

4.00 credits

15.0 h

Q2



This learning unit is not open to incoming exchange students!

Teacher(s)	Klimis Sophie ;
Language :	French
Place of the course	Bruxelles Saint-Louis
Prerequisites	<i>The prerequisite(s) for this Teaching Unit (Unité d'enseignement – UE) for the programmes/courses that offer this Teaching Unit are specified at the end of this sheet.</i>
Learning outcomes	<p>At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to :</p> <p>As a crossroads course, this seminar aims to promote the interdisciplinarity that characterises the bachelor programme and to develop your ability to theorise legal phenomena.</p> <p>By the end of the seminar, you should have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opened your mind to fundamental questions and critical reflection on the law • developed your ability to understand legal theory writings, synthesise them and critique legal doctrine in a group discussion; • critically examined a theoretical issue of your choice, through personal research (including with regard to productions by artificial intelligence) • written an analysis based on legal sources and other disciplines, hence from an interdisciplinary perspective, in an academic style and in accordance with the requirements of scientific probity.

<p>Evaluation methods</p>	<p>General description. In the legal theory seminar, assessment is continuous throughout the semester. There is therefore no exam in the first session; the assessment methods for the second session are different and are specified below.</p> <p>Assessment is based on three elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preparation and participation in sessions (4 points out of 20); - written work presenting the results of personal research (8 points out of 20); - oral defense of this work (8 points out of 20). <p>Preparation and participation in sessions are assessed according to the following criteria: if a student attends without having clearly prepared the texts (no reading notes or inability to participate in discussions due to obvious lack of reading), this will be considered as an unjustified absence from the session. Any unprepared participation is therefore considered an absence. In the event of more than one unjustified absence from seminar sessions, the student will be given a failing grade for absence (0A) in the first session, automatically resulting in a move to the second session.</p> <p>The written assignment must be a minimum of 4,500 words and a maximum of 5,000 words.</p> <p>For the HD seminar, this count includes footnotes and the bibliography BUT not the cover page or table of contents. The work must be submitted at the end of the course suspension period, i.e., Sunday, May 3, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. The date and time of submission on Moodle or by email will be considered valid. If the instructor also requests a printed version of the written work, the printed version must be submitted to the Faculty Administration. If the student submits their work after the buildings have closed, the printed version must be submitted to the Faculty Administration without delay, i.e., on Monday, May 4, 2026.</p> <p>In the event of a justified delay, the deadline for submitting the written work may be extended by a number of days equivalent to the interval between the start date of the medical certificate and the originally scheduled submission date, up to a maximum of 10 days. In this case, the professor may also change the student's assignment to an oral defense group to ensure that the defense can be based on the written work.</p> <p>In the event of unjustified delay, a penalty of 2 points will be applied to the total for each 24-hour period commenced. A delay of more than 5 days, the submission of a non-genuine assignment, or failure to submit an assignment will result in the assignment of an absence grade (0A).</p> <p>The assessment of written work is based primarily on the structure of the argument, the formulation of the problem and its relevance, interdisciplinarity, critical thinking, the quality of research, general understanding of the issue and literature, and methodology.</p> <p>Students must submit, along with their written work, the duly signed document entitled "Integrity Pledge." Failure to submit this document will result in a two-point penalty.</p> <p>The written work will be analyzed using the "Compilatio" software to detect plagiarism and content generated by artificial intelligence.</p> <p>Students are expected to use the referencing system taught within the Faculty for their work; a summary table will be provided at the beginning of the seminar for this purpose. For a specific reason (e.g., related to the topic of the work or the language in which it is written), the instructor may authorize the use of another referencing system (such as APA, Oxford, etc.).</p> <p>Finally, students will present their personal research during an oral defense. These will take place in small groups, in the form of half-days organized after the suspension of classes but before the end of the second semester—for the 2025-2026 academic year, between Monday, May 4, and Saturday, May 16, 2026.</p> <p>Depending on the number of students enrolled, presentations for the HD seminar will be grouped together over one or two half-days on Saturday, May 9, 2026.</p> <p>Defenses may take various forms, but will last 20 minutes per student, followed by a 10-minute discussion with the supervisor and other members of the group. Students will be evaluated both on the quality of their own presentation and on the relevance of the questions they ask other participants in the group. Submission of the written work is a prerequisite for admission to the oral defense. Any unjustified absence on the day of the defense, even if it is the only absence of the year, will result in an absence grade (0A).</p> <p>In the second session, students must submit a written assignment according to the same guidelines as those applicable in the first session, and present an oral defense of their research before the professor and, if applicable, in the presence of other students also enrolled in the second session. If the student has participated in the seminar sessions, the grade awarded for preparation and participation (4/20) will be retained. However, in the event of more than one unjustified absence, the student must, during the oral defense, answer a question asked by the professor on one of the texts in the portfolio, selected at random. This implies having worked on all the texts beforehand.</p>
