

## LAWS6043: Advanced Legal Research Project

Online / Newcastle City Precinct

Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

# OVERVIEW

**Course Description** Advanced Legal Research Project will further develop student legal research and communication skills to an advanced level, and will require students to demonstrate specialised knowledge of the topic of their dissertation. The course consists of research and writing under supervision. The course coordinator will provide general guidance to each candidate concerning the definition of the topic of a proposed legal research project, and will also be available to facilitate appropriate supervision of the dissertation paper which will usually be 8,000-10,000 words in length and to give guidance to candidates at all stages of the dissertation research program. Enrolment in this course is not guaranteed, as it depends on the availability of Law School staff with capacity to supervise the chosen topic.

**Requisites** Students must be enrolled in the Bachelor of Laws and associated combined degree programs or Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and associated combined degree programs or Juris Doctor/ Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice [12334] or Master of Laws [12333] , or Master of Human Resources and Law [40140] or Master of Environmental Law [40141] or Master of Dispute Resolution [40193] programs.

**Assumed Knowledge** For students in the LAWS or LAWS/Dip Leg Prac., the course is only available to students in their fourth or final year of study (or part time equivalent), and Assumed Knowledge is LAWS1010, LAWS1011, LAWS1020, LAWS1021, LAWS2030, LAWS3040, and LAWS3041; for students enrolled in the Juris Doctor/Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice this course is only available to students in their final year of full-time study (or relevant equivalent for part-time students).

**Skills Focus** Advanced legal research and database use  
Advanced structural and writing skills  
Advanced theory, methodology and critical thinking

**Contact Hours** **Individual Supervision**  
1 hour(s) per Fortnight for 12 Weeks  
There are no pre-set meeting times; students will meet with their supervisor by arrangement, approximately every 2-3 weeks across the semester (either in person or via Zoom where agreed by supervisor), to discuss their research paper.

**Unit Weighting** 10

**Workload** Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

# COURSE OUTLINE

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# CONTACTS

**Course Coordinator** Dr Kevin Sobel-Read  
[Kevin.Sobel-Read@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Kevin.Sobel-Read@newcastle.edu.au)  
(02) 4921 6613  
Consultation: please email to make an appointment

**Teaching Staff** Each student will have an individual supervisor.

**School Office** **Newcastle Law School**  
5th Floor  
NuSpace  
409 Hunter Street  
Newcastle  
[Law-School@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Law-School@newcastle.edu.au)  
+61 2 4921 8666

# SYLLABUS

**Course Content** The syllabus will consist of research and writing under supervision within the Law School. The course coordinator will be responsible for providing general guidance to each candidate in the course concerning the definition of the topic of a proposed research project, and will also be able to facilitate supervision arrangements for the dissertation. A supervisor of a research project will be responsible for providing appropriate guidance to the candidate at all stages of the research process.

The course will develop the following skills in particular:

- Legal research and database use
- Theory and Methodology
- Structural and Writing Skills

**Course Learning Outcomes**

**On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

1. Design an advanced legal research project regarding a specialised topic of law and/or legal policy;
2. Utilise specialised knowledge of legal research design and methods to evaluate and critically reflect upon the design of an advanced legal research project;
3. Carry out advanced legal research by using primary and secondary legal sources, as well as the possible use of interdisciplinary material, in order to develop and structure a cogent argument that demonstrates specialised knowledge of an area of law and/or legal policy;

**Course Materials** individualised in consultation with supervisor

# SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	in consultation with supervisor		
2	4 Mar	in consultation with supervisor		
3	11 Mar	in consultation with supervisor		
4	18 Mar	in consultation with supervisor		
5	25 Mar	in consultation with supervisor		
6	1 Apr	in consultation with supervisor		
7	8 Apr	in consultation with supervisor		
<b>Mid-Term Break</b>				
<b>Mid-Term break</b>				
8	29 Apr	in consultation with supervisor		
9	6 May	in consultation with supervisor		
10	13 May	in consultation with supervisor		
11	20 May	in consultation with supervisor		
12	27 May	in consultation with supervisor		
13	3 Jun	in consultation with supervisor		
<b>Examination Period</b>				
<b>Examination Period</b>				

# ASSESSMENTS

This course has 1 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Written Thesis	Fri 7 June by 9pm	Individual	100%	1, 2, 3

To ensure that grades are fair both within and between courses and cohorts, Newcastle Law School has a rigorous policy of moderating and reviewing assessment. The School Assessment Board (SAB) reviews all final grades before they are released to students, and the SAB process may result in the overall marks of a class being moved up or down by a specific amount, thus impacting individual marks. This is consistent with grading practices in other Law Schools across the country and important to ensure the integrity of assessment. This means that the final grade you are awarded may not be the sum of marks you have received in all assessments.

## Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

## Assessment 1 - Dissertation research paper

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Thesis
<b>Description</b>	in consultation with supervisor
<b>Weighting</b>	100%
<b>Due Date</b>	Friday 7 June by 9pm
<b>Submission Method</b>	Canvas, with copy to supervisor and to Course Coordinator
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	in consultation with supervisor
<b>Return Method</b>	in consultation with supervisor
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	in consultation with supervisor

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Wellness Contacts

There are a variety of pressures on law students, and being able to perform well academically under pressure, without excessive stress will contribute to enhanced outcomes in wellbeing and academic results. Reach out to support services and learn ways to maintain your mental health, deal with stress and common issues like perfectionism, procrastination and anxiety.

To access UON support:

<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/support/personal>

Ph: 4921 6622 or email: [counselling@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:counselling@newcastle.edu.au)

For support outside of office hours call the University Crisis Support Line on 1300 653 007 or for chat sms 0488 884 165.

For immediate support contact Lifeline 24/7 on 13 14 11 or <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

### Grading Scheme

This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

\*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

### Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include: email, Canvas, face-to-face.

### Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

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**Oral Interviews**

After you have submitted your final assessment/online quiz, you may be required to take part in a Viva (also called an oral exam) for quality assurance purposes. A Viva will consist of an interview with one or perhaps two staff conducted via Zoom, and will last approximately 10 minutes. During this time, you will be asked questions about the answers you have provided in the assessment/online quiz. For instance, you may be asked about the workings or rationale behind the way you structured an assessment response or a couple of questions from the quiz. This will help us verify your knowledge of a topic, demonstrate that it is your own work and provide informative feedback to staff to help them make enhancements to future examination/assessment papers.

**Academic Misconduct**

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

**Adverse Circumstances**

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:

1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or
2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
3. you are requesting a change of placement; or
4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.

Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at:

<https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>

**Important Policy Information**

The 'HELP for Students' tab in UoNline contains important information that all students should be familiar with, including various systems, policies and procedures.

*This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.*

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