



**The Government of the Russian Federation
Higher School of Economics
National Research University**

Faculty of Law

Private International Law Department

**Private International Law Masters' Degree Curriculum
Educational field 40.04.01 «Jurisprudence»**

**LEGAL TEXTS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
An Interdisciplinary Course**

COURSE PROFILE

Faculty: Law

Academic Year: 2014/15

Course Title: Legal Texts in International Business

Level: Masters students, year 1

Language of Instruction: English

Course type: Elective

Period: Module III

Credits: 4

Course Instructor – Contact Details

Svetlana V. Vlasenko, Ph.D. (Linguistics), Associate Professor

svlasenko@hse.ru

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Syllabus Overview

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Course is intended for the 5-th year students of law and sets forth the essentials for enhancing the knowledge and advancing the skills acquired by students in the preceding years of their academic training. This is achieved by studying and optimizing an analysis of authentic English legal texts extensively used in the international business communication. Legal texts having various

types and forms enclosing voluminous documentary flows – both paperwork and electronic documents – are crucial for collaborating with the English-speaking professional legal community, as well as doing legal scholarship or research.

The Course aims at combining major concepts and categories elaborated within the text linguistics into the legal text analysis and applications. The text generation capabilities determined to a large extent by linguistic proficiency as part of the communicative competence are realized in legal drafting and legal writing. Such skills known to be sophisticated due to the legal language and technical terms of law are developed and refined during the Course.

The Course underlies key essentials for studying other legal courses, namely: corporate law, private international law, international banking law, international investment law, international commercial arbitration, international civil procedure, and the EU contract law, thus ensuring an integrated approach and a comprehensive coverage of the complex law-and-language interaction.

Prerequisites

The Course draws on students' knowledge acquired during their preceding years of university bachelor degree training in law or other social sciences, as well as skills developed through their prior university studies as necessitated by academic curricula including, specifically, academic skills of critical thinking, critical reading, critical writing and reviewing, proficiency in general English and legal English.

The Course syllabus includes the following theoretical and practical dimensions:

Theoretical dimensions:

- International business etiquettes; legal texts in international business; international legal English and business English in their textual representations.
- Legal texts taxonomies and typologies; major concepts of text linguistics as applied to legal texts circulating in international business globally.
- Types of authentic legal texts in the two major variants of

English – British and American; these are extended by other English language variants, such as the Euro English, Australian, Canadian, and South African English varieties; cross-comparisons with Russian legal texts.

- Systemic bases for technical terminology in legal texts: international, national, field-specific systems and subsystems.
- IT-based methods of text processing; subject-specific lexicography; legal text corpora.

Practical dimensions:

- Critical reading of selected authentic English legal texts for in-depth analysis of the underlying legal rationale with a focus on identifying relevant linguistic devices across English legal language layers.
- Identifying commonalities in the authentic English legal texts with the view of extending the students' knowledge of and efficiency in the academic reviewing for purposes of legal decision-making.
- Critical reviewing and discussing certain types of legal documents representative of the relevant corpus juris or other pertinent corpora, their samples and/or templates.
- Making etymological profiles of the authentic text units to enable students' thorough comprehension of legal texts technicalities.

Basic Sourcebooks

1. Law and Language. Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press, 2013.
2. Williams, K. Communicating in Business. South-Western Cengage Learning, 2011.

Essential Reading

1. Chaney, L.H. Intercultural Business Communication. London: Pearson Education, 2007.
2. Martin, J.S. Global Business Etiquette: A Guide to International Communication and Customs. Westport Praeger, 2006.

3. Vlasenko, Svetlana. *Stance-Taking in Legal Matters: A Legal Textology Manual for LLM Students*. Moscow : Omega-L, 2013.
4. Vlasenko, Svetlana. *Contract Law: Professional Translation Practices in the English–Russian Language Pair: Sourcebook for students of law & linguistics*. Moscow: Wolters Kluwer, 2006.

Further Reading

1. Crystal, D. *English as a Global Language*. 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2012.
2. Galdia, M. *Legal Linguistics*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2009.
3. *Language, Culture and the Law*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin [etc.] : Peter Lang, 2008.
4. Matthiessen, C.M.I.M. *Key Terms in Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London and New York : Continuum, 2010.
5. McMahon, A. *Evolutionary Linguistics*. Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
6. Mesthrie, R. *World Englishes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
7. Vlasenko, Svetlana. *Contract Law: Professional Translation Practices in the English–Russian Language Pair: Sourcebook for students of law & linguistics*. Moscow: Wolters Kluwer, 2006.

Total class hours: 40

Of which:

- Lectures: 28 hours
- Seminars: 12 hours

Students' self-study hours: 68

Method of Instruction:

Classes are split into lectures and seminars. Lectures are conducted in the interactive mode with the focus on the feedback from masters' students. Students are expected to get prepared for the upcoming lectures, which enables them to better comprehend the subject matter delivered by the lecturer.

Seminars are aimed at combining interactive methods and spontaneous individual or group debates on specified problem areas. Such interactive tutoring is based on both the prepared and spontaneous modes.

Home assignments are intended for reviewing and analyzing authentic English legal texts, as well as at preparing to the multitasking format of exercising during in-class teamwork.

Assessment

- Seminar attendance / participation – 10%
- Self-study – 10%
- Essay – 30%
- Examination (test) – 50%

The form of intermediate control is an essay and an exam as a written test, the grade being a sum total equalling 80%.

Author of the Course / Course Instructor:

S.V. Vlasenko, Ph.D. (Linguistics, Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences) is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, Private International Law Department, at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow Campus
svlasenko@hse.ru
