Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Faculty of Law

Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.)

Course Syllabus

1. Course Information

- **Title:** Consumer Protection and Competition Law
- **Code:** LLB23
- **ECTS:** 6
- **Hours per week:** 4
- **Academic Year:** 3rd
- **Teaching Period:** Winter Semester
- **Mode of Delivery:** Face-to-Face
- **Language of Instruction/Assessment:** English
- **Course Type:** Mandatory

2. Course Description

The first part of this course offers an in-depth exploration of contemporary issues in consumer protection law with a particular focus on the challenges and transformations brought by the digital economy and the European Union's evolving regulatory framework. Students will examine core principles of consumer rights alongside pressing developments such as digital exploitation through dark patterns and algorithmic targeting, the emergence of innovative digital credit and payment services and their implications for consumer over-indebtedness and the protection of consumers in platform-based and gig economy environments. Special emphasis will be placed on greenwashing and environmental claims as consumer protection embraces sustainability, while the increasing use of Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) mechanisms and cross-border redress will be analysed within the context of effective enforcement. The course further investigates the tension between consumer empowerment and vulnerability in

the data-driven marketplace, offering comparative insights and real-world applications through landmark EU case law, recent legislative reforms (e.g. DSA, CCD2, Omnibus Directive), and interdisciplinary links with competition law. By the end of the course, students will have developed the analytical skills to critically assess and apply legal tools that safeguard consumers in complex, modern markets.

The second part of this course offers a comprehensive introduction to European and national competition law as an essential pillar of the internal market and economic governance. Through a structured exploration of substantive and procedural rules, students will examine the legal framework governing anti-competitive practices, the abuse of market power, merger control and state aid. Special attention is paid to the challenges posed by the digital economy and the interplay between traditional enforcement tools and new regulatory initiatives such as the Digital Markets Act (DMA). The course emphasises both on the theoretical foundations and on the practical application of competition law, including landmark case law of the European Commission and the Court of Justice of the European Union. Students will also become familiar with the role of competition authorities, the mechanics of investigations and the growing relevance of private enforcement and damages actions. By the end of the course, participants will be able to critically assess the role of competition law in maintaining open and fair markets and its interaction with adjacent fields such as consumer protection and digital regulation.

3. Keywords

Digital consumer rights, algorithmic manipulation, greenwashing, platform economy, consumer vulnerability, Online Dispute Resolution (ODR), antitrust, market dominance, cartels, merger control, state aid.

4. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain the fundamental principles, rights and mechanisms of consumer protection under EU law, including the role of key directives and regulations.
- Critically analyse the impact of digital technologies, algorithmic practices and platform-based business models on consumer rights, autonomy and market fairness.

- Evaluate contemporary regulatory responses to emerging challenges such as greenwashing, digital vulnerability and innovative credit and payment systems, including the revised Consumer Credit Directive and the Digital Services Act.
- Apply legal reasoning to real-life scenarios involving cross-border transactions, online dispute resolution and consumer-market asymmetries, drawing on relevant case law and interdisciplinary connections with competition law.
- Explain the purpose, scope and institutional framework of EU and national competition law.
- Identify and critically assess anti-competitive agreements and practices prohibited under Article 101 TFEU.
- Analyse cases of abuse of dominance under Article 102 TFEU, applying relevant legal and economic criteria.
- Evaluate mergers and concentrations based on the substantive tests of EU and Greek merger control regimes.
- Interpret the rules governing state aid and assess the compatibility of public measures with the internal market.
- Examine the challenges posed by the digital economy and apply competition law principles to digital platforms and gatekeepers.

5. General Skills to Be Acquired

- Apply legal knowledge to practical consumer market scenarios, especially in digital and cross-border contexts.
- Retrieve, analyse and synthesise complex EU legislative texts, case law and regulatory materials on consumer and platform regulation.
- Adapt to technological and policy developments affecting consumer protection, such as digital credit tools, green claims and algorithmic practices.
- Critically assess business-consumer asymmetries and make legally reasoned decisions regarding market fairness and consumer rights.
- Work in an international and European legal environment with an understanding of cultural and regulatory diversity.
- Collaborate within interdisciplinary teams linking consumer law, competition law, technology and environmental policy.
- Develop original legal research ideas on emerging topics like sustainability, digital manipulation and consumer vulnerability.
- Advance creative and independent legal thinking by engaging with novel case studies and policy proposals in consumer law.
- Ability to interpret and apply EU and national competition law provisions to real-world market scenarios.

- Critical thinking and legal reasoning skills through the analysis of case law and regulatory decisions.
- Familiarity with legal research methods in the field of antitrust and competition enforcement.
- Capacity to evaluate complex market structures and assess competitive effects of business practices.
- Development of written and oral communication skills through case presentations and legal argumentation.
- Understanding of the role of competition policy in the functioning of the internal market and the digital economy.

6. Course Content (Topics)

1. Digital consumer rights and the challenges of the online marketplace
2. Algorithmic manipulation, dark patterns and consumer vulnerability
3. Greenwashing, environmental claims and sustainable consumption law
4. Consumer protection in the platform and gig economy
5. Innovative consumer credit and payment models in the EU legal framework
6. Cross-border enforcement and online dispute resolution (ODR)
7. Foundations of competition law: purpose, scope, and evolution
8. Cartels and collusive practices (art. 101 TFEU)
9. Abuse of dominant position (art. 102 TFEU)
10. Merger control in the EU and Greece
11. State aid control (arts. 107–109 TFEU)
12. Digital markets and competition law
13. Competition law enforcement and private damages actions

7. Teaching Methods

- Lectures
- Case law workshops

- Student presentations and structured debate
- Guided reading and legal reasoning exercises

8. Assessment Methods

Method	Weight	Description
Final Written Exam	70%	Essay-type and case-based questions
Mid-Term Assignment/Presentation	20%	Individual or group-based
Participation and Engagement	10%	Constructive attendance, preparedness, contribution

Note: A minimum final exam score of 50% is required to pass.

