

Auckland Law School 2025 Postgraduate Law Courses Short Descriptions

Full digital course outlines are available at: <https://courseoutline.auckland.ac.nz/dco>

Course	Short Description
LAW 700 Legal Research Methodology and Advanced Writing Offered in: Semester One and Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 0	The course is designed to provide students with up-to-date research and academic writing skills. The different components of the legal research and writing process including initial analysis, research ethics, writing style and writing a legal research essay are canvassed in this course. New students are provided with information about the Davis Law Library, its collections and resources and legal data base training.
LAW 701 The Legal System: Sources, Structures and Method Offered in: Semester One and Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	Examination of the core substantive components of the New Zealand legal system, in comparison with other municipal legal systems and international law. Analysis of the sources of New Zealand law, including statute, case law and custom. Legal methodology in theory and practice, including: judicial reasoning and the doctrine of precedent, techniques of statutory interpretation, and the resolution of disputes. Different modes of legal analysis and approaches to legal theory. This course is co-badged with LAWGENRL 464.
LAWGENRL 711 ST: Corruption: Comparative and International Approaches Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	This course explores the evolving concept of corruption in advanced democracies and its implications for twenty-first century challenges—specifically, rising economic and political inequalities, illiberal populism, and ecological crisis. Together, we will examine how anti-corruption law could help respond to such patterns of democratic decline. To answer this question, this course analyses economic and political evidence, the scope of anti-corruption law domestically and internationally, and proposed reforms to anti-corruption law intended to protect political integrity.
LAWGENRL 713 Selected Issues on Family Law Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Full-Semester Points: 30	A selection of topics designed to consolidate and advance understanding of the theory and practice of family law. The topics covered will vary according to current legal developments but are likely to include: law relating to cohabitation and marriage, the establishment of parenthood, and the relationship between parent and child, as well as the interrelationship between the state, the family and child protection and support, and the financial and property implications of family breakup including State support for families. How the law allocates duties, rights, and responsibilities in families, including extended family and whānau, as well as how power in relationships is restrained will also be foci for the course.
LAWCOMM 702 International Arbitration Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	International arbitration involves many interesting facets of the law including customary international law, the law of treaties, conflict of laws, soft law and contract law. The course will begin with an introduction to the legal fundamentals of international commercial arbitration and some preliminary comparisons with investment treaty arbitration. The rest of the course will then focus on certain specific aspects of international commercial arbitration, and investment treaty arbitration including the usual substantive commitments on standards of treatment for foreign investors. We will cover both practical and more theoretical issues.
LAWCOMM 709 Corporate Governance Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	How listed companies are run is something that is vital for every constituent involved with them. We have created a series of tools and rules which help companies be run as well as possible, which are together referred to as ‘corporate governance’. Corporate governance includes hard law, ‘soft law’ such as non-binding codes, and tools of pressure on listed companies. Corporate governance regulates the relationships between various corporate constituencies (directors, officers, majority and minority shareholders, employees, creditors) with a view to establishing an adequate system of controls that prevents any single corporate constituency from acquiring overriding power or influence. The course focuses on the theory, law and practice of the governance of corporations across different jurisdictions with a focus on the Anglo-American model.
LAWCOMM 732 ST: Contractual Interpretation Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	Commercial lawyers spend much of their working lives reading and writing contracts. Most of the contract problems which occur in practice are concerned with the meaning of the words which have been used in the contract. That is why the interpretation of contracts is such an important issue in practice. The purpose of this course is to discuss the conceptual issues involved in the interpretation of contracts and the types of problem which are encountered in practice. Contractual interpretation is largely concerned with questions of judgement. But that judgement must be exercised in accordance with the principles of contractual interpretation which we will be studying.

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LAWCOMM 733 ST: Shaping the Law in the Tech Driven Era Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Full-Semester Points: 30	This course critically addresses the legal complexities emerging from technologies like artificial intelligence, blockchain and other disruptive innovations. The course begins by introducing computational thinking and core technological concepts, enabling students to grasp how these innovations operate and affect legal frameworks. Students will examine a range of cases and case studies alongside national and international regulatory responses, focusing on how legal systems adapt to technological advancements. This course will prepare students to communicate and collaborate effectively with technologists and help design their technological solutions, while ensuring compliance, safeguarding individual rights, and supporting responsible innovation.
