

Legal Studies

Units 1 & 2

Students who undertake VCE Legal Studies will have the opportunity to examine the institutions and principles which are essential to Australia's legal system in everyday life. Students will also develop an understanding of the rule of law and its connection to people in society, law-makers, key legal institutions, the protection of human rights in Australia, and the justice system.

UNIT 1: Guilt and Liability

In this unit students develop an understanding of legal foundations, such as the different types and sources of law and the existence of a court hierarchy in Victoria. Students investigate key concepts of criminal law and civil law and apply these to actual and/or hypothetical scenarios to determine whether an accused may be found guilty of a crime, or liable in a civil dispute. In doing so, students develop an appreciation of the way in which legal principles and information are used in making reasoned judgments and conclusions about the culpability of an accused, and the liability of a party in a civil dispute.

UNIT 2: Sanctions, Remedies and Rights

In this unit students focus on the enforcement of criminal law and civil law, the methods and institutions that may be used to determine a criminal case or resolve a civil dispute, and the purposes and types of sanctions and remedies and their effectiveness. Students will undertake a detailed investigation of two criminal cases and two civil cases from the past four years to form a judgment about the ability of sanctions and remedies to achieve the principles of justice. Students develop their understanding of the way rights are protected in Australia and in another country, and possible reforms to the protection of rights. They examine a significant case in relation to the protection of rights in Australia.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Students will have the opportunity to engage in a range of learning activities. This includes learning from different case studies, report writing and class discussions. Students will also hear guest speakers; participate in excursions including a visit to Parliament, the County Court, the Supreme Court and a prison.

KEY SKILLS

Students should have an interest in and awareness of current legal issues and a willingness to unpack recent and relevant cases and laws during classroom discussion. Students will move towards employing high level thinking, synthesis and analysis skills. Students will argue their points and apply their knowledge of the law to legal cases. Writing skills will also be developed with a specific focus on writing under a legal framework.

ASSESSED TASKS

Students undertake a range of assessments throughout units 1 and 2 and these may include: Structured questions, tests, essays, case study reports, classroom presentations and an end of semester written examination.

Legal Studies

Units 3 & 4

Students who undertake VCE Legal Studies will have the opportunity to examine the criminal and civil justice system in Victoria, learn about the Commonwealth Constitution and evaluate how individual rights are protected in the process of law-making through parliament and courts.

UNIT 3: Rights and Justice

In this unit student will develop an understanding of the Victorian justice system, which includes the criminal and civil justice systems and ways in which individual rights are exercised. Students will explore the principles of justice: fairness, equality and access and how they are upheld in the justice system. The outcomes in this unit will also examine the methods and institutions in the justice system and consider their appropriateness in determining criminal cases and resolving civil disputes. Students consider the Magistrates' Court, County Court and Supreme Court within the Victorian court hierarchy, as well as other Victorian legal institutions and bodies available to assist with cases. Students will explore the roles of the judge, jury, legal practitioners in both criminal and civil cases and will evaluate the ability of sanctions and remedies to achieve their purposes. Students discuss recent reforms from the past four years and recommended reforms to enhance the ability of the justice system to achieve the principles of justice. Throughout this unit, students are expected to apply legal reasoning and information to actual and/or hypothetical scenarios and cases. They will provide advice to parties, using direct examples from the case and key content knowledge to support their ideas.

UNIT 4: People and the Law

In this unit students focus on the Australian Constitution and how it establishes Australia's parliamentary system Constitution and provides mechanisms to ensure that parliament does not make laws beyond its powers. In this area of study students examine the relationship between the Australian people and the and the ways in which the Constitution acts as a check on parliament in law-making. Students investigate the process of referendum, the role of the High Court and the division of legislative power between the parliament and courts. Students also explore the doctrine of precedent, statutory interpretation and influences on law reform.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Students will have the opportunity to engage in a range of learning activities, including learning from different case studies, report writing, class discussions, use of Edrolo, plus individual and group work. Students will also hear from guest speakers; participate in excursions including a visit to Parliament, the County Court, the Supreme Court and visit Barwon and Loddon prisons.

KEY SKILLS REQUIRED

Define key terms and use proper legal terminology in their writing. Discuss, interpret and analyse legal principles and information. Explain and evaluate features of the legal system. Provide examples from key cases to justify their responses. Synthesise and apply legal principles to actual scenarios. Engage in discussion and debate.

ASSESSED TASKS

Students undertake assessments throughout units 3 and 4 which are designed to prepare them for the end of year exam (worth 50% of the study score). Task include Structured questions in long and short answer form, case study reports and extended written responses.

Course work for this unit is worth 50% of the overall study score.

VCAA ASSESSMENT - The overall Study Score will consist of: School Assessed Coursework Unit 3 (25%), School Assessed Coursework Unit 4 (25%), 2 hour written examination in November (50%).

NOTE

Students do not have to have completed Units 1/2 Legal Studies as a pre-requisite, however it is advised that they look over this content in preparation for the commencement of the class to have an understanding of the need for law, legal foundations and the difference between civil and criminal law.