

**Interdisciplinary  
Seminar**

# Law, Language and Technology

**9 February, 2024**

**09 : 30 - 17 : 30**

**Montesquieu Building**

**Room MZ20**

**Tilburg University**

## **Session I:**

### **Globalization and legal meaning**

**Prof. dr. Alessio Lo Giudice (Messina university)**

**Prof. dr. Hans Lindahl (Tilburg University)**

## **Session II:**

### **The language of categorization in international criminal law**

**Dr. Ligeia Quackelbeen (Tilburg University)**

**Dr. Luigi Corrias (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)**

**Prof. dr. Elies van Sliedregt (Tilburg University)**

## **Session III:**

### **Legal language, legal science and digital technologies**

**Prof. dr. Angela Condello (Messina University)**

**Dr. David Rocco (Palermo Court of Appeals, University of Catania)**

**Registration via email to:**

**[l.s.c.quackelbeen@tilburguniversity.edu](mailto:l.s.c.quackelbeen@tilburguniversity.edu)**

**Before 2 February 2024**



# Law, Language and Technology

This seminar revisits language, a central research topic in a range of disciplines concerned with law or dealing with language in a legal setting. The act of interpretation and its relation to the object of interpretation is, up to this very day, a matter of debate in legal theory and philosophy. Similarly, the issue of legal meaning and whether there is such a thing as objectivity in legal meaning, is a well-trodden path often visited by legal hermeneutics and related disciplines. How does the law control legal meaning? And is this question answered differently in relation to different legal settings? To what extent do certain technological developments influence the control that the law has over meaning?

Several philosophical disciplines, and in particular philosophy of language, have persistently dealt with the issues of interpretation and meaning. Besides philosophy, linguistics devotes much attention to understanding language use and translation. Thus, from different perspectives it appears that the act of naming, labeling, defining, interpreting, and describing certain phenomena with the language of law, the way of putting certain issues in legal language, is never neutral or straightforward: using language is interpreting language, is translating it in function of certain aims or goals or interests.

New developments elicit renewed reflections on the topic and require revisiting these problems of language, specifically in relation to the legal context, from an interdisciplinary point of view. One of the most important developments is that the legal domain is increasingly international and multi-linguistic in nature and as such it presents us with new challenges. In a similar way, technological developments impact upon the way in which we think about language, and this is not without effect in the legal context. It is difficult to grasp how technological changes impact and will impact upon legal realities and what pivotal role language plays in these developments. Because of its inherent complexity, we propose to discuss this topic from a multi-disciplinary perspective integrating both human and social sciences, in particular philosophy and law, and to provide a forum for exchange and open discussion between scholars of all levels.

**Interdisciplinary  
Seminar**

# Law, Language and Technology

**09 : 30 - 10 : 00**

**Coffee and Introduction**

**10 : 00 - 12 : 00**

**Session I: Globalization and legal meaning**

This session focusses on the role of a “shared” set of meanings with the international realm in order to “judge” and act within dishomogeneous dimensions. International law is indeed, by definition, a field characterized by various voices and various points of view and legal cultures all converging towards similar purposes. International and supranational governance are embedded in questions of language and translation, both literally and at a symbolic level.

Drawing from his recent book publication, “Il dramma del giudizio”, Professor Lo Giudice will explore the human nature of judgement and challenge those who, instead, think of a judge as merely la bouche de la loi reducing him to the human version of an algorithm.

**Speaker: Prof. dr. Alessio Lo Giudice (Messina university)**

**Respondent: Prof. dr. Hans Lindahl (Tilburg University)**

**12 : 00 - 13 : 00**

**Lunch break**

**9 February, 2024**

**Montesquieu Building, Room MZ20, Tilburg University**

# Law, Language and Technology

**13 : 00 - 15 : 00**

## **Session II: The language of categorization in international criminal law**

This session focusses on interpretation and categorization in the specific context of international criminal law. It essentially connects two themes.

First, one of the themes buzzing with discussion is how international criminal law is to be interpreted taking into account the global characteristics and universal aspiration of the field while also having an eye for the specific nature of criminal law. Since we do not necessarily have a common language in international criminal law, what are the issues that we face in terms of interpretation, how do we understand these and move closer to shared conceptions? And how does the concept of humanity, so often invoked international (criminal) law, play a role in this?

Second, categorization is central to law. We discuss different theories of categorization and cross over to other domains to understand how this exercise of categorization functions. For example, prototype theory, i.e., a theory concerning categorization used mainly in cognitive science and psychology, can help explain some law and language issues. Central here is to examine what categorization means and see what function it fulfils for criminal law. An interesting discussion is whether we can even bypass categorization (cf. the discussion on gender), by many considered an essential feature of criminal law. By way of discussing the recent case of the law on forced marriage , we will show how different theories of categorization might prove helpful in the future.

**Speakers:** Dr. Ligeia Quackelbeen (Tilburg University),

Dr. Luigi Corrias (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

**Respondent:** Prof. dr. Elies van Sliedregt (Tilburg University)

**15 : 00 - 15 : 30**

**Coffee Break**

**9 February, 2024**

**Montesquieu Building, Room MZ20, Tilburg University**

# Law, Language and Technology

15 : 30 - 17 : 30

## Session III: Legal language, legal science and digital technologies

Both decision-making in the context of research concerned with the legal setting as well as decision-making in a legal context can be or is argued to be motivated by “data”. But what does this entail? Anything can be considered as data depending on the context and research goals. How do we then select the relevant data and what selection is meaningful for what context? What are the consequences of this selection and how does it affect the decision-making?

This session will deal with the methodological problems that arise from making decisions on the basis of data, both in terms of research setting and legal decision-making such as in the context of judicial decision-making.

Drawing from her recent book publication, “Il diritto come metodo e la scienza algoritmica”, Prof. Condello shall specifically examine how digital technologies (AI; algorithm) assist the humans during legal operations. However, there is an increasing need for interaction across disciplines (e.g. law, linguistics and language technologies) to understand the motivations and expectations behind each other’s research areas. By bringing in scholars from different fields, this workshop aims to open the way for dialogue across disciplines.

As a matter of fact, imagining (and realizing) a digital or robotic judge, or more basically a judging machine working through artificial intelligence, would mean depicting a different model of law and justice at their very bedrocks, since these systems require a “translation” of our propositions into the mathematical language (often written in binary codes) through which these systems work.

**Speaker:** Prof. dr. Angela Condello (Messina University)

**Respondents:** Dr. David Rocco (Palermo Court of Appeals, University of Catania),