

# Thesis Guide

## Master Legal Theory & Socio-Legal Studies

RS128  
2020-2021

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# 1. Introduction

This thesis guide provides information about writing your thesis for the Master Legal Theory & Socio-Legal Studies. The thesis is usually the last part of an academic study and serves to provide an opportunity to develop your independence as a researcher: following your own interests and testing your ideas. So we expect a high degree of independence from you. Your supervisor will gladly support you in this.

Writing a thesis is not only challenging, but also intellectually enriching. The thesis provides a rewarding experience and can ultimately be seen as the crowning glory of your education.

We therefore wish you a lot of intellectual enrichment and pleasure in writing your thesis!

On behalf of all members of the section STeM,

Prof. dr. Wibren van der Burg LL.M. & prof. dr. Sanne Taekema LL.M.

## 2. General information

### 2.1 Topic, outline and timetable

Once you are mid-way in the second block, it is time to start preparing for your master's thesis. On the basis of your enrollment in courses during the first two blocks, you should have an idea what kind of research topics and approaches interest you most. Please have a look at the research topics as outlined by the available supervisors in paragraph 2.6. and start exploring possible, delineated (sub)topics within their scope of research. In some cases, you may also choose a topic that lies beyond the scope of the described themes by the selected supervisor, but your supervisor must of course be able to guarantee adequate guidance. Make sure you seriously read into the topic matter and decide on a specific topic in legal theory, legal philosophy and/or socio-legal studies. After you have made a decision, please upload your thesis-topic proposal form (See Appendix I) on, but preferably earlier than, the **7th of December 2020**.

The thesis coordinator discusses your topic proposal with STeM staff and accordingly informs you about who your assigned supervisor is (note that we try to accommodate your preference, but that this is not always possible). After you have been assigned a supervisor, you will meet up with them to discuss your research ideas. Following this meeting you are to upload your research proposal on **February 8, 2021** on canvas (for the requirements, see 2.2).

Now you have a research proposal, the next step is to further outline the research topic and the research methodology. You will present your research topic and research methodology in the **second week of March** to your fellow students and the thesis coordinator and possibly also to other teachers/supervisors. The exact date and time are to be announced.

If you choose the elective course Capita Selecta in block 5 of the master, there will be a session where students will give a peer review to fellow students' thesis chapter(s) and receive a review from a fellow student. Students who don't choose this course are advised to organize their own feedback among themselves.

There are no fixed deadlines for handing in individual chapters, but the final version of your thesis must be uploaded on canvas no later than **July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 00:00**. The time schedule and planning for separate chapters should be drafted in collaboration with your thesis supervisor and agreed upon by signing the thesis agreement (Appendix II). Please note that you may need to adapt your planning to the teaching schedule of your supervisor in Blocks 7 and 8, and her/his availability.

When your thesis is finished and approved by your supervisor and the second assessor, you are allowed to defend your thesis. The defense is mandatory. For more information on the defense, see paragraph 3.2. In case your thesis is assessed as insufficient, you are entitled to a re-sit during the current academic year if the grade for the thesis is at least a 5.0. The date of the re-sit will be decided by the supervisor in consultation with the second reader. For the re-sit no supervision will be offered. Note that if the grade for the thesis is lower than 5.0, you are not entitled to a re-sit and you will have to enroll in the thesis trajectory of the next academic year.

### Important dates

Task	Date
Upload topic selection form on canvas	December 7, 2020 before 00:00
Upload research proposal on canvas	February 8, 2021 before 00:00
Presentation of research topic + methodology	Second week of March 2021, specific date and time TBA
Upload final thesis on canvas	July 1, 2021 before 00.00

## 2.2 The research proposal

The research proposal of your thesis consists of **1200-1700 words** and should comprise:

- A detailed introduction (500-800 words) including an introduction in which you describe, define and problematize the subject, and a description of relevant concepts/definitions, which may be called 'State of the Art';
- One main research question and sub-questions;
- A reflection on the methodology or methodologies that will be used;
- A brief indication of research strategy (what sources do you need, how to find these etc.);
- A schedule with dates by which the individual chapters will have been completed.

## 2.3 Thesis requirements

A thesis representing 10 EC has a **minimum of 12,000 words** excluding footnotes and bibliography, and a **maximum of 16,000 words** including footnotes, excluding bibliography. The thesis is written in English.

The final grade of the thesis may negatively be affected and/or the thesis may be disqualified, if the thesis exceeds the amount of 16,000 words including footnotes, excluding bibliography. The only exception is if your supervisor has agreed explicitly with your request for a longer text, in which case the maximum can be waived. Specific permission needs to be acquired from the supervisor in order to exceed the amount of 16,000 words.