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<p>Teaching methods</p>	<p>The teaching method is based on continuous assessment, making student attendance mandatory during classes and oral defenses.</p> <p>Seminar sessions are held in person, and students take handwritten notes, as the use of computers is not permitted. The texts to be read are made available to students, according to the methods chosen by the instructors, via the Moodle website and/or in a collection available at the reprographics department.</p> <p>Students must write a handwritten reading note summarizing the texts provided, identifying the key issues or ideas that particularly interest them. These notes are an essential working tool for discussions during the session and must be brought to each class. Preparation and active participation in the sessions are mandatory and will be evaluated. In the event of absence, whether justified or not, students are still required to submit their preparation notes to the teacher in charge.</p> <p>The schedule for each seminar is set by the administration, based on the availability of students and teachers.</p> <p>HD schedule 2025-2026. The five seminar sessions will take place on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The structure of the seminars has been adapted to align with that of the daytime schedule, as well as to meet student demand for an introductory session in Q1. The five sessions will take place at the following times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An introductory session in Q1, which will take place on Saturday, October 18, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Four sessions at the beginning of Q2, which will take place during the month of February: February 7, February 14, February 21, and February 28, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Students must submit a personal written assignment by the last day of the course suspension period. - Students will have at least one opportunity to discuss their individual research with their professor at a time set by the professor before the course suspension period (for the 2025-2026 academic year, this period runs from Monday, April 20 to Saturday, May 2, 2026). - Personal research projects will be the subject of one or two oral defense sessions (depending on the number of students), organized in small groups of students, to allow for collective discussions about the research conducted; these sessions will take place after the suspension of classes but before the end of Q2. - The professor will devote one hour of the introductory session to explain why she rejects the use of generative artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT. Drawing on studies by scientists and philosophers specializing in AI, she will seek to deconstruct the arguments commonly put forward in the mainstream media to promote its use and invite students to engage in a group discussion on the subject.
<p>Content</p>	<p>General description. The legal theory seminar is based on reading and collective discussion of texts dealing with either general issues of legal theory or more specific topics, always approached from a conceptual, critical, and interdisciplinary perspective. The themes vary depending on the year and the teachers in charge of the seminar. These variations allow, on the one hand, to accompany students in exploring the evolution of research, and on the other hand, to share with them the work currently being carried out by the teachers. Students are also supported in carrying out personal research work, based on the issues discussed collectively, but developed around a theme specific to each individual. This research work gives rise to the writing of a personal paper, followed by an oral defense.</p> <p>HD 2025-2026. This year, the seminar will focus on the following theme: “Thinking through legal cases, a fruitful chiasm: what philosophy does to law and what law does to philosophy when they are rooted in a specific field.” Philosophy is usually associated with an abstract, even purely formal and a priori approach, which, in the case of the philosophy of law, would only address general questions of “pure” or “natural” law. However, from antiquity to the present day, many philosophers have developed original thinking based on specific cases drawn from all areas of law. Here are some famous examples: In his last dialogue, <i>The Laws</i>, Plato has an Athenian, a Spartan, and a Cretan discuss the merits and drawbacks of their respective constitutions, with a view to helping the Cretan draft the constitution of a colony, that of the Magnetes. Although the case is fictional, it is rooted in the reality of the Greek legislative process, whereby a colony never imported the constitution of its “mother” city but always had to be provided with a new constitution, the drafting of which was entrusted to an exceptional individual. Still in the field of legislative law, in the 18th century, Rousseau was asked to draft a constitution for Corsica, which had freed itself from Genoese rule when Pascal Paoli proclaimed the Corsican Republic in 1755. This text exists, even though it was never implemented, as Corsica was invaded and annexed by France in 1769. At the intersection of various fields of law, in the 20th century, Michel Foucault and his researchers unearthed a forgotten case of parricide from the 19th century, that of Pierre Rivière, who murdered his mother, sister, and brother and wrote a memoir in which he justified his actions with various arguments drawn from both private contract law and history.</p> <p>After an introductory session (Q1) devoted to the characteristics of what is now known as “field philosophy” and a more detailed presentation of these first three examples, we will focus on the study of two specific cases (Q2). The first is the debates of the Rhenish Diet (the parliamentary assembly of the Rhineland region) in 1842, prior to the vote on a law criminalizing the collection of wood, which were followed and critically commented on by Karl Marx, then a young lawyer and editor of a newspaper, the “Rhenish Gazette” (<i>Rheinische Zeitung</i>). We will study these texts by Marx together in the seminar, as well as the three essays in which the French philosopher Daniel Bensaïd continued Marx’s reflection on the question of the “commons” in the 21st century. All these texts are collected in a small book by D. Bensaïd, which will be available at the reprographics department and will be the primary course material: D. Bensaïd. <i>Les dépossédés. Marx, les voleurs de bois et le droit des pauvres</i>, La Fabrique, Paris, 2007.</p> <p>The second case we will examine is that of little Mawda Shawri, a two-and-a-half-year-old Kurdish girl killed by a police gunfire on a Belgian motorway in 2018. Far from being an isolated incident or the blunder of a single individual, this was a direct consequence of policies criminalizing migrants in Belgium and throughout Europe. In fact, little Mawda died during a large-scale police operation set up by the Belgian government (MEDUSA) to intercept migrants crossing the Belgian border illegally to reach the United Kingdom. The professor critically analyzed all the official discourse on this case (journalistic, police, legal, political, judicial, etc.) as well as the citizen movements (artistic, legal, and political) that it has generated continuously since 2018 in a book: S. Klimis, <i>Mawda v. Medusa. Giving a face to the criminalization of migrants in Europe</i>, Bordeaux, Le bord de l’eau, 2024. This book will serve as a secondary resource for the course. It will be available in electronic PDF format on MOODLE and in paper format at the reprographics department.</p>

