



## INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS: COURSE DESIGN & TEACHING GUIDELINES

The IISL's International Master's in Sociology of Law consists of two components. First, students attend intensive courses from generally the last week of September until the last week of March. Second, students work on their Master's thesis projects from usually beginning of April to late July. Written or oral defences take place in early September.

The following guidelines provide information concerning the teaching of the coursework component of the programme. There are separate guidelines for Master's thesis supervisors and examiners, concerning the supervision of the thesis research and the grading of the thesis. For teachers in our programme, the following two documents are likewise relevant:

- *Programme structure and learning outcomes:* This document contains a description of the contents, structure and objectives of the overall programme and the different modules. This will help you link your course with the respective module it is allocated to and put it into the broader context and perspective of the one-year Master's degree.
- *Course programme of the relevant academic year:* This document lists the specific courses and the modules they are allocated to for each academic year together with the names and affiliations of the visiting faculty and their respective teaching periods. The course programme varies from year to year within the structure of the overall programme.

These documents will be sent to you by the Master Coordination Team and they can also be found on our homepage.<sup>1</sup> The broader framework is set by the accreditation documents,<sup>2</sup> the regulations for Master's programmes by the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU),<sup>3</sup> with which this programme is linked, as well as the respective Basque and Spanish regulations.

The Master Coordination Team ([master@iisj.es](mailto:master@iisj.es)) is your first point of contact in all kinds of questions which these guidelines do not or insufficiently address and will gladly support you. They may also request you to fill in a form to provide some basic data, if you have not done so in the process of submitting a teaching proposal,<sup>4</sup> and request from you confirmation regarding the arrangements of your stay.

### Cohort size and course language

Our intake of regular Master's degree students is presently at 15 per year. In addition, there may be a small number of students taking single courses or a double degree. Typically, there are no more than 15 to 20 students in class, which allows for close interaction with the teacher.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iisj.net/en/socio-legal-master/presentation>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ehu.eus/en/web/master/master-sociology-of-law/accreditation>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ehu.eus/en/web/masterrak-eta-graduondokoak/university-masters-degrees/regulation/regulation-upv-ehu>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.iisj.net/en/master-oficial/master%E2%80%99s-course-proposals>



The course language is English. Students will have a proficiency in English, but their proficiency can vary. In exceptional cases a professor may agree to accept a written assignment in another language. Such cases need to be discussed with the Scientific Director beforehand.

### **Teaching hours and student workload**

A course worth 3 ECTS typically consists of ten teaching sessions of two hours each given over a period of two weeks (Monday to Friday, i.e., ten working days), adding up to 20 contact hours in class. One-week courses on methods worth 1,5 ECTS run over half of that period (five working days). Variations of this formula are possible. The exact time slots for teaching will be agreed upon with the Master Coordination Team and in consultation with the Scientific Director.

Teachers are expected to be available also beyond these teaching hours and give advice to interested students. We kindly ask you to set aside 1 hour per day from Monday to Friday for potential meetings, whether on-site or, in special circumstances, if the teacher or student is not in Oñati, also online. This time can be used to discuss students' course assignments or the development of their Master's thesis proposals (see the section on thesis research, supervision and examination below) or any topics relevant to the teacher's area of expertise.

3 ECTS translate into 75 hours of work for students in a two-week course, of which 20 hours are spent in class and a little more in consultation with the teacher. The remaining 55 hours should be divided between reading and preparing for class (about 40 hours, or 4 hours per day), and coursework assignments (about 15 hours in total).

### **Learning activities and assignments**

Given the relatively small cohort of students, classes can be very interactive. Teachers may want to give short presentations or lectures at the beginning of the class and otherwise rely on the preparatory readings, videos or else, as a means to provide the students with inputs before class. The time in class can then be used in a way to actively engage the students through individual or group exercises and discussions about the material or perspectives provided. Teachers are encouraged to reserve sufficient time for such learning activities and students' own contributions.

Reading assignments for each session should not exceed **40-45 pages** (e.g., a chapter of a book, one long article, or two shorter ones). The required readings shall be made available to the students on the electronic learning platform of the institute (Moodle; further information below). Course teachers may also recommend additional readings, which are not compulsory to read. These readings should be useful to students when they want to expand their knowledge on certain topics, or when they prepare for discussing certain topics in an assignment. Non-compulsory readings are also made available on the electronic learning platform (Moodle).

Further assignments may include oral presentations, short written responses to readings, preparation of individual questions for plenary discussions, preparation of an individual part in a debate or role-play, short quizzes, etc. At the end of each course, students are usually expected to submit an essay of 1,500 to 3,000 words to the electronic learning platform (Moodle) on a subject agreed upon with the teacher of that course.