Sources should always be referenced; at least **20 scientific sources** should be referenced in the thesis; referencing should conform to **APA standards (6<sup>th</sup> edition)** (author-date). In addition to the standard APA style, we require you to refer to specific page numbers in your sources. The work should have a 11-point font, 1.15 spaced, and contain page numbers.

The front page should at least contain the following information:

ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM  
Erasmus School of Law

Master Thesis Legal Theory & Socio-Legal Studies  
[Thesis title]  
[optional subtitle]

Name student: xxx  
Student ID number: xxx

Supervisor: xxx  
Second assessor: xxx  
Date final version: xxx

## 2.4 Academic rigor and methodology

In the course Research Skills Seminar, you have been introduced to the theory and practice of interdisciplinary legal research. For this master, we expect a **thorough methodological reflection**, where you justify the chosen literature and perspective(s). Make sure you explain your questions and use the proper methodology for answering them (doctrinal; sociological; philosophical).

The thesis must be structured in such a way that the questions raised are answered clearly and as comprehensively as possible. The thesis contains an introduction, consisting of an introduction to the topic, its relevance and main concepts, situated in the state of the art; the main research question and sub questions with an explanation how these follow from the main question; methodological reflection, and the structure of the thesis. The central part of the thesis is divided into chapters and sections and has a coherent lay-out. The thesis must show knowledge of the subject-matter by providing in-depth analysis and well formulated arguments – and counterarguments. The conclusion answers the main research question.

The thesis should have a clear structure and should be worded concisely, with care, precision and clarity.

## 2.5 Plagiarism

The thesis is an individual and original written paper. It is therefore not possible to submit previous work as a thesis, although with the permission of your supervisor you can extend and elaborate further on previously done research. If you seek to include a publicly available work you wrote before, or an earlier submission of yours for coursework, then you must refer to it.

Please note that all uploaded files/attachments, including first drafts, are **scanned for plagiarism**, using plagiarism scanning programs. Plagiarism is quoting or paraphrasing phrases



and ideas of others and presenting it as your own work. An example of plagiarism is copying a text from the internet into your assignment or thesis without providing a clear reference to the source of this text.

Plagiarism is considered to be a serious crime. It is fraud, even though you may not have done it intentionally. If someone finds out that you have committed plagiarism, you will be reported to the ESL Examination Board.

See: [https://my.eur.nl/sites/myeur/files/webbrochure2015\\_Cheating-plagiarism\\_EN.pdf](https://my.eur.nl/sites/myeur/files/webbrochure2015_Cheating-plagiarism_EN.pdf)

When you have discussed the research proposal with your supervisor, you will have to sign an agreement on thesis authenticity (see Appendix II).

## 2.6 Research topics and available supervisors

The section STeM deals with theoretical, philosophical and sociological reflection on law and legal scholarship in a broad sense, preferably interdisciplinary in nature:

- Law including legal principles, morality and ethics;
- The structure, system, language and argumentation of law, and
- The relationship between law, society and culture.

Below you will find the topics of choice and research interests/expertise of thesis supervisors in alphabetical order. Whether a specific topic can be chosen depends on the available expertise among the staff.

- **Irma Bluijs LLM MA**

Topic of choice: Civil disobedience

When a citizen doesn't agree with a certain law or policy, they can demonstrate against that law or policy, start a petition against it, or just accept it. They can also decide to break the law. According to Rawls, civil disobedience is a "public, nonviolent, and conscientious act contrary to law usually done with the intent to bring about a change in the policies or laws of the government." Theories of civil disobedience and the many examples of it bring about multifarious questions. What is civil disobedience? (When) can it be justified, or even obligatory? Is nonviolence a strict condition? How do (or should) judges decide on these unavoidably political issues? Is civil disobedience a reinforcement or an infringement of democracy, and the rule of law? Possible avenues of research your master thesis could take within this topic are: theories on civil disobedience; focus on the relationship between law and morality and/or law and society, or look into the discussions concerning contemporary examples of civil disobedience.

Other topics that link to my research interests are welcome as well, but I preferably supervise thesis that lie within the scope of my topic of choice.

Research interests:

Civil disobedience; legal philosophy; political theory; law and literature; law and humanities; law and linguistics; legal argumentation; human rights; criminal law.

Courses:

RL24 Legal Theory and Legal Methods.



- **prof. dr. W. van der Burg LLM**

Research interests:

Legal philosophy; methodologies of legal research; law and morality; democracy theories; political theory; the multicultural and multi-religious society; law and religion; non-discrimination; state neutrality.

Courses:

RL21 Research Skills Seminar

- **Wietse Buijs LLM**

Topic of choice:

Wietse Buijs is working on a PhD in Legal philosophy on the morality of targeted killing from a just war perspective. His areas of interest also include the legal philosophical and historical questions on matters related to war and the war on terror. Whether it covers torture, indefinite detention, extraordinary rendition, targeted killing, or other implications relating to international humanitarian law or human rights law and its philosophical dimensions, he will definitely be interested in supervising.

