LL.M. Digitalization and Law at the University of Würzburg: My journey as one of the first students

By Said Kalay

In this article, I would like to introduce you to the LL.M. Digitalization and Law program at the University of Würzburg and share my experiences thus far. Throughout this piece, I will endeavor to explain how this master's program can provide you with a new perspective and benefit you in various areas to the best of my ability. **If you have completed a degree course with a basic knowledge of law and are interested in topics such as AI, digitalization ethics and IT, the information in this article should make your decision easier.**

I graduated from Marmara University in Turkey and later completed my internship at the Istanbul Bar Association. While undertaking my internship, I realized the importance of continuing my education and began researching master's programs. I opted for this program due to its vision and its focus on contemporary issues in legal practice. As one of the program's inaugural students, I will share my experiences with you.

As a recent graduate who has completed both education and internships, I am passionate about pursuing a career in the field of technology. The widespread use of digital technology has become a norm in our modern world, and its impact is evident in the disruption that would have occurred without the internet in the early 2000s. I firmly believe that AI is similarly transformative today. With the advancements in technology, the challenges we face are becoming more complex than ever before. As a legal professional, my focus is on understanding the impact of technology on the law and how regulations can effectively address any related issues, both positive and negative.

Showing the same level of care in solving problems as we do in identifying them is one of the most important factors today. To ensure diligence in finding solutions, it is imperative to have both ethical and scientific foundations in the relevant field.

The LL.M. Digitalization and Law program began with only two participants in October 2022, and it concluded with the final module in July 2023. After that, the students started working on their master's thesis. This year, 23 students in the program's second year finished their exams in February and are now waiting for the next semester to begin. We have a diverse group of international students from various countries, which makes for a small but interesting community. The program offers many opportunities to create great memories.

Exploring the Comprehensive Framework: LL.M. Digitalization and Law Program Overview

- Duration: The program spans three semesters, incorporating six months dedicated to the thesis and oral examination.

- Structure: Consists of fourteen modules, with students required to complete twelve. Each lecture lasts for 28 hours.
- Teaching Format: Hybrid lectures, allowing remote attendance, except for in-person exams.
- Language: The lectures are held in English.
- Location: Situated in a lively and appealing city.
- Tuition Fees: Payable in three equal installments of 2500 euros, totaling 7500 euros, along with a semester fee of approximately 165 euros.
- Start Date: The program begins in October.

Exploring the Intersection of Digitalization and Law

The program is called Digitalization and Law, and it covers 14 different modules that address a range of topics related to both law and digitalization. Each module delves intricately into the issues surrounding digitalization, exploring both its benefits and drawbacks. Although there are 14 modules, students have the choice to choose 12 of them based on their interests. Participating in discussions on these topics has significantly enhanced my understanding of legal principles and ethical considerations. It is worth mentioning the *Informatics for Jurists* lecture, which is particularly important for practitioners who deal with internet, technology, and computer science-related topics. Moreover, based on my observations, when it comes to legal topics, it is essential to know the scientific approach and its application to ensure consistency while commenting on such matters.

The program starts slowly but quickly becomes more complex. While it was an exciting experience for me, I'm unsure if it will appeal to everyone. However, if you're looking for new challenges to improve your understanding of new technologies and find solutions to associated problems, this program is a good choice. The program covers various fields of law, which may be overwhelming. Each lecture covers unique topics, but some lectures build on the previous ones. For instance, robot AI law and cybercrime are related topics in the first semester. If you're looking for in-depth knowledge, this program offers a comprehensive understanding of digitalization-related legal aspects. It includes not only legal subjects but also basic technical knowledge about computer science and ethical concerns.

Modules and Learning Journey

Modules:

- Cybercrime I & II
- Machine Ethics
- Robot Law/AI Law
- Introduction to Informatics
- Introduction to German IT Law
- Fundamental Rights and Data Protection
- Procedure Law
- Company Law and Digitalization
- Legal Tech
- Competition Law in the Digital Age
- IP Law

- E-commerce/Consumer protection
- Labor Law 4.0

Digitalization and Law LL.M. is well-designed when it comes to introducing the topic at the beginning of the program and then focusing on the topics that you are interested in. Throughout the first semester, the program's primary objective, from my perspective, is to instill fundamental knowledge of digitalization ethics and address legal inquiries. This phase includes six classes, each with a unique focus. Renowned experts and practitioners in the respective fields conduct lectures, ensuring a comprehensive learning experience. The subjects covered in the first semester include machine ethics, informatics for jurists, procedure law, an introduction to German IT law, fundamental rights and data protection, and cybercrime. Addressed problems were crimes on the internet, data protection, big data, e-persons, automated decision-making, possible ethical solutions for AI-related problems, effects of the internet in procedure law, and introduction to German jurisdiction on IT-related problems.

In the second semester, students have the opportunity to customize their focus based on their individual preferences and interests. Cybercrime II delves into the intricate procedural aspects of digital offenses, while Robot AI Law explores the ramifications of recent European legislation on substantive legal frameworks. Although I didn't select the Legal Tech module, it is delivered by seasoned professionals specializing in legal technology. IP law, renowned for its clarity and tailored approach to digitalization, presents a plethora of engaging case studies for thorough analysis. Similarly, company law remains comprehensible, adapting alongside technological advancements that are undergoing significant transformations. Additionally, e-commerce and consumer protection serve as invaluable tools for understanding the complexities of both B2C and B2B issues in the digital age.

The lecturers, bringing practical experience to the table, contribute valuable insights, fostering a deeper understanding of the intricacies within their domains. Notably, three lectures per semester extend over the entire term, while the remaining sessions are conducted as intensive block lectures. This structured approach provides a well-rounded and immersive educational experience. However, I must express some concerns about the program's time management. Having a bit of time between the courses may distract students from focusing on crucial points.

Conclusion: A Journey through Digital Law

The Digitalization and Law LL.M. program is a comprehensive course that can be completed in three semesters. Each semester consists of three mandatory modules held from Tuesday to Thursday, complemented by three block lectures on Fridays and Saturdays. The program is designed for legal professionals with practical professional experience who want to broaden their knowledge of digital law. However, students who are starting their careers are also welcome, as they will be introduced to various fields of law that will be relevant in the early years of their studies. The program provides a fresh perspective on the topics and discussions, and it is preferable to have an interest in most of the areas mentioned in addition to basic legal studies. The practical application of each area will depend on your professional situation.

The best thing about this program is that you don't need a degree in computer science to understand the modules' content. Instead, a willingness to learn and an interest in the subject matter are crucial. Additionally, you don't need a law certificate to enroll in the program. The only requirement is to have 15 law ECTS credits in relevant fields. The program is designed to help you learn from the beginning, assuming that you have a basic understanding of the law. However, prior experience in some areas would be beneficial.

In conclusion, the Digitalization and Law LL.M. program is an exceptional opportunity for full-time working professionals to improve their comprehension of digitalization's influence on the legal landscape. While the program may require commitment and dedication, the benefits are invaluable. Remember that you don't need a computer science degree to excel – what matters is your eagerness to learn and explore new concepts. Take advantage of the diverse modules, leverage your prior legal knowledge, and immerse yourself in the practical applications. With determination and an open mind, you will successfully route the program. Good luck on your academic journey!

About the author: Said Kalay completed his bachelor's degree in Turkey and is currently pursuing an LL.M. in "Digitalization and Law" at the University of Würzburg.

This article was published on March 19th 2024 on legal-tech.de, Germany's platform for digitalization in law firms. It is intended to give all those interested in the LL.M. Digitalization and Law at the University of Würzburg an overview of the Master's program.