Seminar WiSe 21/22
**Introduction to
Software Law**

Course Guidelines

Lucas Lasota, PhD

This course in a nutshell

In this seminar you will learn the main aspects of software law in the EU, mainly topics as license compliance, software agreements, patents and trademarks, free and open source software, artificial intelligence and internet of things.

What are you expected to do?

You are expected to accomplish the following assignements:

- Prepare a **blog post** of no less then 8000 characters (an approximately 15-minute read in Medium.com's estimate on a chosen topic and provide three discussion topics;

- Post at least one contribution to the three discussion topics of your peers' blog posts (i.e. at least **3 comments per week**);

- Attend the **four monthly lectures**;

- Prepare in the end of the course a **term paper** of no less then 20.000 characters (without spaces but including footnotes).

Prof. Dr. Vitaly Bezbach (1946-2021)

This course is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Dr. Vitaly Bezbach.

Basic information

Veranstaltungsart	Seminar	SWS	2
Semester	WiSe 21/22	Zugeordnete Person	Dr. Lucas Lasota / Prof. Dr. Herbert Zech
Modul	BZQ II	Veranstaltungsnummer	10552
Sprache	English	Moodle-Link	https://moodle.hu-berlin.de/course/view.php?id=106255
Termine	Mittwochs 14:00 bis 16:00		

Study programs

Abschluss	Studiengang	LP
Master of Laws	Dt. und Europäisches Recht Hauptfach	5
Master of Laws	Europäisches Recht Hauptfach	5
Staatsex./ 1. Jurist. Prfg.	Rechtswissenschaft Hauptfach	5

Learning outcomes

Students in good academic standing at the end of the semester will:

- Develop an infomed opinion about Develop an infomed opinion about the EU regulatory framework of software from the perspective of copyright law and other related fields;

- Identify the main contractual aspects concerning software licenses;

- Plan and develop a legal oriented research and conduct a professional-level discussion in regards to aspects of software law.

Course format

The seminar is focused on individual research, collective learning experience and systemic flow of information among the proposed topics. It is divided into two parts:

1) The "blogger for one week" section; and

2) The term paper

Along with the term paper, each participant will be also a "blogger for one week", working on one of available topics. Every participant is always a debater in the audience throughout the semester, except during the week when she/he is a blogger.

Each blogger is responsible for bringing the basic information in a clear and structured manner, so others can learn about the topic.

The debaters must ensure a collective learning process. Each topic should be well discussed by all participants.

During the online meetings, the lecturer will provide a bird's eye view of the group of topics, in order to ensure the systemic flow of knowledge between the topics.

Assignements

1. Bloggers for one week

During the first two weeks of the course we will have the topics distribution. **You must choose one of the topics listed**. The course schedule will be based on that.

On each the week after the blog post I will have a **15-minute online call** with the blogger to chat about the lessons learned, the difficulties and the questions.

Every month will have a **big online call** to wrap-up the main take aways of the weekly discussions. It will be also a good chance to meet each other.

Below you find the instructions for bloggers and debaters.

Instructions

For Bloggers

Duties

1. You **must** write a blog post and post on **Forum** in Moodle on your scheduled Wednesday before 11:59 a.m.

2. You **must** provide three discussion topics together with your blog post on **Forum**.

3. In the week following your article you should interact with your peers in the **Forum**. It does not mean you must be online 24 hours and answer straight away, but you have to be present everyday, answer questions, reply to comments etc.

4. On the following Wednesday, we meet online at 3 p.m. (or after the lecture))for a 15-minutes call. I wish to hear from you what you have learned, the difficulties you have faced and your impressions on the forum debates. This is an informal talk, so don't worry about preparing any material, but be ready to spontaneously talk about the content you worked with.

How to write a blog post

1. Your blog post should have not less than 8000 characters and max. 15000 without spaces (an approximately 15-minute read in Medium.com's estimate.

2. Be creative: the style may be more informal and pedagogical; you can use pictures, memes, emojis, examples etc.

3. The blog post **must include:**

    a) The title of your topic

    b) Min. 8000 and max. 15000 characters without spaces.

You can find a few examples of good blog posts here, here and here.

Feel free to contact me if you have any trouble. I do not expect you to be experts... yet :)

For Debaters

Duties

1. When a blog post is available (on Wednesdays), in the the week that follows you **must** post at least one contribution to the three discussion topics on Moodle forum (i.e. at least 3 comments per week) before the next Wednesday at 11:59 a.m.

2. The comments should be pertinent to the development of the discussion so far. Your week contribution **must** consist of at least 300 words (split among all your comments).

3. You may ask questions, politely disagree with the blogger, suggest improvements, support the blogger with more evidence, recommend material etc. Remember it is the participation (not the correctness) that counts on the grade!

4. Do not write general comments that do not mean much (like 'the post was very useful') but use this opportunity to learn more about the topic and to engage with others.

5. In our monthly online meetings you should also actively participate, using the opportunity to interact about the topics.

2. Term paper

The term paper is your in-depth research on **one of the topics available**. It can be different from the topic of your blog post. The paper should contain min 20.000 and max 62.000 characters without spaces but including footnotes. It is a **scientific and formal work,** so you must abide the HU norms on term papers. Use your blog post as basis for your text and try to develop the ideas you presented firstly on it.

The deadline for the submission will be announced during the course.

Online monthly meetings

The monthly online meetings will consist of short lecture about one of the thematic groups and followed by the interaction among all participants. The meeting will have approximately 1 hour of duration. It will be a good oportunity for live Q&A.

Grading policy

To pass the course, you must achieve a performance of at least 60% on each of the items above separately, which includes abiding by the Course Guidelines.

- One complete blog post and the proposoal of 3 discussion topics (30% of final grade)

- Active participation on the discussion forums every week (20% of final grade)

- Term paper on the chosen topic (50% of the final grade)

I need help

These are unprecedented times. My overriding concern is your health and safety. As a student you may be under personal stress. The Humboldt University provides free, confidential services including individual and group **psychological counseling** and evaluation for emotional, social and academic concerns. Given the COVID pandemic, students may consult with staff remotely.

Do you possess any special needs to participate in this course? Please feel free to reach me out in Moodle or at **lucas.lasota(at)hu-berlin.de**.

Topics for the blog post and term paper

Group 1. Fundamentals of software law

1. Software from the perspective of contract and copyright law: The regulatory overview.

2. Software patents and patenteability of computer programs.

3. Trademarks and software agreements.

4. Legal aspects of reverse engineering and decompilation. Copyright-related issues of DRM.

5. Software product liability issues, software quality control and the developer`s liability.

6. Software and internet regulation issues.

Group 2. Software licensing models

7. Free and Open Source Software. Copyleft and non-reciprocal licenses.

8. Contracts for software acquisition, distribution and support. Software development agreements.

9. Cloud computing and software licensing issues.

10. Internet of things devices and software licensing issues.

Group 3. Software and data interconnected licensing issues

11. Software and data. Types of licenses for data and content.

12. Artificial intelligence and software law.

Supporting biblography

All works are available in the Humboldt Library or as Open Access in Internet, except for some sources, which can be replaced by the provided alternatives. For better access policies, use the HU VPN service.

Fundamentals of software licensing in Europe

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