LAWCOMM 735 ST: Private Equity and Venture Capital – Corporate Law and Practice Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	Private equity is an investment class through which investors aggregate investment funds to be invested and managed by a private equity sponsor. Private equity sponsors apply funds in the takeover of private and publicly listed companies. Since private equity funds have finite lifetimes, the business plan of private equity necessarily involves the sale of acquired companies over time with a view to generating profits (the “exit”). “Private equity - law and practice” is a comprehensive “soup-to-nuts” examination of private equity as a discipline and a concept focusing on the US and UK markets. The course embraces black-letter law, economic theory, mergers and acquisitions (“M&A”), regulation, and corporate governance. This subject is taught at an advanced level. A basic understanding of companies and their structures, the difference between shares and debt, the roles of shareholders and directors, and the difference between private and publicly-traded companies is recommended.
LAWCOMM 736 ST: FinTech Finance and Regulations Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	This course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the legal complexities involved in financial law and FinTech, addressing both practical applications and theoretical foundations. Topics covered will include venture capital, private equity, hedge funds, crowdfunding, regulatory sandboxes, and sustainable investments, among others. The curriculum will also explore key issues in partnership law, corporate law, and securities law as they pertain to various investment vehicles. Additionally, the course will offer comparative analyses of investment vehicles in the UK, US, EU, and Asia. This course is ideal for individuals interested in both the legal and practical aspects of alternative investments and FinTech regulations.
LAWCOMM 738 ST: IP Law in Asia-Pacific Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	This course provides students with a critical understanding of intellectual property (IP) laws in Asia-Pacific through a regulatory and comparative approach. It starts with international intellectual property law harmonisation, focusing on the TRIPS Agreement and the “minimum” standards it set for WTO members. The discussion then extends to post-TRIPS bilateral and plurilateral trade agreements (such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), so that the students can understand the dynamics that have further impacted the IP law landscape in Asian-pacific countries in the last two decades. It then analyses pivotal IP issues in multilateral and bilateral rulemaking, including IP and protection of genetic resources and traditional knowledge and geographical indications in the EU-Australia and EU-New Zealand trade negotiation. It concludes by identifying the challenges and emerging trends in IP laws in the Asia-Pacific, including the insufficient response of the IP laws to sustainability challenges and bottom-up IP lawmaking initiatives in relation to data and artificial intelligence in the digital economy.
LAWCOMM 749 ST: Tort Law at the Cutting Edge Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 15	The aim of this course is to consider a range of highly topical issues in tort law. The first part of the course concerns damage in the law of negligence. We will look under this heading at the boundaries of damage, both generally, and specifically in the context of ‘reproductive negligence’. The second part concerns preventive damages, and the related issue of climate change litigation. To what extent can a plaintiff recover damages in tort for the cost of preventing negligent conduct from causing her harm? And to what extent may claims of this kind, along with more conventional claims for property damage, personal injury and nuisance offer redress to the victims of man-made climate change? Finally, in the third part we will consider what forms of tort liability are most appropriate when it comes to providing redress for harms caused by artificial intelligence systems and automated vehicles.
LAWCOMM 778 ST: Corporate Governance, Social and Environmental Responsibility Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 15	Companies are the engine room of national and global economies but are also responsible for much social and environmental harm. This course provides the opportunity for students to consider how corporate governance and business regulation might ensure corporate environmental and social responsibility and hold companies legally accountable when things go wrong. Students will learn how to analyse a case study of corporate responsibility problem using an array of interacting legal and regulatory tools, including corporate law and governance, international norms of human rights due diligence and environmental social governance, and various regimes of formal and informal business regulation such as environmental, health and safety, food and financial regulation.

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LAWCOMM 720 Law of Insurance Contracts Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	This course will review the operation of insurance law in New Zealand. The existing position is derived from common law principles that remain operative in other common law jurisdictions, notably England and Australia, but modified by different forms of legislative intervention in all three jurisdictions. The course will consider whether the position reached in New Zealand, in particular following reform in 1977, remains appropriate in the light of market, judicial and legislative developments. The course will also devote a good deal of attention to the impact of the Canterbury earthquakes on the law, demonstrating how New Zealand has found itself in the unaccustomed position of laying down legal principles on previously unresolved topics, thereby influencing and clarifying the law in other common law jurisdictions.
LAWENVIR 716 ST: Resource Management Law Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Full-Semester Restriction: LAWENVIR 433 Points: 30	An examination of the law relating to resource management and environmental regulation including: evolution of the sustainable management concept, consideration of national objectives, application of the Treaty of Waitangi, national standards, coastal policies, regional statements and plans, district plans, designations, heritage and conservation powers, resource consent procedures, and remedial powers and enforcement procedures. This course is co-badged with LAWENVIR 433.