Research interests:

Humanitarian law; legal philosophical questions in (counter)terrorism research; laws of war; jus ad bellum; jus in bello; human rights law; the philosophical implications on terror and torture policies; philosophy of human rights; enforcement of human rights; foundations of human rights; rule of law; American Constitution; United States Supreme Court; historical dimensions of human rights law and humanitarian law; global war on terror.

Courses:

RL26 Philosophy of Human Rights

- **dr. Carinne Elion-Valter LLM**

Topics of choice:

My current research is focused on law and legislation in a cultural context. I'm specifically interested in the belief structures underlying legitimacy and in the role of rationality and emotions in theories of law and legislation. One research project involves the influence of utopian thinking. I welcome thesis topics that revolve around the concept of utopia in relation to the theory of law and of legislation. To what extent utopian thinking is part of certain legal theories and theories about legislation? Descriptive historical research is fine as well, for example a history of ideas approach of utopian thinking in the Enlightenment and its influence on current theories of legislation. Secondly, regarding law and emotions, thesis topics are welcome that critically evaluate the role of emotion for a specific legal theory or for a specific author and for legal methodology. What does the recognition of emotion in for example criminal procedure mean for assumptions about rationality and emotion in specific legal theories? How justified is the assumption of rationality in legal thinking and legal judgment? What critical framework would be needed for legislation which uses emotional tools to 'nudge' citizens to behave in a specific way? I welcome thesis topics that use cultural artefacts (art, literature), to reflect on these questions.

Other topics that link to my research interests are welcome as well, but I preferably supervise thesis that lie within the scope of my topics of choice.

Research interests:

Law & (modern) literature; law & rhetorics; law & Art in the information society; belief in and legitimacy of the Rule of Law; myths and stories of legal and political institutions; legal science and theory of science; legal methodology and legal thinking; law and emotions.

- **prof. dr. Jeanne Gaakeer LLM**

Topic of choice:

Legal narratology and its relevance for legal practice.

Research interests:

Legal theory; jurisprudence; legal philosophy; interdisciplinary legal studies; law and literature; law and humanities; criminal law and criminal procedure.

Courses:

RM92 Law and Narrative in Theory and Practice

RL25 Capita Selecta Legal Theory & Socio-Legal Studies

- **dr. Marlies Galenkamp LLM**

Research interests:

Public interests through private actions; limits to contractual freedom; autonomy versus paternalism; nudging; autonomy versus determinism (neuro-science and philosophy of criminal law). Also: law in multicultural society; conflicts between human rights; cultural defense.

- **dr. J.W. Hiah MSc.**

Topic of choice 1: Vulnerabilities, opportunities and interdependencies in digitized work  
'Old' and 'new' forms of work increasingly overlap as labour markets are rapidly evolving and changing in the digital age. Digitised work, such as work performed in the platform economy; online IT workers, web streamers and digital labour in massive multiplayer online games, destabilize the traditional representation of the employment relation between workers and employers. Scholarship underlines that these new employment relations result in less protection for workers, at the same time, digitisation also offers certain marginalized groups in society channels to subsist, such as long-term unemployed workers and migrants. For this project, I am looking for a student who is interested in mapping out the social and legal vulnerabilities and opportunities related to digitised work and its regulation. Possible questions that could be posed are: What are social and legal vulnerabilities related to platform work and other forms of digitised work/labour; what risks of labour exploitation are there to be identified in relation to digitised work? What role can law play in not only regulating, but protecting platform workers and other digitised workers from precarity and exploitation? How to weigh opportunities vs vulnerabilities for those that engage with digitized work as buyers and sellers of labour?

Relevant sources:

- Altenried, M., & Bojadzjev, M. (2017). Virtual Migration, Racism and the Multiplication of Labour. *Spheres: Journal for Digital Cultures*, 4, 1-16.
- Huws, U. (2019). The Hassle of Housework: Digitalisation and the Commodification of Domestic Labour. *Feminist Review*, 123(1), 8-23.
- Medland, L., Anderson, B., Bales, K., Bogg, A., Novitz, T., O'Connell Davidson, J., Pitts, F. H., & Turnbull, P. (2018). *The 'future' of work? A call for the recognition of continuities in challenges for conceptualizing work and its regulation*. (Bristol Law Research Paper Series; Vol. 2019, No. 001). School of Law, University of Bristol.

Topic of choice 2: A labour perspective on trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation

Current dominant approaches to studying trafficking in human beings (THB) for labour exploitation depart from a criminal law, organized crime or human rights perspective. These perspectives do little justice to the underlying causes of labour exploitation that lie in the structures of demand and supply of the globalized economy. I would be interested to supervise students exploring alternative, labour perspectives that consider labour exploitation as a phenomenon related to the structures of the globalized economy. Possible avenues for master thesis research include but are not limited to: a labour rights perspective on labour exploitation as a form of precarious labour; the role of supply chains in labour exploitation; the demand/consumer side of (sex) work.

