

Law  
'A' level

# Introduction

Welcome to your Oxford Open Learning 'A' level Law course!

## The Specification (or Syllabus)

This course has been designed to give you a full and thorough preparation for the AS level or A-level Law 2160 specification, set by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA).

The **Subject Code** for entry to the AS only award is **1161**.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the A2 (A-level) award is **2161**.

No coursework is required.

## Private Candidates

The AQA specification is open to private candidates. Private candidates should contact AQA for a copy of *'Information for Private Candidates'*.



Oxford Open Learning

# The Arrangement of Lessons

## AS Units

### Unit One: Law Making and the Legal System

#### Section A: Law Making

<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Reading:</i>
1. The Formal Legislative Process	<i>AQA Law for AS</i> Ch. 1.1-1.5, Ch. 2.1, Ch. 2-3-2.8
2. Influences on Parliament	Ch. 1.6, Ch. 2.2
3. Delegated Legislation <i>Tutor-marked Assignment A</i>	Ch. 3
4. Statutory Interpretation	Ch. 4
5. Judicial Precedent <i>Tutor-marked Assignment B</i>	Ch. 5

#### Section B: The Legal System

6. The Civil Courts and other forms of dispute resolution	Ch. 6, Ch. 7
7. The Criminal Courts and lay people <i>Tutor-marked Assignment C</i>	Chs. 8-10
8. The Legal Profession, other sources of advice, & funding	Ch. 11, Ch. 12
9. The Judiciary <i>Tutor-marked Assignment D</i>	Ch. 13

### Unit Two: The Concept of Liability

#### Section A: Introduction to Criminal Liability

10. Underlying Principles of Criminal Liability	Ch. 14, Ch.15
11. The Criminal Courts: Procedure and Sentencing <i>Tutor-marked Assignment E</i>	Ch. 16, Ch. 17

#### Section B: Introduction to Tort

12. Liability in Negligence	Ch. 18
13. The Civil Courts: Procedure and Damages <i>Tutor-marked Assignment F</i>	Ch. 19.7

Summary of Cases  
Glossary of Legal Terms

## A2 Units

### Unit Three: Criminal Law (Offences against the Person)

#### Section A: Criminal Law (fatal and non-fatal offences against the person)

*Lesson*

- 14. Criminal Law: Defences
  - 15. Criminal Law: Fatal Offences against the Person
  - 16. Criminal Law: Non-Fatal Offences against the Person
- Tutor-marked Assignment G*

Reading:  
*AQA Law A2*  
 Ch. 4  
 Ch. 1-2  
 Ch. 3

### Unit Four: Criminal Law (Offences against Property) and Concepts of Law

#### Section A: Criminal Law (offences against property)

- 17. Theft and Robbery
- 18. Burglary, Blackmail, Fraud and Criminal Damage

Ch. 10, Ch. 11.1  
 Ch. 11.2-4, Ch.  
 12, Ch. 13

*Tutor-marked Assignment H*

#### Section C: Concepts of Law

- 19. Law, Morality and Justice
  - 20. Balancing Conflicting Interests
  - 21. Fault and Judicial Creativity
- Tutor-marked Assignment J*

Ch. 20, Ch. 21

Ch. 24

Ch. 22, Ch. 23

Summary of Cases

Glossary of Legal Terms

## Textbooks

This course is NOT self-contained, and has been designed to be used in conjunction with:

*AQA Law for AS* by **Jacqueline Martin** & Denis Lancer (Hodder, 2013, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.) ISBN-13: 978-1444192711

and

*AQA Law A2* by **Guy Blundell**, Emma Bateman, Peter Smith, John Wilman & Pam Whelan (Nelson Thrones, 2013, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) ISBN-13: 978-1408519714

One easy way of acquiring accompanying textbooks is through the Oxford Open Learning website ([www.ool.co.uk](http://www.ool.co.uk)).

Students taking the Criminal Law options selected by this course will find the following book helpful:

Jonathan Herring: *Criminal Law: Text, Cases and Materials* (Oxford, ISBN-13: 978-0199646258)

For Unit 2, Section B (Tort), the following book is helpful:

Emily Finch & Stefan Fafinsky: *Law Express: Tort Law* (Pearson, ISBN-13: 978-1408295434)

This course avoids Contract Law options but students who wish to explore this area of the law in more detail will find the following book helpful:

Catherine Elliott & Frances Quinn: *Contract Law* (Longman, ISBN-13: 978-1408282915)

AQA publishes a *Resources* list, full of useful supporting texts, which can be viewed on the AQA website or purchased from AQA.