LAWENVIR 726 ST: Nature Law Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 15	We live in a hyperconnected world – ecosystems and societies are linked like never before. This occurs through the movement of people, goods and products and the transfer of capital and information. At the same time, there is mounting appreciation of the need to address issues of equity and sustainability concurrently. To adequately understand, and ultimately to govern and regulate, for equitable-sustainability there is the need to identify and appreciate the complex feedbacks across activities of multiple individual, government and corporate actors across scales from the global to the local. This interdisciplinary course equips students with a grounding in concepts from the biophysical sciences, social sciences, law and governance. By introducing students to systems and futures approaches, and using this to examine legal frameworks, this course aims to equip students with the tools for futures-focused sustainable and equitable governance.
LAWENVIR 727 ST: Climate Change Law Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Full-Semester Restriction: LAWENVIR 404 Points: 15	An introduction to and critical examination of multi-sourced climate change law from a New Zealand perspective. Against the relevant international law backdrop, the course critically surveys and assesses domestic New Zealand climate change law including the ‘zero-carbon’ legislative framework, emissions trading, common law, climate change under planning and environmental law, and the emerging legal regime on managed retreat. This course is co-badged with LAWENVIR 404.
LAWENVIR 728 ST: Global Environmental Law Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Full-Semester Restriction: LAWENVIR 420 Points: 15	An overview of key concepts and developments in international environmental law, followed by a study of the law in specialised areas such as protection of biodiversity on land and in the oceans, climate change and Antarctic environmental protection, as well as studies on selected topics such as business and sustainability, and sustainability in international trade. Previous study in public international law is strongly recommended. All LLM candidates are expected to attend this course in person and participate fully in classes as well as preparing individual research papers on approved topics. This course is co-badged with LAWENVIR 420.
LAWENVIR 741 ST: Sustainability and Natural Resources Law Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Part-Semester Points: 15	This course examines the normative concept of sustainability in the international context, and its application through law and policy in the use and development of natural resources in New Zealand. Specific attention will be given to minerals, hydrocarbons and other energy resources, and selected natural resources including water, fisheries and forestry. The course includes a comparative element with selected examples of approaches to the development of natural resources in Canada and Australia. The course will be of interest to those who may intend to work in legal practice, in government service, in public interest organizations, or in the private sector including mining and energy development.
LAWPUBL 736 Human Rights Litigation Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	The course focuses on how to bring and defend human rights litigation in New Zealand under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993, as well as the bringing of claims under international human rights treaties (such as ICCPR) where that is possible. It will also deal with the use of the Bill of Rights in other forms of proceedings such as employment law and judicial review in various settings, such as health and education. The focus is on New Zealand law but this will involve reference to comparative law in order to understand the significance of case law and judicial approaches in other jurisdictions under different models of bills of rights.

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LAWPUBL 740 ST: International Human Rights Law Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 15	The course will provide an overview of International Human Rights Law (IHRL), including its principal instruments and enforcement mechanisms. Students will explore case studies of the application of IHRL in some of today's most challenging contexts, including armed conflict and climate change. Students will also examine how the application of a state's international human rights obligations can inform its domestic case law, using New Zealand as an example.
LAWPUBL 748 ST: South Pacific Legal Studies: Critical Issues Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Part-Semester Points: 15	The South Pacific region constitutes Pacific Island nations with distinct and diverse societies, cultures and legal systems. The course offers an advanced study of contemporary legal issues faced by nations in the region. Students will critically examine a range of legal issues; including customary law, constitutional law, human rights and climate change. Delivered through a talanoa based approach, the course offers students a nuanced understanding of important and current legal issues in the Pacific region.
LAWPUBL 749 ST: Indigenous Persons: Law and Policy Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	The aim of this course is to consider Aotearoa New Zealand's particular experience of Indigenous rights reforms of the last four decades with reference to reforms in other similarly situated settler states, especially Canada, USA and Australia. What we have in common is a shared history of Anglo-imperial colonization and settlement with similar phases of: (1) first contact and recognition; (2) denial of rights and taking of tribal authority and territory (through violence and oppression and manipulation); (3) benign neglect and assimilation; and (4) Indigenous resurgence or belated-state building. The plan is to cover these phases by focusing in a series of lectures/wananga/fono on particular themes.