Relevant sources:

- Anderson, B., & Andrijasevic, R. (2008). Sex, slaves and citizens: The politics of anti-trafficking. *Soundings*, 40, 135-145.
- Davies, J. (2020). Corporate harm and embedded labour exploitation in agri-food supply networks. *European Journal of Criminology*, 17(1), 70-85.
- Hiah, J. (2019). Chapter 1. Introduction. *'Having a Chinese Job'. Opportunities, interdependencies and vulnerabilities in Migrant businesses in the Netherlands and Romania*. Rotterdam: Erasmus University Rotterdam, *PhD-Thesis*.

Research interests:

Socio-legal studies; empirical legal studies (qualitative methodologies); citizenship, migration, immigration, labour and employment relations, digitization of work, trafficking, modern day slavery, social justice.

Courses:

RL21 Research Skills Seminar  
 RM94 Socio-Legal Studies  
 RM83 Anthropology of Law  
 RL91 Advanced Socio-Legal Studies

- **dr. N.L. Holvast LLM**

Topic of choice 1: 'Routine decision-making by judges' [with Peter Mascini]

Judges have to take individualised decisions about similar cases on a mass scale. Previous research has shown that first impressions about court cases that are based on prior experiences seem to play an important role in judges' routine decisions in criminal law cases. Peter Mascini and I are looking for a student who will study routine judicial decision-making in a legal domain in which this topic has not been studied yet, i.e. civil law or administrative law.

Topic of choice 2: 'Socialisation in law schools' [with Willem-Jan Kortleven]

During their studies, law students are prepared for becoming lawyers. In order to do so, they are 'socialised' into the norms, values and reasoning practices of the legal profession. Willem-Jan Kortleven, Peter Mascini and I are conducting research which aims to gain insight into how this process of socialisation takes place and how it affects students with different social, ethical and cultural backgrounds. We would welcome a student to participate in conducting research on this topic. Possible focusses for a master thesis are: the role of academic staff in socialization of students, socialization of international students, socialization into the legal profession within the 'toga master'. Possible methodologies: interviews, (participant) observations, a survey.

Topic of choice 3: 'Role, influence and legitimacy of judicial assistants'

Judicial assistants (or: law clerks) play a significant role in adjudication in various jurisdictions. They can relieve judges of non-judicial tasks, help courts to reduce backlogs and assist judges in producing high quality judgments. However, the legitimacy of the involvement of assistants is regularly questioned. I have conducted empirical research on the role and influence of judicial assistant in Dutch district court. However, many sides of this issue remain unexplored.

Possible focusses for a master thesis: the public image of judicial assistants, the role of judicial assistants in international courts, the question of legitimacy of employment of judicial assistants. Possible methodologies: literature review, interviews, survey, focus groups.

Other topics that link to my research interests are welcome as well, but I preferably supervise thesis that lie within the scope of my topics of choice.

Research interests:

Socio-legal studies; (qualitative and quantitative) empirical legal research; the legal profession; courts; law enforcement agencies; access to justice.

Courses:

RL21 Research Skills Seminar  
RM94 Socio-Legal Studies  
RL91 Advanced Socio-Legal Studies

- **Dr. Ioannis Kampourakis LLM**

Topics of choice:

My research draws from legal theory and transnational economic governance to explore the question of the Rule of Law in the face of rising private powers. The focus of my research is on the transnational law of Global Value Chains and whether it can be penetrated by extra-economic, social considerations. I welcome thesis topics on both the governance and regulation of Global Value Chains and, more broadly, the rule of law in the transnational context. Examples of more particular topics could include issues such as supply chain liability, corporate social responsibility, private governance mechanisms, etc., while broader topics could include the human rights obligations of corporations, contemporary debates on legal pluralism, the notion of 'global law', or theoretical/socio-legal/legal-anthropological examinations of supply chain capitalism. I also welcome thesis topics on theoretical questions at the intersection of legal theory and political economy (e.g., law and the creation of economic value) in different theoretical frameworks, including legal realism, ordoliberalism, marxism, critical legal studies, and systems theory.

Other topics that link to my research interests are welcome as well, but I preferably supervise thesis that lie within the scope of my topics of choice.

Research interests:

Legal theory and political economy, legal underpinnings of markets, rule of law and private power, legal realism, global value chains, transnational law, legal pluralism, human rights obligations of corporations, law and informational capitalism.