## Attendance and types of assessment

Students are expected to attend all the classes of all courses. This also applies to potential online classes. Absences have to be justified (e.g., sickness) and should be notified to the course teacher and the Master's Coordination Team, preferably in advance (e.g., by email). Attendance is mandatory, and students not showing up for unspecified reasons will not be able to complete the course. Students are expected to arrive to class on time, and course teachers are entitled to impose a penalty for persistent late coming.

There is no set template for assessment; instead, assessment should be adapted to the individual course format and be aligned with the planned learning activities. Formally, active participation in class (e.g., contributions to the discussion or small exercises in class) has to make up at least 10% of the total grade.

Examples of previous types and combinations of assessment include:

- Active participation in class (10%), oral presentation (30%), essay of 2,500 words (60%);
- Active participation in class (10%), learning diary consisting of notes on readings and class discussions (2,000 words, 45%), essay of 2,000 words (45%);
- Active participation in class (10%), group exercise, with all members of a group given the same grade (45%), essay of 2,000 words (45%);
- Active participation in class (10%), oral presentation (25%), written exam taken on the last day of the course (65%)
- Active participation in class (10%), essay of 4000 words (90%).

Teachers have to specify their assessment scheme in the course outline presented to the students in the first session of the course. It then cannot be changed anymore throughout the course.

The **deadline** for submitting final course essays is always 23:00 o'clock (11:00 pm) of the Saturday following the conclusion of the respective course. Please enforce this deadline in your own course. Extensions should only be given in exceptional circumstances and be agreed with the Scientific Director. The deadline allows students to enjoy a free Sunday before the beginning of the next course and start afresh. This free day is essential, considering the intensive nature of this Master's programme.

## Using the Spanish grading scale

According to the Spanish grading scale, the grade awarded to a student should be a numerical grade out of 10, with 5.0 being the passing mark.

There is no direct equivalence between the Spanish grading scale and the ECTS grading scale (European Credit Transfer System). However, this table may give international teachers some orientation in grading Master's students' assignments according to the Spanish grading scale.



Spanish Grading Scale		ECTS Grading Scale			
Grade	Range		Grade	Percent	Description
Sobresaliente (SB)	9.0-10.0	~	A	10%	Excellent – outstanding performance with only minor errors
Notable (NT)	8.5-8.9	~	B	25%	Very good – above the average standard but with some errors
	7.0-8.4	~	C	30%	Good – generally sound work with a number of notable errors
Aprobado (AP)	6.0-6.9	~	D	25%	Satisfactory – fair but with significant shortcomings
	5.0-5.9	~	E	10%	Sufficient – performance meets the minimum criteria
Suspenso (SS)	2.5-4.9	~	FX		Fail – some more work is required before the credit can be awarded
	0.0-2.4	~	F		Fail – considerable further work is required

Based on our experience and as an orientation for teachers, this means that about a third of the students may reach an A (“sobresaliente”) or a B (“notable alta”) in a course or a Master’s thesis. This is a realistic expectation, even if your grading practice does not follow the logic of ranking the students along their performance expected to show a so-called normal distribution.

Theoretically, about another third would attain a C (“notable baja”) and the last third would reach a D or E (“aprobado”). In practice, the distribution may look a bit different, and this is fine. In the end, the ranking of students in class, if needed to calculate equivalences, will follow the actual distribution of grades. We just have to ensure sufficient consistency in expectations and actual grading across the programme.

Please try to adjust to the Spanish grading scale based on this guidance. It may be that your own national system is either more generous or stricter in awarding best grades. If some students’ performance is in the top ten percent of a cohort, they should be awarded a grade between 9.0 and 10.0 (~A). If their work is clearly above average but still shows some deficiencies, they should get 8.5 or a little above (~B), and so on. If some students’ performance is just sufficient to pass the course, their grade should be 5.0 or 5.5.

Normally, grades should be a whole or half integer (i.e., 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; or 5.5, 6.5 etc.), unless there is a very good reason for a more subtle variation (e.g., 6.8), such as when



different assessment components are weighted in the final grade or a ranking of students seems appropriate.

### **Final assessment and failed subjects**

The grading of course essays submitted at the end of the course should be completed **within two weeks**. Please provide written feedback on the essays, as your comments are vital for the students to improve their performance and understand your grading criteria.

If students fail a course after the last assessment is completed, they will have a chance to make up for this during the course programme, e.g., by once having the chance to resubmit the final course essay within a period of two weeks after notification of the course results. As this means that they would have less time to focus on the following course, this should not be a regular option but a last resort only.

