RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

**Legal Skills
2016**

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1 Introduction and overview

Welcome to the Legal Skills course. This is a compulsory course for Penultimate LLB students.

The course is designed to improve generic skills which are required for all kinds of legal work. The course was introduced to meet frequent complaints from employers of law graduates about the quality of law graduates from South African universities. The complaints relate *inter alia* to the areas covered by this course.

2 Course content

The course consists of five modules ('blocks') that are taught one after the other. Each component of the course will be presented by a different lecturer. The course co-ordinator is Prof Laurence Juma l.juma@ru.ac.za (Office on top floor of the Law Faculty Building - next to Staff Reading Room).

3 Student assessment

Assessment will be by way of tests, a 72 hour assignment, and a moot. There will be no exam at the end of the course, and hence no possibility of a supplementary exam in the event of a failure.

Note that the last component, Legal Argument and Moots, will be presented and assessed at the beginning of the **third** term.

The modules, in order of presentation (percentage of total mark allocation indicated in brackets) are:

Module	% of total mark	Presenter
• Numeracy	(15%)	Dr Andrew Pinchuck
• Writing skills	(10%)	Ms Sarah Driver
• Legal environment	(10%)	Prof Helena Van Coller
• Legal research, Applied logic and critical reasoning	(35%)	Prof Graham Glover & Ms Sarah Driver
• Legal argument and moots	(30%)	Ms V. Heideman & S. Khan

4 Specific outcomes for each module

4.1 Outcomes for Numeracy

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to do the following:

- Be numerate at the level required for the numeracy component of the attorneys' admission
- Competently apply the following mathematical skills:
- Basic number sense and calculation skills involving the following number systems:
  - Whole numbers
  - Integers
  - Rational numbers (represented as fractions, decimals or percentages).
- Simple algebra; representing quantities symbolically and manipulating such symbols.
- Functions and relationships; in particular:
  - Proportion and rates
  - Linear functions
  - Exponential functions
  - The amortization function
- Plotting and reading simple graphs; in particular, graphs of the above relationships
- Applications of the above concepts and skills to situations relevant to the legal profession.

4.2   Outcomes for Legal Writing

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- understand the importance of communicating information, in all legal contexts, in clear and plain language
- apply the skills and techniques they have learnt to communicate clearly and concisely in writing in plain English.

4.3   Outcomes for the Legal Environment

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify the different types of legal professionals contemplated in the Legal Practice Act.
- Identify and understand the transitional arrangements and regulatory framework for the legal profession contemplated in the Legal Practice Act.
- Identify and understand influences on the legal profession in South Africa, including globalisation, recession and poverty issues.
- Debate issues within the legal profession and think critically about existing practices.

4.4   Outcomes for Legal Research

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify and understand the various legal research resources, methodologies and techniques that are available to a law student and a lawyer;
- Utilise the various legal research resources, methodologies and techniques in order to solve practical legal problems.

4.5   Outcomes for Applied Logic and Legal Reasoning

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Analyse the concepts of applied logic and critical reasoning in the context of the study of Law;
- Organise their approach to legal research, and their production of verbal and written work, in a logical and systematic manner;
- Apply the process of critical reasoning in their construction of legal arguments and opinion.

4.6   Outcomes for Moots/Legal Argument

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- On a supplied set of facts prepare heads of argument suitable for a moot court (and thus for a real legal argument in court) which comply technically with court requirements, and which succinctly and logically provide an outline of the argument which will be delivered orally subsequently;
- Present an oral legal argument in a moot court setting in a logical, coherent and distinct fashion, and competently respond to questions posed from the bench during the course of the argument.

5   IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATING TO THE COURSE

- In order to obtain a credit for Legal Skills in the LLB degree, students need to attain a sub-minimum of 30% for the numeracy component.
- Should a student fail to attain 30% or more for the numeracy component, but manages to attain 50% or more for the Legal Skills course in that same year, that student need not repeat the entire Legal Skills course. He or she must repeat the numeracy component.
- Handouts, etc, will be provided in due course by the individual lecturers.
- While the main part of the course will be undertaken in the two official lecture slots as per the timetable, there will be special arrangements for the numeracy component.
- Attendance requirements will be strictly enforced. Note that the quota of permissible missed lectures applies to the course as a whole, and not to the components.
- Failure to secure a DP will mean repeating the course.