



university of
 groningen

faculty of law

LLM Technology Law and Innovation

Preliminary course descriptions for 2023-2024 academic year

Please note the courses and content listed below are still subject to change.

COURSES

Data driven innovation (6 ECTS)

Data are at the core of all digital technology innovation, including not only AI and IoT but also Cloud services and Blockchain technology. The amount of data is growing globally — from 45 zettabytes in 2019 to a projected 175 zettabytes by 2025. The reasons behind this worldwide data growth include our increased internet access, mobile phone and social media use. However, what matters most when dealing with data is not their volume but, rather, knowing how to use it. While data analysts focus on gathering and interpreting data in order to address specific problems, the task of lawyers is to ensure that all these activities are done in compliance with the legal regime.

Starting by understanding different classifications of data (personal data, big data, open data, etc.), in this course the students will learn about the legal dimension of the use of data in various private and public sectors. Contrasting legal challenges with benefits deriving from the use of data will allow for gaining the necessary expertise in the fields of data use and data protection.

Competition Law and Market Regulation (6 ECTS)

The technology often plays a secondary role in competition law. Many debates in competition law focus on the role of economics in competition law. However, the foundation for these economics or the application of competition law in specific cases, is often technological in nature. Take, for example, Google's abusive practices such as the bundling of the Android OS to the Playstore, Chrome and its search engine. The economic incentive to engage in this bundling is based on the imperatives of machine learning technology that relies on ever more complete datasets to allow even more relevant advertisements to be shown.

This course focuses on the technology that underlies the instances where competition law is applied. Building on – inter alia – the knowledge and skills developed in Competition Law in the Digital Market, this course will look beyond digital technology involved and also focus on the relation between competition law and innovation.

The track uses the same interactive lectures that are organized for Competition Law, Market Regulation and External Effects, but you pass this course not by writing an exam, but by completing a series of papers that will need to analyse an instance of interaction between technology and an instrument of competition law (this could be an existing case) for its impact on innovation.

Seminar: Interactions between legal systems: in Technology Law (6 ECTS)

The aim of this course is to reflect of the interconnections between the different national, European, and international legal systems and the ways in which courts reason and apply rules. Students will be invited to choose one area of technology law and explore differences in regulatory approaches in different legal orders. They are then invited to reflect on the implications on the regulation of often transboundary technological developments.

Cybersecurity Law (6 ECTS)

Students will become familiarized with the international law and EU law framework governing cybersecurity. Students will also be invited to creatively apply this framework in practice in the context of case studies (e.g. smart and sustainable cities).

Intellectual Property and Innovation (6 ECTS)

This course is an advanced reflective course on the role of intellectual property law in both fostering and delaying innovation. It explores how intellectual property assists both closed and open innovation models in different ways. This will lead students to reflect on the intellectual property choices that players in innovation may need to make to realise their goals.

The Law of Sustainable Technology (6 ECTS)

Technology and innovation can do good as well as bad things. Nuclear technology, to name just one example, has brought us methods to treat cancer as well as weapons of unimaginable destructive power. Law plays a major role in ensuring that technology is sustainable and will not adversely impact future generations. This course identifies the sustainability challenges from technology and innovation and how law contributes to ensuring that sustainability. We will do this by first fleshing out what sustainability entails and then identifying various instances where law attempts to ensure sustainable technology. We will look at the regulation of AI, not just to ensure non-discriminatory treatment, but also to ensure that such technology ends up in the hand of only a few powerful companies. We will identify the ways in which law seeks to ensure inclusive technologies and innovation that will not harm the environment or the level of social protection.

We will do this in an interactive manner, using Socratic teaching, group assignments and group discussions. You pass this course by writing and presenting a paper that analyses a novel technology for its potential sustainability impact and the ways in which this impact may be best regulated.

Consumers and Innovation (6 ECTS)

Do technological developments such as internet devices, AI driven digital health, autonomous vehicles challenge established consumer rights and policies? This course invites a reflection on new challenges for consumer policy, such as ensuring consumer safety when using AI driven products; effects of planned early obsolescence of devices, product safety etc. This course will discuss the new challenges for consumers including the lack of transparency and disclosure, security and product safety, accountability and interoperability. It will reflect on the more fundamental challenges of changes to the traditional ideas of ownership and aftermarket support. Students are invited to reflect on how consumer policy is adjusting/needs to adjust to rapidly changing technologies to protect vulnerable consumers.

Seminar: Technology Law and Practice (6 ECTS)

Legal compliance is the process by which a public or private actor adheres to the complex rules that regulate a particular field in a given jurisdiction. The process involves not only knowing and understanding the applicable legislation, but also being able to demonstrate compliance all the time. This practically oriented seminar, aims to stimulate innovative and interdisciplinary research and education. The students will collaborate with various researchers from other Faculties and, by taking a client oriented approach, conduct DPIA studies and will draft Certification schemes for newly developed technologies. They will present and defend their reports both in written and orally.