Cyberlaw

LSE SUMMER SCHOOL

This course covers a selection of topics in the field of Information Technology and the Law (or Cyberlaw).

It will begin by considering the debate about the nature of the influence of information technology upon the development of new legal doctrine, moving on to consider both how the law has responded to the challenges of information technologies, and the extent to which legal issues have shaped the development of information society policy. This will encompass topics such as data protection, computer misuse and computer evidence, copyright and digital rights management, criminal content liability and defamation.

The focus will be initially on English law, although the increasingly global nature of IT law means that there are already strong EU and US legal influences upon the English system, so comparative aspects will be introduced in places, and readings will include materials drawn from, amongst others, US law journals.

This course does not require an in-depth understanding of contemporary computer technology – we are primarily interested in the implications of the use of information technology, and the intended and unintended consequences of regulating that use.

The course will provide an introduction to Digitisation and Law, and explore the key contemporary cross-border challenges of information law, including:

Regulation of the digital environment

The responsibilities of platforms such as Google and Facebook for the content that they host

Free speech

Copyright law in the digital (sharing) economy

Children's rights

Regulating personal data processing

Machine learning and algorithmic decision-making

Key facts

Lectures: 36 hours

Classes: 18 hours

Assessment*: One examination and one essay

Typical credit**: 3-4 credits (US) 7.5 ECTS points (EU)

Prerequisites

Introduction to legal methods or equivalent. This course does not require an in-depth understanding of information technology.

Programme structure

The course will consist of twelve three-hour lectures and twelve 90-minute classes. It will examine the law and policy issues relating to a number of key aspects of the information society.

The course will be assessed by means of one two-hour unseen examination, and you will be required to submit one summative essay of no more than 2000 words . You receive written feedback on one piece of formative coursework and oral feedback on your progress in the context of group-exercises completed during the tutorials. This feedback will help with your summative work and your exam preparation.

Course outcomes

Critically evaluate ongoing developments in law relating to information technologies.
Display an understanding of how these developments relate to one another.
Examine areas of doctrinal and political debate surrounding rules and theories.
Evaluate those rules and theories in terms of internal coherence and practical outcomes.
Draw on the analysis and evaluation contained in primary and secondary sources.

Reading materials

The recommended textbook is:

Murray: Information Technology Law: The Law and Society, (4th Edition) (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2019).