Also well worth acquiring are the examination board's Marking Schemes, which give details on how individual papers are marked and what constitutes a good answer.

Law books are often revised for new editions so it is best to obtain the most recent edition, where there is more than one.

## Aims and Objectives of the Course

This course has been designed and written with the purpose of preparing you to sit and *pass* the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and the Advanced Level (A2) Law Examination of the AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance). As required, the course enables you to study the structure and operation of certain major aspects of the English legal system and selected areas of substantive law, and to develop skills associated with an understanding of the law and its operation in society.

At the end of the course you should:

1. have a knowledge and understanding of the processes by which and the structure through which law is created, administered and changed;
2. have an ability to analyse factual problem situations and apply the appropriate substantive legal rules and principles;
3. have an ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness and effectiveness of particular legal rules, institutions and procedures in fulfilling their functions;
4. have an ability to appreciate the effects of law and the legal system upon the individual and society.

## Using the Course Materials

### Lesson Structure and Assessment

Lessons are arranged to allow for progression through the AQA specifications from Unit 1 to Unit 4. Throughout the lessons, you will find Revision Points, Self-Assessment Tests and Tutor-Marked Assignments. You should work through all relevant exercises.

### Tutor-Marked Assignments

At the relevant point in the course, you should attempt the tutor-marked assignments. It will be most helpful if you attempt these under examination conditions, however this is not obligatory.

It is very important that you **quote cases** to support your arguments, both in your assignments and in the exam. As you work through these course materials, make your own notes on some cases that are relevant to topics raised in the lessons. Look for

suitable cases in your textbook, in library books, on the internet, in the lessons and in the Summary of Cases at the back of this pack.

## Suggested Answers

Suggested answers will be made available to you with your marked paper (if you are not working with a tutor you will have received the suggested answers upon enrolment). The tests are progressive both as regards difficulty and as regards knowledge. They have been designed not only to test your understanding of the specific lessons to which they relate and your ability to apply the skills which you have learnt to problematical situations, but also to provide you with a means of revising the content of earlier lessons.

A careful study of the Suggested Answers will be of great assistance to you with problems of technique, but remember that the Suggested Answers are the product of experience and are based on careful reading and analysis of the question and the drafting of a preliminary answer plan.

## Problems and Difficulties

You will not go through the entire course without coming up against some things that you do not understand. If you find that something still does not make sense after you have been through all the relevant textbooks, do not hesitate to ask your tutor who should be only too pleased to help you.

It is important to notice that not all the lessons are of equal length. This is inevitable since some subjects can be dealt with in relatively short passages of notes and texts, whereas others require lengthier treatment.

Moreover, not all lessons are supplied with Self-Assessment Tests and where this is the case you should read with great care the portion of the text which has been suggested for study.

# The 'AS' level and 'A' level System

## The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses may be used in one of two ways:

- As a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer questions about specialism;
- As the first half (50%) of an Advanced Level qualification, which must be completed before an Advanced Level award can be made.

Advanced Subsidiary is designed to provide an appropriate assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the first half of a full Advanced Level Qualification.

## The Advanced Level (AS + A2)

The Advanced Level examination is in two parts:

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) - 50% of the total award;  
A second examination, called A2 - 50% of the total award

Most Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced level courses are modular. The AS level normally comprises three teaching and learning modules and the A2 comprises a further three teaching and learning modules. These modules generally match the Units of Assessment (or Exam Papers).

## Examination Flexibility

The new style 'A' levels allow for more flexibility in the taking of exams. The two most popular options are:

- AS is completed at the end of one year and A2 at the end of the second year;
- AS and A2 are completed at the end of the same year.

Both of these options are open to students following this course as it is divided into two halves and follows the same modular sequence as the specification.

## Grading and Shelf-Life

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A\*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A\* candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A level qualification and an A\* on the aggregate of the A2 units.

Candidates may re-sit a unit any number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result for each unit will count towards the final qualification. Candidates who wish to repeat a qualification may do so by re-taking one or more units.

## The Examination Structure

This information is correct for the AQA examinations in 2011 and later years. Prior to the examination, students should contact the exam board for the latest information.

