

**Effective Techniques for Teaching About Other Cultures and Legal Systems
(Lithuanian report)**

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The study program at Vytautas Magnus University School of Law, Lithuania, leads to a master degree in law and from the very start was aimed at much more trans-cultural and interdisciplinary teaching of law, than it was and still is common in Lithuania.

The necessity for teaching about other legal systems is grounded by these circumstances:

- Lithuania is a very small country,
- Lithuania is the Member of European Union,
- Lithuania was occupied for fifty years,

So one of its greatest challenges for Lithuania as a nation is to create and consolidate the rule of law. In order to create a law school which would indeed meet the real needs of the country by preparing lawyers who can move the country towards the rule of law and to implement the law which actually cuts across the "borders", our School of Law have made and implemented these decisions, that are related with our aim to teach our students not only about Lithuanian legal system but about other legal systems as well :

1. The teachers: from the onset, numerous American and European scholars' taught mainstream, required courses in our School . This effort was culminated by signing of certificate agreement with Michigan State University – Detroit College of Law.
2. The Socratic teaching method was encouraged. In order for the Lithuanian lecturers to raise the level of their skills of the case method of teaching, a seminar was conducted in 2001 by prof. Carl C. Monk and prof. Barbara Black (of Pace University).
3. A bachelor degree in other subjects and high level of legal English for students is required.
4. International exchange of students and academic personnel is promoted

Foreign teachers

Recognizing that foreigners much more readily travel to our Law school to teach law if the teaching is to be done over a short period of time, the School formed and implemented an innovative short and intensive course program. After the initial two semesters of the first year studies, during which courses are taught in the traditional, semester-long, manner, there are numerous short, intensively taught, courses. Each course last two weeks and have a classroom component of thirty astronomic hours. During the sessions of these intensive courses, students take no other courses. This intensive course program allows us achieve two goals: 1. To invite a vast number of American and European teachers with great expertise and outstanding academic background. The lectures from abroad are selected by recommendations of our good friends at Michigan State University, by contacts with other law schools. Of course some visiting professors might be called recurring visiting professors as they are visiting us every year; 2. Visiting professors in most cases offer our students some areas of concentration, teaching on a higher level, much more in depth, not only basic assumptions of the entire system.

The Socratic teaching method

The traditional method of instruction used in continental – law faculties is commonly referred to as “didactic” or “ magisterial”, in contrast with so called “Socratic” or “case “ method.

It is a goal of our law school to have almost all courses taught in the Socratic, case analysis , fashion. Accordingly:

1. nearly all classroom work is done in an integrated lecture-seminar fashion, it means classes take the form of question – and answer sessions on given areas of the law between the professor and a few students designated for that purpose throughout each class. Through such verbal interaction, students are put to the task of sorting the relevant from the irrelevant, making use of facts and analogies, invoking and distinguishing precedents, arguing both sides of a legal issue, casting specific problems in terms of their relations to broader legal principles. “Right answers” are not always given.
2. for nearly all courses students must prepare the traditional case briefs, so there is a great stress upon the independent work on the part of the student. Considerable amounts of raw materials are given students before the class, which they must read, dissect, understand and synthesize in preparation for class discussion.
3. Teacher is required to provide detailed reading assignments for every lecture. Since readings are assigned, it follows that the reading material should be made available to the students, by placing them into the course intranet conference, or left at the law school library.

On the other hand as Lithuania is a civil law country we cannot say, that we use purely Socratic method during our lectures, we have continental-law teaching method with Socratic elements in. As codes (for example civil, criminal, administrative and etc.) are considered as embodiment of the juridical moral order that ground our law tradition, the texts of codes are primary source of materials for study. In each class, the professor exposes one part of some conceptual edifice, presenting the rules and

principles on the day's agenda in their logical, natural and deductive order. Nevertheless "magisterial" and "Socratic" methods are deemed to reflect the different emphases, magisterial method is thought to reflect upon abstract principles and case method , places the greater focus upon concrete cases, but the integration of these two methods can have a synergetic effect we try to achieve in our study program.

Requirement of legal English and bachelor degree in other subject.

There are two obligatory requirements for students applying into law program at our law school: 1. high level of legal English; 2.bachelor degree in other subjects;

Students that are applying to enter law studies at our Law school should pass the English test As well we suppose that students who have bachelor degrees in other subjects are more mature. They are more capable of entering into study program which requires a great deal more of them in terms of self-discipline and self-application than do studies at bachelor level. The fact that the students have degrees in other subjects (such as economics, history, politics and other social sciences) allows them to apply the various paradigms they have learned to the law. They are much more capable analyze a legal question's relations to other fields are much more capable to determine both the policy considerations which underlies a particular rule ant to plot the results of a particular rule's application.

International exchange of students and academic personnel

The best way to learn about other legal system is to study at least one semester in other country. While implementing the aims of Bologna process and common policy of Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), our Law school promotes mobility of students and academic personnel. Vytautas Magnus University has about 100 Socrates/Erasmus partners all over the world, has 44 bilateral agreements with universities form Europe, Asia, USA, Japan, and is partner in 4 international organizations.

