

Faculty of Law



DROI1008 History of institutions

[60h+12h exercises] 6 credits

This course is taught in the 2nd semester

Teacher(s): Michel Dumoulin
Language: French
Level: First cycle

Aims

The aim of this course is to teach students to understand the law in the context of the society that has produced it over two centuries, with a view to equipping future lawyers with the tools needed in any critical analysis of the topic. The objectives underlying the choice of a historical approach are threefold: to structure what is learned about society's evolution over time; to understand documents that are often contradictory; and to identify the connections between legal concepts and norms, and the reality of the outside world.

In terms of the skills that they should acquire, this triple objective should make it possible for students to:

- know the origins, and understand the development, of the political and institutional system that determines contemporary law;
- take on the task of critically analysing issues in society by studying specific, documented examples of sensitive questions;
- be able to put the law and legal institutions into context alongside the interests defended by the various elements that make up Belgian society.

In the first year of this university course, there is specific emphasis on training students in methods needed to describe, analyse and make comparisons concerning an issue in question, in addition to preparation for oral or written assessment based on an essay-style question. As regards the history of law, the course dealing with the history of institutions represents the history-oriented component, focusing on the specific chronological (18th to 20th century) and territorial context in which Belgian law evolved in Belgium.

Main themes

Course content focuses on the origins, construction and transformation of the Belgian State over two centuries.

The following aspects are addressed

- :- the 'pre-history' of Belgium (legacies of the ancien régime, French Revolution, Dutch rule);
- the period from 1830 to the present day covers, firstly, Belgium's economic, social and cultural structures and, secondly, its institutional structures (law, constitutional powers, transformation of State structures, European integration) and working institutions: the history of political parties, trade unionism and civil society.

The course is taught in formal classes complemented by tutorials. Other teaching methods may also be used in order to meet course needs. Course materials must be available at the beginning of each teaching term.

Tutorials

The tutorials aim to prepare students to perform successfully in oral or written university-level assessments.

Tutorial materials consist of documents introduced in the history of institutions course. Students work on contentious issues in the following areas: language, schools policy, society, the monarchy, colonial issues, constitutional questions, penal affairs, etc. Students are trained in the ability to construct a well-argued, critical and comprehensive analysis.

Content and teaching methods

- To trace, from a historical point of view, the origins and construction of, and transformations in, the Belgian State with the aim of equipping future lawyers with the critical tools needed to be able to situate Belgian law in the context of the society that produces it. The course is in two parts. The first is devoted to the 'pre-history' of Belgium (legacies of the ancien régime, French Revolution, Dutch rule). The second deals, firstly, with Belgium's economic, social and cultural structures and, secondly, with its institutional structures, (law, constitutional powers, transformation of State structures, European integration) and working institutions: the history of political parties, trade unionism and civil society. Formally taught course based on pre-read texts. Using a dossier of selected documents (from parliamentary, economic, legal and political sources), theme-based analysis of different issues in Belgian history. Examination: either oral or written, based on texts analysed during the course

Other credits in programs

DROI1BA	Première année de bachelier en droit	(6 credits)	Mandatory
HIST13BA	Troisième année de bachelier en histoire	(3 credits)	