LAWPUBL 751 ST: Regional Law and Governance in the Pacific Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 30	Covering one-third of the world's surface, the Pacific Ocean encompasses vast natural resources, cultural diversity, and sites of strategic significance. In recent years, the Pacific has become an object of growing geopolitical contestation – however, the region also faces long-standing challenges relating to development, resource management, rule of law and good governance, peace and security, and of course climate change. This course will examine the intersections of these various issues in international law and governance, with particular attention to Indigenous Pacific perspectives and the work of regional agencies such as the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, and others.
LAWPUBL 779 ST: International Dispute Settlement Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Part-Semester Points: 15	This course introduces participants to a selection of international legal dispute settlement and compliance mechanisms including: the International Court of Justice, international environmental law including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the World Trade Organization. The course familiarises candidates with the basics of the procedures in each context. In addition the course invites debate on the purposes and functioning of these processes, including their contribution to addressing global issues of pressing importance. Candidates will prepare research papers in relevant areas, potentially extending also to dispute settlement and compliance mechanisms under regional trade agreements as well as international human rights complaints mechanisms. Previous study in public international law or in one or more of the fields indicated is called for, and purchase of the course textbook is recommended.
COMLAW 740A/B Tax Base Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Double Semester, Intensive Courses Points: 30	An advanced study of the breadth of the New Zealand income tax base, including the different concepts of income, its timing and recognition. Comparisons between the nature of capital and income, and the differing treatment of each, provides a deeper understanding of the policy behind the New Zealand income tax regime. Provides a theoretical background and detailed technical knowledge of the scope and application of the most significant regimes for income, deduction and timing in the Income Tax Act 2007. Involves individual research resulting in a substantial individual research essay.
COMLAW 747 Goods and Services Tax Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 15	An advanced study of Goods and Services Tax (GST): both a theoretical background and high level of technical knowledge of the GST Act 1985. Comparisons with other indirect taxes and overseas variations of GST (notably Australian GST and the United Kingdom VAT) provide a deeper understanding of the policy behind the New Zealand GST regime.

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<p>LAWCOMM 767 ST: Transfer Pricing Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Points: 15</p>	<p>This course offers an advanced study of aspects of International Transfer Pricing. The course offers students a thorough analysis as to the workings of the Arm's Length Principal ("ALP"), as set by the OECD in its Transfer Pricing Guidelines (2017). The course will outline how multinationals set their cross border related party transfer prices for goods, services, interest, management fees and royalties. Accordingly, students will be provided a solid grounding in the foundations of transfer pricing method selection and application, as well as the governmental documentation requirements. New Zealand's specific domestic law transfer pricing provisions, transfer pricing guidelines and relevant Tax Treaty Articles will also be covered in this regard.</p>
<p>LAWCOMM 775A/B International Taxation Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Double Semester, Intensive Courses Restriction: LAWHONS 748 Points: 30</p>	<p>An advanced study of New Zealand's international tax regime. The course covers the test of residence for individuals and corporates, and the wider tax base for off-shore income of New Zealand residents. It also covers the taxation of income derived by overseas residents from New Zealand activities and the application of the Double Tax Conventions to various sources of income and transactions. The course also addresses the selecting of country of residence in the form of treaty shopping, anti-avoidance measures directed at transaction activity and the use of tax havens.</p> <p>This course is co-badged with LAWHONS 748.</p>
<p>LAWCOMM 783 Avoidance Provisions Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 15</p>	<p>This course offers an advanced study of all aspects of the general anti-avoidance provisions (GAAR) contained in the Income Tax Act 2007 and Goods and Services Act 1985. It provides a detailed analysis of the structure, function and application of the general anti-avoidance provisions and their relationship to the "black-letter" tax law. The course is designed to equip the student with the skills required to be able to analyse and apply the GAAR regimes to business transactions for the purposes of providing advice and administering the tax system. Discussion on the cases and the principles of The GAAR provides a deeper understanding of the policy behind New Zealand's general anti-avoidance provision.</p>
<p>LAWCOMM 788 ST: Current Issues in Tax Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Intensive Points: 15</p>	<p>This course looks at the most important current issues in international and New Zealand taxation. For example, we will explore the trend in progressivity and the taxation of wealth. We will also look at international trends in taxation e.g. in the case of corporate in-come taxes, towards the place of destination or marketplace rather than the place of origin or manufacture. We go "behind the curtain" on the Pillar 1 and 2 regimes to see the impact and operation of these major developments.</p>