As there are formal arrangements for failed subjects (“second call” in the same year), the respective arrangements have to be agreed with the Master Coordination Team and to be approved by the Scientific Director.

### **Avoiding and countering plagiarism**

It is the responsibility of visiting faculty members to discourage and detect plagiarism in their courses. We encourage you to follow up with students on dubitable working practices, which at this stage may still be a matter of carelessness, as they may not had much sufficient instruction on that in their bachelor degree. Students will receive citation and referencing training in the thesis seminar but, as we all know, academic writing requires practice, which they develop throughout the different courses.

We recommend the use of anti-plagiarism software, even though this usually only captures more blatant cases. The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) provides access to Turnitin, which has to be requested using the UPV/EHU university email address,<sup>5</sup> which visiting faculty may activate as well. If you have access to anti-plagiarism software via your home university, this may be a simple alternative. The UPV/EHU also lists some free platforms which can be used to scan essays for plagiarism.<sup>6</sup>

If there is clear evidence that a student has committed plagiarism, the assignment (essay or Master thesis) becomes invalid. According to UPV/EHU regulations, the student has the right to once more submit a new assignment, be it a newly written essay or the Master thesis. The deadline for this (“second call”) will be determined by the teacher in consultation with the Scientific Director.

---

<sup>5</sup> An email has to be sent to: [antiplagio.bib-uni@ehu.eus](mailto:antiplagio.bib-uni@ehu.eus), in which the teachers are to include their full name, their UPV/EHU email address, and the UPV/EHU centre they are affiliated with via the Master’s programme (Gipuzkoa, Facultad de Derecho). The Master Coordination Team will support you with this, if need be.

<sup>6</sup> Viper: <http://gateway.scanmyessay.com/index.php>; Plagiarism Checker: <http://www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker/>; Plagium: <http://www.plagium.com/>; ArticleChecker: <http://www.articlechecker.com/>; Antiplagiarist: <http://antiplagiarist.software.informer.com/>.



## Unauthorised use of AI-based software

At the IISL, the use of **ChatGPT or other AI-based software** by students, e.g., in preparing essays, is generally not allowed. Exceptions may be made by teachers who explicitly permit the use of ChatGPT or other AI-based software as an exercise. However, as a default these are considered as unauthorised aids. This specifically concerns any use of text-generative software in examinations and performance components that count into the grade, even if the text as such is revised by the student. If you have good reasons to apply a different policy in your own course, please inform the Scientific Director about this, and be very explicit to the students that this policy is exceptional to your course and does not affect the rule that AI-based generative tools are considered as unauthorised means in (all) other courses as well as in the thesis-writing process.

## Course contents, good practices, and diversity

To plan the contents of your course, please take into account the *Programme structure and learning outcomes* (separate file, see above). This helps you connect your course with the respective module it forms part of and avoid overlaps with other courses and modules.

We welcome material relating to your own research, but please keep in mind that your course should also provide a general overview of the topic. For that purpose, it should include different perspectives, approaches, and debates which had an impact on the field, even if you are critical of them.

Please also pay attention to at which stage of the course programme you will be teaching. You can check the *Course programme of the relevant academic year* (separate file, see above) to get a better idea of what the students may know already and how your course contributes to the overall build-up of the programme.

Our students come from a wide range of geographical, cultural, academic, and professional backgrounds, and we ask you to bear this diversity in mind in selecting material and preparing the learning activities of your course. Many students are likely to have a first degree in law, but may have little knowledge of theories and research in social science, while some may have studied little or no law, but have more experience in social science perspectives and methodology.

In general, we expect a student-centred approach to teaching drawing on modern pedagogical principles. See the “Seven Principles of Good Practice in Teaching” for inspiration.<sup>7</sup> The IISL is strongly committed to respect for and to protection of gender, religious, and cultural diversity. Any incident of inappropriate and unprofessional behaviour will be followed up by the IISL leadership, who may inform local authorities in consultation with the affected student or staff.

In terms of increasing awareness of ethical questions in social science and research, please draw on available codes of ethics and materials and integrate them, where suitable, in your course

---

<sup>7</sup> There are many versions available on the internet; see for instance: <https://www.utc.edu/academic-affairs/walker-center-for-teaching-and-learning/online-resources/seven-principles-for-good-teaching>).



materials.<sup>8</sup> In the interest of neutrality, please do not invite students to participate in any publication project of yours during the course period. Excellent essays should be recommended for publication in the journal *Sortuz*, published by the IISL.

