



Manchester Law School, Manchester Metropolitan University

&

Faculty of Law, University of Bialystok

introduce:

English Common Law Course

Course dates: 3rd to 5th March 2026 + 2 online days

Course venue: Faculty of Law, University of Bialystok (3 days), online (2 days)

Course Instructors:

Christopher Sykes, Manchester Law School

Dr Rossella Pulvirenti, Manchester Law School

Course fee: 250 PLN

Course certificate: provided by the Manchester Metropolitan University

DRAFT PROGRAMME of the ENGLISH COMMON LAW COURSE

DAY 1 – Being a lawyer in the UK and the English Legal System

Time	Topic	Indicative Content	Activities:
9-10:00	Introduction to the English Common Law Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to lecturers, content of programme. • Icebreaker/introductions. • What are the key differences between UK and Polish systems? 	
10-11:00	Becoming a lawyer in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference between barrister and solicitor • How you qualify as a barrister or solicitor in the UK. • What law students study in the UK (at undergraduate and postgraduate stages). • Paralegals and the opening up of the legal profession. • Becoming a judge. • The changing nature of the UK judiciary. • Other relevant qualifications. • The role of the magistrate and the magistracy system. • Qualifying if you are a lawyer from another jurisdiction. • UK lawyers working in other jurisdictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor led discussion to introduce the key concepts. - Group activity – groups research how you become a magistrate: Group A present positives and Group B negatives of the system - Brainstorming activity (whole group) – what do we expect from a judge?
11.00-11:15		COFFEE BREAK	
11:15-12:15	The role of a lawyer in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do lawyers do in different areas of practice (in general terms) • Professional and ethical duties of a lawyer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor led discussion on differences

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty to client • Duty to the court • Ability to swear documents. • Ability to give undertakings. 	<p>between Polish and UK lawyers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group Activity: Case studies on ethical challenges that might be presented to solicitors - Review of what we have covered this morning.
12:15-13:15		LUNCH BREAK	
13:15-15:30	The court system and areas of practice: which courts do what?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case law and precedent. • Civil and criminal systems. • Court hierarchy. • Tribunal system. • Magistrates' courts. • Crown Court. • High Court. • Court of Appeal. • Supreme Court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor led explanation and discussion on the ELS. - Activity in Pairs: Identifying where a fictional case would be heard. - Appeal routes group activity: what options are available to fictional 'clients' - Brief discussion on case precedent with examples (area to be revisited).

DAY 2 – Sources of Law

Time	Topic	Indicative Content	Notes
------	-------	--------------------	-------

9-10:15	The role of Parliament, the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty and sources of UK law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary sovereignty • The law-making process • Statutes • Statutory Instruments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor led simple introduction to parliament and parliamentary sovereignty. - Group activity: using Legislation.gov.uk to identify applicable law/section. - Whole group case study: when statute doesn't make sense.
10:15-10:30		COFFEE BREAK	
10.30 – 11.45	Comparative Constitutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The British Constitutional Law system • Characteristics (non-entrenchment, not codified) • Sources (statutes vs common law – refer back to the session in the morning) • Constitutional Principles (Parliamentary Sovereignty; Separation of Powers, Rule of Law) • Constitutional Conventions and Royal Prerogative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ice-breaker – brainstorming around the word constitution (10 minutes) - Group Task: Compare Core Features (Sources, Constitutional Principles, Conventions & Royal Prerogative) (40 minutes) - Debate - Side A: Defend UK's Parliamentary Sovereignty vs Side B: Defend Poland's Constitutional Supremacy(20 minutes) - Concluding remarks (5 minutes)
11:45-12:45		LUNCH BREAK	

12:45-14:45	Precedent and the UK court system (part 1) – statutory interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to read a statute • Doctrine of stare decisis as it applied to legislation • Challenges of statutory interpretation • Techniques and methodologies employed by judges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion regarding the various techniques that judges use. - Group activity: interpreting statute in a case scenario. - Whole group discussion on the challenges of interpretation.
14:45-15:30	Precedent and the UK court system (part 2) – stare decisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case law: a reminder. • Doctrine of stare decisis. • Operation of precedent. • Pros and cons of precedent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor led discussion on stare decisis. - Pair activities involving identify the 'ratio' of a case. - Group discussion regarding the pros and cons of precedent. - Group challenge: advising a client on in relation to a factual scenario.

DAY 3 – human rights, Brexit and the international perspective

Time	Topic	Indicative Content	Notes
9:00-10:15	Human Rights in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of human rights in the UK • Human Rights Act 1998 • Human Rights Act and the f principle of Parliamentary Sovereignty. • Example of case precedent in action (with HRA 1998) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ice-breaker - 'Rights in Action' - Get students thinking about rights protection in everyday life and link it to the HRA (10 minutes) - Presentations - Divide the class in groups and ask them to give a presentation of 3-5 minutes on one section of

			<p>the HRA to the rest of the class) (25 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solving case scenarios using the HRA – case scenarios loosely based on the Belmarsh case, Ghaidan v Godin-Mendoza case and possibly the Rwanda Policy on asylum seekers (25 minutes) - Concluding remarks (5 minutes)
10.15-10.30		COFFEE BREAK	
10.30 – 12.00	Impact of Brexit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Brexit • The impact of Brexit in the UK • UK and European Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ice-breaker - Key timeline for Brexit (10 minutes) - Guess who? with famous sentences on Brexit (15 minutes) - 2 Case studies based on Miller I and Miller II (60 minutes) - Concluding remarks (5 minutes)
12.00 – 1.00		LUNCH BREAK	
1.00-2.30	Final activity, discussion and Q&A session	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icebreaker - Read in class a few case scenarios to introduce difference between appeal and JR (10 minutes) - Ask students to present on Grounds for Review – divided in 3 groups (Illegality,

			Irrationality/Wednesbury unreasonableness and Procedural Impropriety (35 minutes) - Ask students to create a scenario for each of the grounds to be solved by the other groups (40 minutes) - Concluding remarks (5 minutes)
--	--	--	--

DAY 4 (ONLINE) – Tort Law and Criminal Law

Time	Topic	Indicative Content	Notes
9:00 – 10:00	Introduction to Tort Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types of tort • Fundamentals of general negligence 	TBC
10.10-13:00	Introduction to Tort Law continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other types of tort: nuisance, occupiers liability, false imprisonment • Defences • Remedies 	TBC
14.00 – 15.30	Introduction to Criminal Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of criminal offences • Exploration of how this applies to offences. • Criminal litigation process in the UK 	TBC

DAY 5 (ONLINE) – Contract Law

Time	Topic	Indicative Content	Notes
9:00 – 10:00	Introduction to Contract Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of contract law • Offer & Acceptance 	TBC
10.10-13:00	Introduction to Tort Law continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration • Breach and remedies 	TBC