### AS Examination

**Unit 1** 1 hour 30 mins      50% of the total AS marks  
 (Unit code: LAW 01)      25% of the total 'A' level marks  
 Subject Content      Unit 1 **Law Making and the Legal System**

Candidates answer questions on **three** topics. Candidates will study both section A and section B. In the examination, they will answer questions on one topic from each section, and questions on a third topic from either section.

**Unit 2** 1 hour 30 mins      50% of the total AS marks  
 (Unit code: LAW 02)      25% of the total 'A' level marks  
 Subject Content      Unit 2: **The Concept of Liability**

AQA offers the option of studying either sections A and B or sections A and C. This course prepares you for sections **A** and **B**.

Candidates answer questions on **two** scenarios. Do not attempt to answer the section C question.

### A2 Examination

**Unit 3** 1 hour 30 mins      25% of the total 'A' level marks  
 Subject Content      Unit 3 **Criminal Law (Offences against the Person)**  
 (Unit code: LAW 03)

AQA offers the option of studying either section A or section B. This course prepares you for section **A**.

Candidates answer **three** questions on **one** scenario. Do not attempt to answer section B questions.

The *third* question under each scenario requires candidates to "evaluate" an aspect of the substantive law which they have studied. The same single evaluative question will be set for the two criminal



law scenarios, and the same single question for the two contract scenarios. As a result, candidates will have no choice of question. The specification identifies which areas of law will be the subject of an evaluative question. These are:

#### **Criminal Law**

Murder  
Voluntary manslaughter  
Non-fatal offences against the person  
Defences

#### **Contract**

Formation  
Contract terms  
Vitiating factors  
Remedies

For the criminal law evaluative questions, three areas will be covered:

- murder (including voluntary manslaughter)
- non-fatal offences against the person
- defences – a general question with candidates being required to illustrate their answer with examples taken from two defences of their choice.

For the contract evaluative questions, three areas will be covered:

- formation – a general question or on offer/acceptance only
- terms – a general question or on exclusion clauses only
- remedies – a general question.

Discussion of misrepresentation may be incorporated in any of these elements as appropriate, though it will not be the specific focus of any question. As a result, candidates for both criminal law and contract need to cover three broad areas. Each examination paper will contain a question on one of these three areas. Do not assume that any pattern will be established in the sequence of areas covered in the question papers.

**Unit 4** 2 hours 25% of the total 'A' level marks  
(Unit code: LAW 04) Subject Content: **Criminal Law (Offences against Property) & Concepts of Law**

AQA offers the option of studying either Sections A and C or Sections B and C. This course prepares you for Sections **A** and **C**.

Candidates answer **two** questions on **one** scenario and **one** essay question.

## **Studying the Syllabus**

You should be sure to acquire your own copy of the syllabus, either via the AQA Publications Dept or from the website [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk).

The syllabus can be purchased from

AQA Publications  
Unit 2, Wheel Forge Way,  
Trafford Park  
Manchester  
M17 1EH (tel: 0870-410-1036)

or downloaded from  
[www.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/pdf/AQA-2160-W-SP-10.PDF](http://www.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/pdf/AQA-2160-W-SP-10.PDF).

We advise that you obtain a copy of the syllabus so that you can assess which topics you have covered in the most detail and which ones you will feel happiest about in the exam. AQA can also provide advice booklets on your course, including 'Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates'. As you approach the examination, it will also be helpful to purchase and tackle past papers from AQA.

## Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the AQA website ([www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site ([www.ool.co.uk](http://www.ool.co.uk)) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by. If you have not already done so, you may register for your free copy of *How to Study at Home*, our 200-page guide to home learning, or enrol on further courses. Put it on your Favourites list now!

## Further Guidance: The Use of Cases

English Law is essentially a case law system and part of the English legal technique is the use of cases as authorities. You do not have to have a detailed knowledge of every case mentioned in the course but it is wise to study carefully those to which your attention is directed.

Because the English Courts follow the principle of *stare decisis*, it is essential for you to quote those cases which support your contentions and opinions. It is also necessary for you to be aware of those precedents which do *not* support your argument and which you could refute if necessary. To do this with confidence is the hallmark of having a legal mind!

The refutation of a leading case is known as "distinguishing" that case from the current one under consideration. This is done by showing that the facts are not "on all fours" in the two cases being discussed or by showing that the decision in one was reached by differing considerations to that obtaining in the other.