### **Public lecture or guest speaker**

You may consider turning a lesson of your course (e.g. 60 or 90 minutes) into a public lecture, have a panel discussion, or a Q&A session with a guest speaker. This special event could be opened to a broader audience, made accessible online and advertised to members of the IISL scholarly and professional network. Our former students and visiting researchers from all over the world appreciate staying in touch and remaining part of our international community by such events, which may be low-threshold but are often high-profile in their scholarly quality.

### **Course evaluation**

Students will submit evaluation forms at the end of your course, e.g., using the questionnaires available from the University of the Basque Country to which the Master's programme is linked.

Some open suggestions for teachers from previous years include:

- Required readings should be discussed in class so that students can understand how the reading links to the topic.
- Class discussions should be managed in such a way that they are not dominated by the most eloquent students. A suggested method is to include questions on the reading lists and assign specific students the day before to prepare answers. In this way, students not so fluent in English can prepare their interventions in class and thus gain confidence.
- Use of PowerPoint slides is especially appreciated by students from non-English backgrounds. Students also appreciate the slides being made available prior to class.

### **Thesis research, supervision and examination**

Parallel to the individual courses taught by visiting faculty, the Scientific Director offers a weekly thesis research seminar, which provides students with the opportunity to reflect on research design and methodology, and to develop a proposal for their thesis research projects. The thesis seminar works as a supplement to the individual courses and ends with the last course in March. By then, students are also expected to submit their thesis research proposals, which are assessed and graded by the Scientific Director.

From April onwards, students will work on their Master's thesis projects under the guidance of individual supervisors, who will be selected by the Scientific Director, in consultation with the students, from past and present teachers and the international network of the IISL. As visiting faculty, you are thus very much welcome to supervise the Master's thesis of one or more of our

---

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Code of Ethics of the International Sociological Association: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/about-isa/code-of-ethics>; "Ethics on the Web – A Brief Guide to Resources", website by the Association of Social Anthropologists in the UK: <https://www.theasa.org/ethics/ethnav/six>.



students if this is in your field of interest and expertise. You may also become an external thesis examiner for one or more Master's theses that you have not supervised yourself. The students will submit their Master's theses in late July and defend them in early September.

During your teaching period, students may actively seek your advice about their first ideas regarding a thesis project, and they may be eager to explore topics related to these in assignments in your course. Since finding a suitable topic and developing an approach may be a time-consuming process, we encourage both students and teachers to make use of these opportunities. Of course, you can also point to possible thesis topics in your course.

### **Technical and electronic equipment**

The seminar room at the IISL is equipped with a laptop, projector/screen and speakers, as well as a whiteboard and flip-chart, and other equipment may be made available if needed.

Teaching materials are shared via the electronic learning platform Moodle, to which teachers and students are given access, and teachers with editing rights. This allows you to directly up- and download materials (e.g., class readings, course essays). The Master Coordination Team will provide guidance on how to use this platform and support you in practical questions if need be.

The readings you are going to use in your course should at best be available by the end of July before the course programme starts in September. Since we may have to acquire some missing literature, you will be asked early on about the readings you would like to use. Please contact the Master Coordination Team if other arrangements are required.

Coursework is submitted exclusively via Moodle. The students are asked to submit their essays in two formats: pdf and docx, which the teachers can then download on their own. If you would like to comment directly in the files, you can either use the editing function in pdf files or the review and track-changes function in docx files. In addition or alternatively, you can insert your feedback comment for each student into a textbox or upload a file in Moodle.

Please do not use emails to make course announcements, communicate grades or feedback, but include these directly to Moodle. For other exchange, you may use emails, but try to use the students' official UPV/EHU email addresses, which they have to get used to also for other purposes.

### **Online or dual teaching format**

This Master's programme is generally taught face-to-face. However, there may be conditions (like the recent COVID pandemic), when switching to an online or dual (online and face-to-face combined) teaching mode is advisable or even required. Moreover, even in courses taught face-to-face exceptional circumstances may arise on the part of the teacher or of single students in which offering an online or dual teaching format for a limited period may be a preferable option to cancelling or postponing the course.





OÑATI INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE  
FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF LAW  
—  
OÑATIKO LEGE-SOZIOLOGIAKO  
NAZIOARTEKO ERAKUNDEA  
—  
INSTITUTO INTERNACIONAL  
DE SOCIOLOGÍA JURÍDICA DE OÑATI

The video-conferencing platform used for online or dual teaching is Zoom. The respective classes would be scheduled via the IISL's Zoom account. The Master Coordination Team will provide guidance as to how to use the Zoom video conferencing platform if needed. Sessions may be recorded on request and made available to participants.