecture for full time students; three weekly hours of lecture for part time students; and sixteen hours of lectures for distance students.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Continuous Assessment: **30%** (One Assignment of 10% and Mid-semester exam of 20%) and **70%** final exam- **FULL/ PART TIME STUDENTS**

(One Assignment of 10% and one test of 20%) and **70%** final exam - **DISTANCE STUDENTS.**

RECOMMENDED TEXT BOOKS

Finch, Emily and Stephan Fafinski **Legal Skills** 5th Ed (Oxford University Press, 2013)

Holland, James and Julian Webb **Learning Legal Rules** 8th Ed (Oxford University Press, 2013)