- **dr. Harm Kloosterhuis LLM**

Topic of choice: Legal reasoning and the reconstruction of interpretative argumentation

Students are welcome to participate in the interdisciplinary research project 'Legal reasoning and the reconstruction of interpretative argumentation in legal decisions'. This project is a collaboration with colleagues of Leiden University (Legal Philosophy) and the University of Amsterdam (Linguistics and Argumentation theory). We offer students a well-designed research context and the possibility to contribute to publications.

Research interests:

Legal theory, Legal argumentation theory (Logical, dialectical and rhetorical perspectives).

- dr. W.J. Kortleven LLM

Topic of choice 1: 'Legal consciousness in a context of religious conflict'

Law is a reality in everyday life, but this reality is not the same for everybody. People who are more or less aware of law's presence and influence differ in their views of and attitudes towards the law. Put otherwise, they display different degrees and types of 'legal consciousness'. These differences may be due to their personal character traits, upbringing and experiences, but also depend on other factors such as socio-economic circumstances, cultural background and (religious) beliefs. I would welcome thesis proposals that empirically engage with the phenomenon of legal consciousness in a religious context, focusing on the influence of religious beliefs on people's attitudes towards the law. I am specifically interested why people involved in religious conflict do or do not resort to state law, and if they do, how they value their experiences. A relevant case in this respect would be church schisms, which have often led to legal struggles over church properties. Since 2004, for example, several lawsuits have been fought following the merger of three protestant church communities in the Netherlands that provoked a new schism because not all clergy, church members and local churches agreed with the merger. Research could be conducted into the views and experiences of members of local churches that were involved in these lawsuits.

Relevant sources on legal consciousness:

- Ewick, P. & Silbey, S.S. (1998). *The common place of law: Stories from everyday life*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
- Hertogh, M. (2018). *Nobody's law. Legal consciousness and legal alienation in everyday life*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Topic of choice 2: 'Socialisation in law schools' [with Nina Holvast]

During their studies, law students are prepared for becoming lawyers. In order to do so, they are 'socialised' into the norms, values and reasoning practices of the legal profession. Nina Holvast, Peter Mascini and I are conducting research which aims to gain insight into how this process of socialisation takes place and how it affects students with different social, ethical and cultural backgrounds. We would welcome a student to participate in conducting research on this topic. Possible focuses for a master thesis are: the role of academic staff in socialization of students, socialization of international students, socialization into the legal profession within the 'toga master'. Possible methodologies: interviews, (participant) observations, a survey.

Other topics that link to my research interests are welcome as well, but I preferably supervise thesis that lie within the scope of my topics of choice.

Research interests:

Socio-legal studies; sociology of risk; governance of safety; regulation of new technologies; post-crisis inquiries; regulatory agencies and compliance; human error in high risk environments; policy effectiveness and evaluation; child welfare policy and practice; interprofessional collaboration; qualitative methods, specifically discourse and document analysis and interviewing.

**Courses:**

**RL21    Research Skills Seminar**

- Adelheid van Luipen LLM

Topic of choice:

Empathy has recently been put forward as a promising option for moving people towards action with regard to climate change. Richard Rorty for one argues that sentimental education, the manipulation of our feelings through sentimental stories, is an effective instrument in achieving a more utopian world. It lets us envision ourselves in the shoes of another or future

being. In my research I argued that we must question the negative sides of empathy as a concept, how it misses certain essential aspects of what matters in a relation and how we can move forward. I'd be interested in supervising thesis that explore the concept of empathy in climate change discussions or other societal issues.

Other topics that link to my research interests are welcome as well.

Research interests:

Philosophy of law, animal ethics, the political turn in animal ethics, law and literature, law and emotions, transitional justice, climate justice.

- **dr. L.M. Poort LLM**

Topic of choice:

My current research focuses on the analysis of both expert and public involvement in regulating biotechnology. I am interested in supervising thesis that engage with questions that address how decision-making on controversial issues such as biotechnology can be organized and legitimized. Involving experts either the public may offer a tool to come to decision-making, but can it actually lead to adequate and legitimized decisions? Thesis that engage with research perspectives that combine theoretical reflection from a legal and legal-philosophical perspective with a more practical approach inspired by Science and Technology Studies are highly suitable to explore these questions.

Research interests:

Regulation of biotechnology, interactive legislation, expert involvement in legislation, public involvement in legislation, participation processes, dynamics in law, ethics committees, dissensus and consensus.

Courses:

RL21    Research Skills Seminar  
RB26    Legal Ethics

- **dr. Annie de Roo LLM**

Topic of choice: public and private dispute resolution

My area of expertise is comparative law with a focus on comparative dispute resolution and public and private justice. In my research I frequently combine legal and socio-economic approaches, the aim of which is to contribute to a profound understanding of the wide variety of dispute resolution processes and private and public justice systems, in particular from the disputant perspective.

Other topics that link to my research interests are welcome as well, but I preferably supervise thesis that lie within the scope of my topic of choice.

