

The Law of the Public Interest

"This course will use a problem-solving method to examine the various ways in which the term "the public interest" is used in public law. Taking UK law and the law of the European Convention on Human Rights as reference points for comparative discussions, it considers "who" can mobilise the term, "when", and "why". The aim of the course is to encourage students to think critically about the term's place in legal practice and how it does – and does not – complement core ideas of democracy, transparency and accountability. Themes to be examined include: the basis and origins of "the public interest"; "the public interest" above and below the state; "the public interest" in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and national courts; pressure groups and "public interest litigation"; and "the public interest" and freedom of expression.

The course will be highly interactive and students will be required to prepare for classes in advance. Key readings will be provided and will be discussed in class. Students will also be required to prepare short presentations on aspects of the law of the public interest as applies in their respective domestic legal systems.

Keywords: Public interest, democracy, EU law, national law, freedom of expression."