<p>Inline resources</p>	<p>On the course Moodle platform, students will find the texts to read, as well as other texts for further reading on the topics covered in the seminar, for information and illustration purposes, and links to videos, podcasts, and other resources related to the seminar.</p> <p>On the course Moodle, students will also have access to links to educational videos produced by the teachers. These videos cover the seminar on legal theory, the use of word processing (Word), tips for researching sources in the social sciences and humanities, and the use of artificial intelligence.</p>
<p>Other infos</p>	<p>No pre-correction of texts is offered by the professors. However, students can meet with their instructor during office hours or individual appointments, and it is recommended that these discussions be based on a text (outline, chapter, etc.).</p> <p>In order for the results obtained throughout the year to be officially transcribed and communicated to students, the course will be formally included in the June session program, although no exams will be organized at this stage of the year.</p> <p>For the written work of HD seminar, no use of generative intelligence such as ChatGPT is allowed. The professor will devote one hour of the introductory class to explaining the reasons for this choice by placing the development of AI in its historical, societal, political, and environmental context.</p> <p>The only artificial intelligence tool permitted is a specialized spell checker such as ANTIDOTE. The instructor draws students' attention to the fact that, while spelling is a convention that has fluctuated greatly over time (and which it would nevertheless be desirable to master in its current state), it is not possible to develop an argument or engage in any form of critical thinking without a thorough mastery of the syntax of the French language and its nuances.</p>
<p>Faculty or entity in charge</p>	<p>DRTB</p>

Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)				
Program title	Acronym	Credits	Prerequisite	Learning outcomes
Bachelor in Law (shift schedule)	DRDB1BA	4	BHDDR1216 AND BHDDR1213 AND BHDDR1160	