Research interests:

ADR, comparative law, public/private justice, socio-economic approaches to law, justice systems'

Courses:

RL21    Research Skills Seminar  
RL28    Mediation Advocacy: Theory and Practice

- **dr. Michał Stambulski**

Topic of choice: Strategic Litigation and Public Values

My research concerns using court cases to shape public values. In the liberal paradigm, which dominated the public sphere of Western democracies for the last decades, conflicts about public values were resolved by deliberation. In this paradigm, the judiciary, especially the constitutional and international courts, embodies deliberative reason – an impartial and rational observer who compares arguments and balances rights and values. However, the economic crisis, mass protests, and rising populist sentiment seem to be slowly undermining the liberal consensus in Europe. A sign of this is the undermining of the legitimacy of the judiciary to shape public values by pointing out its democratic deficiencies. At the same time, strategic litigation remains a useful tool of influence on the public sphere for many social actors. Taking the previous into account, I am interested in supervising master theses that look into the social and political use of strategic litigation in contemporary democracies and methods of dealing with accusations of its non-democratic nature.

Research interest:

Strategic litigation; populism studies; theory of democracy; the relationship between law and ideology; post-structural philosophy of power; social theory and law; legal education.

- **prof. dr. H.S. Taekema LLM**

Topic of choice: Rule of law in a transnational context

My current research is focused on the rule of law in a transnational context, and in particular on the meaning of the rule of law for non-state or private actors. This means that I welcome thesis topics that engage with a theoretical reflection on the rule of law in connection to some aspect of that context. This can be the meaning of the rule of law in public interest litigation, the meaning of the rule of law for multinational companies, the challenge of legal pluralism for the rule of law, or the problems of rule of law export. It may be useful to check my recent rule of law related publications and working papers (see [ssrn.com](http://ssrn.com)).

Other topics that link to my research interests are welcome as well, but I preferably supervise thesis that lie within the scope of my topic of choice.

Research interests:

Legal theory (both general issues and application to areas of law, particularly private law); methodology of law, including issues of interdisciplinary research; (background and principles of) the rule of law; legal pluralism, especially in relation to transnational law; the relationship between law and morality and law and society; foundations of law or areas of law; the limits of legal concepts.

Courses:

RL57 Analytical Jurisprudence

RQ82 The Rule of Law in the Global Legal Context

- **dr. Sohail Wahedi LLM**

Topics of Choice:

I focus in my research on the relationship between law and religion and am interested in supervising thesis that look into this relationship. I am interested in both angles of this relationship: singling out religion for a favored or a disfavored treatment in law qua religion. Also, I am working on different projects scrutinizing the contribution of private actors to the very idea of favoring and disfavoring religion in law. In addition to this law and religion relationship research, I am broadly interested in constitutional law debates (on, but not limited to the separation of powers) and substantive criminal law and am interested in supervising thesis on these topics. For more information, please visit my SSRN page: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf\\_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per\\_id=2173051](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per_id=2173051)



Research interests:

Criminal law; constitutional law; fundamental freedoms, freedom of religion, freedom of speech; freedom of association; political and civil liberties; law and religion; religious traditions and law; Islamophobia; nationalism, majoritarianism, law, migration, integration and assimilation policies.

Courses:

RL21    Research Skills Seminar

- **Dr. Cees Zweistra LLM**

Topic of choice

My research is mainly focused on the legal and philosophical implications of new technological developments. This includes robotics, self-driving cars, online (social) media and Artificial Intelligence (AI). I welcome topics that revolve around and address developments in the following areas:

- Changing perspectives towards key philosophical and legal notions such as: responsibility, accountability, agency and autonomy;
- Changing perspectives towards legal subjectivity;
- Democratic implications of technology induced forms of fake-news and conspiracy-theories
- The importance and (perhaps necessary) developments in legal research as a result of technology induced forms of fake-news and conspiracy-theories
- Legal notions of privacy in a rapidly developing technological context

Research interests:

Philosophy of technology, philosophy of law, law and technology, philosophy of science, legal research, law and Bigtech, democracy and Bigtech, responsibility/accountability and (new) technologies, conspiracy-theories and democracy, conspiracy-theories and legal science

# 3. Defense and assessment

## 3.1 Assessment and re-sit

After handing in the thesis, no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the thesis will be assessed by the supervisor and a second assessor.

The final grade is firstly based on the written work (see Appendix III for the assessment criteria). The assessment will be conducted by the supervisor and the second assessor independently prior to the defense. This means that prior to the defense the grade for the written thesis will have been established. When the grade for the thesis is considered sufficient enough to defend, a defense date will be picked. In case the thesis is graded as insufficient, the student will receive (written) feedback to improve the thesis for the re-sit. The date of the re-sit will be decided by the supervisor in consultation with the second assessor. Note that for the re-sit no supervision is offered.