<p>LAWCOMM 772 Intellectual Property and Practice Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Part-Semester (online) Points: 15</p>	<p>This is an online course designed for those with little or no background knowledge in intellectual property law. The course provides a general outline of intellectual property law in the context of the New Zealand and Australian legal systems, including the impact of te Tiriti of Waitangi on the protection of knowledge and culture. The course also covers the duties and ethical responsibilities of trade mark and patent attorneys. The course is intended to provide an introduction to the main intellectual property laws encountered in practice and to provide a foundation for further specialised study into particular areas of intellectual property law.</p> <p>This course is accredited to meet Topic Groups A1, A2 and B from the curriculum of studies set by the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board for those seeking registration as a patent attorney.</p>
<p>LAWCOMM 782 Trade Mark Practice Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Pre/co-requisite: LAWCOMM 796 Points: 15</p>	<p>This course is about the practical elements associated with filing, opposing, registering, maintaining, removing and enforcing trade marks under the Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth) and Trade Marks Act 2002 (NZ) and relevant trade mark regulations. It is recommended that that the course is taken alongside LAWCOMM 796 – Trade Marks and Related Rights. As well as practical aspects of trade mark practice in Australia and New Zealand, the course will cover some key aspects of overseas trade mark regimes and key features of international systems for filing trade mark applications.</p> <p>This course is accredited to meet Topic Group D from the curriculum of studies set by the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board for those seeking registration as a patent attorney.</p>

Course	Short Description
<p>LAWCOMM 785 Patent Practice Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Intensive Pre/co-requisite: LAWCOMM 793 Points: 15</p>	<p>This course is about the practical elements associated with filing and prosecuting patent applications in New Zealand, Australia and internationally. The course also covers the various ways in which patents can be challenged (before and after grant) and the law relating to the exploitation of granted patents. The course further addresses the law relating to the protection of plant varieties in New Zealand and Australia. It is recommended that this course is taken alongside LAWCOMM 793 – Patent Law.</p> <p>This course is designed to meet Topic Group F from the curriculum of studies set by the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board for those seeking registration as a patent attorney. It is not yet accredited, but an accreditation request has been filed.</p>
<p>LAWCOMM 793 Patent Law Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Part-Semester Pre/co-requisite: LAWCOMM 772 Restriction: LAWCOMM 462 Points: 15</p>	<p>This course is about Australian and New Zealand law relating to the protection of innovative ideas and inventions. The primary focus is therefore on the statutory rules and case law that relate to the Patents Act 1990 (Cth) and the Patents Act 2013 (NZ). The course addresses the creation, exploitation, enforcement and loss of patent rights under such legislation. However, before addressing patent legislation, the course deals with the protection of innovative ideas and inventions via contract and the equitable breach of confidence action.</p> <p>This course is co-badged with LAWCOMM 462.</p> <p>This course is accredited to meet Topic Group E from the curriculum of studies set by the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board for those seeking registration as a patent attorney.</p>
<p>LAWCOMM 795 Copyright and Design Offered in: Semester Two Course Type: Part-Semester Pre/co-requisite: LAWCOMM 772 Restrictions: LAWCOMM 433 Points: 15</p>	<p>This course is about how Australia and New Zealand law can be utilised to protect product design. It examines the law of copyright, which in New Zealand is the primary mechanism that can be, and is, used to protect the design of products. The course also addresses the requirements and process for obtaining registered design protection in Australia and New Zealand, interrogates the nature and scope of such protection, and examines how both jurisdictions seek to deal with overlaps between copyright and design protection.</p> <p>This course is co-badged with LAWCOMM 433.</p> <p>This course is accredited to meet Topic Group I from the curriculum of studies set by the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board for those seeking registration as a patent attorney.</p>
<p>LAWCOMM 796 Trade Marks and Related Rights Offered in: Semester One Course Type: Part-Semester Pre/co-requisite: LAWCOMM 772 Restriction: LAWCOMM 463 Points: 15</p>	<p>This course provides a detailed examination of the Australian and New Zealand laws that govern the protection of commercial symbols and indicia. A significant part of the course is devoted to the protection of registered trade marks under the Australian Trade Marks Act 1995 and New Zealand's Trade Marks Act 2002. The course also covers various other methods of protecting unregistered or unregistrable trade marks or commercial symbols and indicia, including the law of passing off, consumer protection legislation, special events legislation, domain name protection and the protection of geographical indications.</p> <p>This course is co-badged with LAWCOMM 463.</p> <p>This course is accredited to meet Topic Group C from the curriculum of studies set by the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board for those seeking registration as a patent attorney.</p>