It is also possible in some cases to argue that a certain precedent was wrongly decided. This can only be done where the precedent is not binding on the Court before which the current case is being tried. You should read pages 34 onwards of your textbook where this matter is fully explained under the heading "Stare decisis".

When citing a case, you should if possible name the claimant and defendant together with a brief synopsis of the facts of the case. If either claimant's or defendant's name escapes you, then you can refer to "...in a case where XXX was claimant ". Alternatively, you can refer only to the most salient fact, such as "... a case where a claimant became ill after drinking from a stone bottle, afterwards found to contain a decomposed snail..."

You do *not* need to quote the date and references. Incidentally, it is useful to note that when the date is enclosed in square brackets [...] then the date is essential if you want to refer to it quickly in a law library. But where the date is in round brackets (...) the date is not essential for speedy reference.

## Ratio Decidendi and Obiter Dicta

Two Latin phrases that will occur fairly frequently in your reading are *ratio decidendi* and *obiter dicta*. The former means the reason for the decision, that is to say the very fundamental point of law that was considered by the judge(s) and as a result of which consideration, the decision was given. The latter phrase refers to remarks made by the judge(s) "by the way" and which, whilst perhaps of importance, were not basic and essential to the decision. It is vital that you understand these two phrases and that in all cases you are able to discern the point that is being decided. You are very strongly advised to read the relevant portions of *Learning the Law* (op cit). It should be remembered that it is only the *ratio* which is binding on subsequent courts and not the *obiter*.

## Examination Technique

Obviously your ultimate aim in taking this course will be to take and pass an examination and, as stated earlier, the course has been specifically designed with this end in mind. However, as the examination approaches there will undoubtedly be certain queries you will have as regards examination technique.

The most common question asked by students in this regard concerns the approach to, and the answering of, problematical questions. The key to answering such questions is proper preparation. Read through the question several times, analysing the situation presented as you do so. Make note of any points you think significant, cases that you think relevant, etc.

These notes will act as the basis of your essay plan and you should at this juncture organise these notes into a logical order. Define relevant basic terms, set out basic rules, etc. In actually writing your answer, remember to state the relevant law first and, having done so, apply it to the facts presented in the question. Remember also to examine all the possibilities to which the facts give rise and to make an effective use of the relevant case law.

Another query raised by students concerns the use of cases and the importance of including names, dates, and facts of cases in an answer. Firstly, if you cannot remember the name of a case, but you can recall the facts, then include the facts in your answer, but introduce them in some other way, e.g. 'In a decided case...' Secondly, if you know the name of the case but cannot recall its facts, it is acceptable for the case name alone to follow the principle. But if this is the only way you introduce cases your answer will look unbalanced. Thirdly, there is no need to remember case dates or law report references. Fourthly, try to choose cases that are relevant to the facts of the problem and illustrate those facts.

## Legal Thought and Logic

As you read the various chapters of the text-book and the reports of various cases, you will note how the legal mind tends to analyse the various problems and to classify them in certain ways. It is not always easy to follow the logic of a certain decision but if you persevere, light will dawn!

Jurisprudence is not one of the subjects of your examination but, nevertheless, you may find it useful to read the article on "Jurisprudence" in, say, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* or another of similar calibre.

In the majority of cases the law itself is not in dispute – it is the facts that have to be decided. Once the facts are ascertained it is necessary to apply the law to those facts. It is here that lawyers are bound by either statutes, precedents (i.e. case law) or equity and they do not apply what may seem to them to be the ideals of justice. The ideals of justice are matters for Parliament to consider or for the consideration of judges where the law itself is uncertain or productive of two conflicting possibilities.

## Legal Essay Writing

How should essays be written? A good approach is given below. Read it before you begin the course and return to it as you tackle your first pieces of written work.

## A. The Approach

1. Read the question fully and be sure you understand it.  
Ask yourself the following questions:
  - (a) What is being asked in the question?
  - (b) What are the nuances?
2. Brainstorm the question.
3. Order the brainstorm.
4. Keep referring back to the question to make sure you are not straying from the point.
5. Draft an answer and read it through.  
Ask yourself the following questions:
  - (a) Have I answered the question?
  - (b) Have I covered all the points?
6. Make a final copy.

