

An Introduction to Law

Background

This course is an introduction to the Law, past and present, intended for those applying for it as an undergraduate subject. It aims to explore the historical foundations of law in England, and then look at its main branches – criminal, civil and public. We will also look at the relationship between law and government, and how laws are made.

We will consider some of the problems in the legal system, such as access to justice, whether prison works, national sovereignty vs supranational jurisdictions, and human rights.

The material for the programme will be made shared via Microsoft Teams.

How we will approach the course

The course will be a mixture of individual study material and live discussion. We will also connect to external resources as well, where they are useful and relevant.

Week 1

A look at the origins of the two main legal systems in the world: the Common Law and Civil Law

Week 2

How to interpret statutes and case law: a look at a fictional case of cannibalism and the Dangerous Dogs Act

Week 3

An exploration of the right to free speech and the ECHR

Week 4

A bit of advocacy: pupils will write and deliver a bail application in a criminal matter and an application for an interim payment in civil proceedings

Week 5

An exploration of different careers in law and the ways to get the most out of a law degree and maximise your chances of gaining a training contract, pupillage or other placement.

The research task

The course will include a piece of individual writing to be submitted by Friday 22 May. It will be a piece of extended writing in answer to one of the following:

1. Explain the importance of any one individual in the development of English law.
2. What should the role of a judge be?
3. Should judges be allowed to change the law?
4. What does national sovereignty mean in 2020?
5. Does prison work?