## 3.2 Defense ceremony

After handing in the thesis, it will be assessed by the supervisor and a second assessor and the thesis defense will be scheduled. The thesis defense is compulsory and will take place in English. The defense is open to the public and lasts 45 minutes. You are required to arrive at the defense 15 minutes before the start time.

The defense itself consists of two components, namely a presentation of maximum 10 minutes, followed by a round of questions by the examiners (typically, the thesis supervisor and the second reader). You are free to choose the form of your presentation, although a hand-out is recommended.

After the presentation the examiners or thesis panel will ask questions concerning the thesis and presentation. Immediately following the examiners' questions, the panel will leave and determine the final grade. Note that all of these activities will occur within the allocated 45 minute-timeframe. Thereafter, the supervisor and the second assessor formally announce and register the grade for your thesis.

The final grade is first of all based on the written work (see Appendix III for the assessment form). During the defense there are additional criteria which are taken into account: your presentation; your ability to answer the questions raised by the panel, and the extent to which you are able to have a conversation about your research.

After the defense, you can request a copy of the thesis evaluation form from the STeM department's secretariat by sending an email to [pubstem@law.eur.nl](mailto:pubstem@law.eur.nl) in order to see how your final grade was determined.

The date, location and time of the defense will be announced via Canvas.

Any additional questions regarding the defense can be directed beforehand to your thesis supervisor or to the thesis coordinator.

# Appendix I Thesis topic proposal form

Name of student:	
Description of topic of choice (+/- 100 words):	
Description of methodological perspective (e.g. Legal theory/Legal Philosophy/Ethics/Socio-legal studies or other):	
Preferred supervisor(s):	1. 2.

# Appendix II Thesis agreement

## Erasmus School of Law Thesis agreement and authenticity agreement

The undersigned intends to write a Master's degree thesis and agrees to meet the requirements set by the faculty:

Name:

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m/f

Studynumber:

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Studyaddress: 

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Telephone nr: 

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Name of the thesis supervisor

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Master: 

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 Number of ECTS:

Note: Any number of ECTS other than stated in the Education and Examination Regulation requires written permission from the examination board Erasmus School of Law.

### 1. Provisional thesis statement

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### 2. Provisional division into chapters

Chapter 1.

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Chapter 2.

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Chapter 3.

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Chapter 4.

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Chapter 5.

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Chapter 6.

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### 3. Provisional Schedule

	Date
1. Start of thesis	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6. Hand in manuscript	
7. Result (up to four weeks after handing in manuscript)	

#### 4. Handing in Final Thesis

- The final thesis is to be uploaded as a single Word document via MyPapers.
- Students are required to hand in four copies of their final thesis: 2 copies to the thesis supervisor, and **1 copy to the examination board** (intended for the library): via Student Information Centre, room M6-06. The copy for the examination board must be signed off as a final copy by the two assessors. The thesis must be uploaded before it is handed in to the board of examiners.
- When handing in the thesis to the examination board, the **pink carbon copy** of the examination note, featuring the mark awarded and the signatures of the thesis supervisor and the second assessor must be submitted. The original (white) examination note is sent to the examinations' office by the thesis supervisor.
- If these conditions are not met, the examination board will not accept the thesis and not issue the receipt you need to be able to graduate.

#### 5. Authenticity statement

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
student at the School of Law at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands, declare  
that when writing my thesis on the subject of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not commit plagiarism, that the thesis  
is my own work and that I have written it in my own words, excepting quotations. Where my  
thesis is based on information or ideas of others, I will do justice to those persons by referring  
to the work consulted. Moreover, I declare that I will, at all times, remain responsible for the  
above.

Date

Signature student

Signature first supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix III Thesis assessment form

Please find the thesis assessment form on the next page. The assessment form can also be separately downloaded from canvas.



# Thesis assessment sheet ESL

## Assessment sheet Master thesis ESL – Legal theory and Socio-Legal Studies

Student name : \_\_\_\_\_

Student number : \_\_\_\_\_

Master's programme : \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor : \_\_\_\_\_

Second reader : \_\_\_\_\_

Title of thesis : \_\_\_\_\_

Result : \_\_\_\_\_

	Insufficient	Not quite adequate	Sufficient	More than sufficient	Good	Excellent
	0-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15
1.						
<b>Problem statement and justification of research methods (15 points)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Points:

Points of assessment include:

- Clear description of scientific reason/societal problem(s) that prompted the research
- Clear research question and logical set of sub-questions
- Well-supported statement of the scientific relevance of the research question
- Justification of research perspective(s) used, e.g. legal doctrinal, theoretical, sociological)
- Justification of research methods (in line with research questions)
- Coherent design
- Originality

Remarks:

	Insufficient	Not quite adequate	Sufficient	More than sufficient	Good	Excellent
2.	0-12	13-16	17-20	21-23	24-26	27-30

**Execution of research: use of sources and presentation of findings (30 points)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Points:

Points of assessment include:

- A further clarification/analysis of the problem, and of the theoretical framework (if applicable)
- Good/innovative use of research methods
- Presentation, interpretation, organization, and analysis of relevant sources
- Description of own research findings

Remarks:

	Insufficient	Not quite adequate	Sufficient	More than sufficient	Good	Excellent
3.	0-10	11-13	14-16	17-19	20-22	23-25

**Argumentation and answering of research questions (25 points)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Points:

Points of assessment include:

- A well-structured coherent argumentation leading to a clear answer to the research question
- The answer is supported by the student's analysis, and linked to the literature/theoretical framework)
- Originality/novel insights
- (Insightful recommendations/discussion of implications (scientific or policy-oriented), if applicable)

Remarks:

	Insufficient	Not quite adequate	Sufficient	More than sufficient	Good	Excellent
4.	0-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15
<b>Language and structure (15 points)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Points:

Points of assessment include:

- Writing style and quality of language
- Overall structuring of the text and layout

Remarks:

5.	0-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15
<b>Research process (15 points)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Points:

Points of assessment include:

- Independence and self-management
- Use of feedback by supervisor

Remarks:

6.

**Points to be deducted if insufficient (max. 10 points)**

Points deducted: minus .....

- Spelling or grammar mistakes
- Untidy presentation (layout etc.)
- Incorrect or incomplete listing of sources

*Remarks:*

	Insufficient	Not quite adequate	Sufficient	More than sufficient	Good	Excellent
<b>Oral defence</b>						
Quality of presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Response to questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Remarks:*

### Final grade (before oral defence)

The oral defence can only influence the final grade by 5% (grade plus/minus 0,5). A defence that is as expected will not influence the final grade.

**Final grade (total):**

### Other remarks

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# Appendix IV Thesis awards

## Ars Aequi prijs

- Topic: -
- Language: -
- Link: <https://arsaequi.nl/studenten/>

## ESL Scriptieprijs

### Visies op Vrede scriptieprijs - IKV Pax Christi/Stichting VredesWetenschappen

- Topic: peace and safety
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: <https://www.stichtingvredeswetenschappen.nl/scriptieprijs/>

## SER scriptieprijs

- Topic: Social-economics or Ser's expertises
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: <https://www.ser.nl/nl/actueel/Nieuws/scriptieprijs-2020>

## Jan van Dijk Victimology and Victims' Rights Award

- Topic: Victimology and Victim's Rights Award
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: <https://fondsslachtofferhulp.nl/janvandijkaward/>

## Nederlands-Duitse juristenprijs

- Topic: Grensoverschrijdende vraagstukken, waarbij rechtstelsel van Nederland en Duitsland met elkaar worden vergeleken of waarin een Europeesrechtelijk onderwerp wordt behandeld.
- Language: Dutch
- Link: [www.juristenprijs.nl](http://www.juristenprijs.nl) (werkt niet helemaal...)

## Prof. Mr. N.J.P. Giltay Veth scriptieprijs

- Topic: sport en recht
- Language: Dutch
- Link: <https://sport-en-recht.nl/vergadering-scriptieprijs/>

## Thoolen NJCM-Scriptieprijs

- Topic: human rights
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: <https://njcm.nl/over-het-njcm/studentencompetities/>

## J.P.A. Françoisprijs (internationaal recht) (Dutch and English)

- Topic: public international law or private international law
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: <https://www.knvir.org/francois-prize/francois-prize/>

### Max van der Stoel Award

- Topic: human rights
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: <https://www.asser.nl/nnhrr/max-van-der-stoel-award/nominations-eligible-candidates-and-criteria/>

### Stichting Gascaria

- Topic: recht en humaniora/law and literature
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: <http://stichtinggascaria.nl/>

### Respect for Refugee Rights scriptieprijs - Vluchtelingenwerk

- Topic: any aspect of refugee protection outside the Netherlands and Europe
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: [https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/sites/default/files/u895/Scriptieprijs\\_okt2016.pdf](https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/sites/default/files/u895/Scriptieprijs_okt2016.pdf)

### Hanneke Steenbergen scriptieprijs

- Topic: migration law
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: [http://steenbergenscriptieprijs.nl/?page\\_id=9](http://steenbergenscriptieprijs.nl/?page_id=9)

### J.C. Baak Scriptieprijs

- Topic: one or more of the following fields: philosophy, law, politicology, international relations and/or sociology. The main idea needs to be about different people living peacefully side by side.
- Language: Dutch or English
- Link: <https://www.khmw.nl/j-c-baak-prijs/>