## B. The Style

1. **The Introduction**
  - (a) Outline your answer in general terms.
  - (b) Keep this paragraph short.
2. **The Main Body of the Essay**
  - (a) Divide into paragraphs - each paragraph **MUST** relate to the paragraph before and after.
  - (b) Each paragraph needs to be a complete entity in itself.
  - (c) Keep sentences short.
3. **The Conclusion**
  - (a) Give a résumé of what has been said.
  - (b) You may give your views but remember the way it is done.  
'It is submitted that...'
  - (c) Keep it short.

## C. Content of the Essay

### (i) Civil

A legal essay is divided into two distinct areas.

#### 1. The Thought Processes

- (a) What is the Common Law?
- (b) What is the Statute Law?
  - (i) What is the English Law?
  - (ii) What is the European Law?
  - (iii) What is the International Law?
- (c) Is there case law?
  - (i) What are the leading cases?
  - (ii) What are the general principles?

- (iii) How do these general principles apply?
- (iv) How do the facts of the question fit into the principles?
- (d) Is there academic law on this point?
  - (i) Are there contradictions?
  - (ii) Where are the points of difference?
- (e) Your ideas
  - (i) There is nothing wrong with having an opinion.
  - (ii) Phraseology is important. 'It is submitted that...' or 'It is respectfully submitted that...'

## 2. The Legal Presentation

Now that you have ordered your essay in terms of English and the Legal Structure you must turn to the presentational skill.

REMEMBER; there are always two sides to every argument and then a judgement.

In civil law the parties are called the Claimant (the person who brings the case) v (versus) the Defendant (the person who defends the action) and there is the judge who decides the case. All parties have to be discussed in the essay. As such you must take account of each party and the opposing arguments. In an essay you need to start with the claimant's case and this is followed by the defendant's and then the judgment.

- (a) **The Claimant.** Follow the models above and look at the arguments from the claimant's point of view.
- (b) **The Defendant.** Follow the models above and look at the arguments from the defendant's point of view.

In each case the law may well be the same. It is your job to try to tease out the differences. Use words like 'MAY, MIGHT POSSIBLY, IF, BUT, THEN.'

Use authorities to show the differences between the principle and what the facts are in the case under consideration.

- (c) **The Judgment.** Try to give an assessment of the way you think the case is likely to go. When making such a decision the words to use are 'ON THE BALANCE OF PROBABILITIES'. Do not say 'beyond all reasonable doubt'.

### (ii) Criminal (If Applicable)

A legal essay is divided into two distinct areas. Although the areas have to be distinct from the model point of view within sentences or paragraphs the points still have to be raised

## 1. The Thought Processes

- (a) What is the Common Law?
- (b) What is the Statute Law?
  - (i) What is the English Law?
  - (ii) Isolate the Actus Reus and Mens Rea for each substantive crime.
- (c) Is there case law?
  - (i) What are the leading cases?
  - (ii) What are the general principles?
  - (iii) How do these general principles apply?
  - (iv) How do the facts of the question fit into the principles?
- (d) Is there academic law on this point?
  - (i) Are there contradictions?
  - (ii) Where are the points of difference?
- (e) Your ideas
  - (i) There is nothing wrong with having an opinion.
  - (ii) Phraseology is important. 'It is submitted that...' or 'It is respectfully submitted that...'

## 2. The Legal Presentation for Criminal Essays

Now that you have ordered your essay in terms of English and the Legal Structure you must turn to presentational skills.

REMEMBER; there are always two sides to every argument and then a judgement. In civil law the parties are called the Prosecution or Prosecutor (the person who brings the case) v (versus) the Accused Defendant (the person who defends the action) and then there is the judge who decides the case. All parties have to be discussed in the essay. As such you must take account of each party and the opposing arguments. In an essay you need to start with the claimant's case and this is followed by the defendant's and then the judgement.

- (a) **The Prosecutor** Follow the models above and look at the arguments from the claimant's point of view.
- (b) **The Accused** Follow the models above and look at the arguments from the defendant's point of view.

In each case the law may well be the same. It is your job to try to tease out the differences. Use words like MAY, MIGHT POSSIBLY, IF BUT, THEN.' Use authorities to show the differences between the principle and what the facts are in the case under consideration.

- (c) **The Judgment.** Try to give an assessment of the way you think the case is likely to go. When making such a decision the words to use are 'BEYOND ALL REASONABLE DOUBT'.

Finally, good luck!

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