

HUM-487

Law and computation I

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Cursus	Sem.	Type
Humanities and Social Sciences	MA1	Obl.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	3
Session	Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	During the semester
Workload	90h
Weeks	14
Hours	3 weekly
Courses	2 weekly
Project	1 weekly
Number of positions	60

Remark

Une seule inscription à un cours SHS+MGT autorisée. En cas d'inscriptions multiples elles seront toutes supprimées sans notification.

Summary

This course provides students with insights into how law shapes our increasingly digital and artificially intelligent environments and how the law itself gets shaped within that process and is designed for students who want to critically examine the interplay of law and computation.

Content

Both law and computation have been permeating our private and professional lives: The law has done so for thousands of years already by determining the social and economic structures in which we interact, while in comparison, digitalization only much more recently has been transforming our societal fabric. Understanding how the law can enable or constrain innovation within the broad domain of computation or digitalization is central for developers and engineers to determine how to shape future, responsible computing as well as regulatory environments. Within this course, we will analyze the regulatory toolkit at the disposition of policymakers and map legislations that emerged in Switzerland, Europe, and selected jurisdictions across the globe. We will analyze how the field of digital law has shifted over the years, more recently with a focus on data driven computing and machine learning, and aiming to achieve trustworthy artificial intelligence. We will critically reflect on the shortcomings of current legislation and envisage new approaches to address new risks that an ever-artificially intelligent world entails. This opens up the discussion to newer approaches and domains of law, that are focused on how computation and design can improve legal processes and access to law and justice. These new approaches are situated within the field of regulatory innovation, legal design, and computational law and combine the expertise of computer scientists, human-computer interaction designers, and legal scholars and are often driven by the quest to leverage interdisciplinary know-how to create more accessible legal processes.

Keywords

Digital law, computational law, artificial intelligence, legal design, regulatory innovation

Learning Prerequisites**Required courses**

None

Recommended courses

None

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Identify the key rules governing digital services and products, including new governance approaches for data and artificial intelligence
- Assess / Evaluate different regulatory strategies and their impact
- Assess / Evaluate approaches to automating legal processes
- Describe practicable, future-facing solutions that enable a symbiotic relationship between automation/AI, law, and society
- Analyze complex issues at the intersect of technology and law which necessitates the integration of several viewpoints/methods/fields
- Assess / Evaluate the state-of-the-art knowhow in the field and, upon this basis, write a project proposal that addresses a specific research gap

Transversal skills

- Demonstrate a capacity for creativity.
- Write a scientific or technical report.
- Set objectives and design an action plan to reach those objectives.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking
- Evaluate one's own performance in the team, receive and respond appropriately to feedback.

Teaching methods

The course will contain different elements such as lectures, practical workshops, student presentations, critical reading groups, and, if the timing permits, for those who are interested participation at a legaltech hackathon.

Expected student activities

Students will work in teams on a capstone project, present their project, integrate peer feedback, and evaluate their projects based on guidelines and regulations discussed in class.

Assessment methods

Continuous assessment throughout both terms (including presentations, individual assignments, group assignments):

Fall term: Capstone project pitch and presentation, individual assignment

Spring term: Capstone project presentation and poster, written report

Supervision

Office hours	Yes
Assistant.e.s	Yes
Forum	Yes

Resources

Bibliography

Moodle Link

- <https://go.epfl.ch/HUM-487>