9. A. Ethics

Students are reminded that all submitted work must comply with the University's academic integrity policy. Plagiarism or unauthorised collaboration will result in disciplinary measures.

B. Course Policies

- Attendance is strongly encouraged.
- All assignments must be submitted on time via the designated platform.
- Special accommodations will be made for students with documented learning or health needs in accordance with university policy.

10. Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

- **Use in Teaching:** (e.g. digital slides, audiovisual aids, interactive tools like Mentimeter)
- **Use in Communication:** (e.g. E-learning platform, Zoom/Google Meet for office hours)
- **Digital Resources:** (e.g. online legal databases, podcasts, video lectures)

11. Bibliography

- Books/E-Books

Akman, P., Stylianou, K., & Brook, O. (Eds.). (2023). *Research handbook on abuse of dominance and monopolization*.

Andriychuk, O. (Ed.). (2023). *Antitrust and the bounds of power – 25 years on*.

Ashton, D. (2023). *Competition damages actions in the EU and the UK*.

Bahner, B. (2024). *Ansatzpunkte im Kaufrecht zur Förderung eines nachhaltigen Konsums nach Umsetzung der Warenkaufrichtlinie*.

Castillo de la Torre, F., & Gippini Fournier, E. (2024). *Evidence, proof and judicial review in EU competition law*.

Combet, M. (2022). *Le droit européen de la consommation au XXIe siècle: état des lieux et perspectives*.

Esposito, F. (2022). *The consumer welfare hypothesis in law and economics: Towards a synthesis for the 21st century*.

Ezrachi, A. (2024). *EU competition law :an analytical guide to the leading cases (*e-book*)* . Hart. https://koha.lib.auth.gr/cgi-bin/koha/catalogue/detail.pl?biblionumber=1169402&found1=1

Fox, E. M. ., & Gerard, Damien. (2023). *EU competition law : cases, texts and context (*e-book*)*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Galli, F. (2022). *Algorithmic marketing and EU law on unfair commercial practices*.

Gallo, D. (2022). *Public services and EU competition law*.

Guerra, G. (2023). *Redesigning protection for consumer autonomy: The case-study of dark patterns in European private law*.

Haucap, J., Podszun, R., Rohner, T., & Rösner, A. (2024). Competition and sustainability: Economic policy and options for reform in antitrust and competition law. In *Competition and Sustainability: Economic Policy and Options for Reform in Antitrust and Competition Law (*e-book*)*. Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035325399

Ho-Dac, M., & Pellegrini, C. (2023). *Governance of artificial intelligence in the European Union: What place for consumer protection?*

Ibáñez Colomo, P. (2023). *The new EU competition law*.

Ilieva, M. (2021). *La protection des consommateurs et les droits fondamentaux dans l'Union européenne*.

Jones, C., & Weinert, L. (2021). *EU competition law. Volume II: Mergers and acquisitions*.

Kardos, G. (2023). *Alternative dispute resolution für Verbraucherstreitigkeiten: Eine rechtsvergleichende Untersuchung zum englischen und deutschen Recht*.

Katsorchi, P., & Gervasoni, S. (2022). *Le réseau des règles de droit international européen de la concurrence*.

Küter, R. (2024). *Verbrauchergewährleistungsrecht und allgemeine Kodifikation*.

Lianos, Ioannis., Korah, Valentine., & Siciliani, Paolo. (2019). *Competition law (*e-book*)*. Oxford University Press.

Micklitz, H.-W., & Twigg-Flesner, C. (2023). *The transformation of consumer law and policy in Europe*.

Pesaresi, Nicola., Siaterli, Christina., Van de Casteele, Koen., & Flynn, Leo. (2016). *EU competition law. Volume 4, State aid* (e-book*)*. Claeys & Casteels.

Pflücke, F. (2024). *Compliance with European consumer law: The case of e-commerce*.

Piernas Lopez, J. J. (2021). *Research handbook on European state aid law*.

Rainey, D., & van Gelder, E. (Eds.). (2022). *Consumer online dispute resolution pathways in Europe*.

Rodger, B. J., Ferro, M. S., & Marcos, F. (Eds.). (2023). *Research handbook on private enforcement of competition law in the EU*.

Schmieder, G. (2022). *Der verbraucherschützende beseitigungsanspruch des lauterkeitsrechts*.

Steinbrück, K. (2021). *Changing consumer law in the United Kingdom after Brexit?*

Tereszkiewicz, P., & Golecki, M. J. (2023). *Protecting financial consumers in Europe: Comparative perspectives and policy choices*.

Tyagi, K., Kamperman Sanders, A., & Cauffman, C. (Eds.). (2024). *Digital platforms, competition law, and regulation: Comparative perspectives*.

Vogel, L., & Vogel, J. (2020). *Les fondamentaux du droit de la consommation*.

Zelger, B. (2023). *Restrictions of EU competition law in the digital age*.

- Databases

Westlaw UK Academic	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
HeinOnline Academic Core and Kluwer Law International Journal Library	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
Beck-online PREMIUM	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
O.U.P Oxford Public International Law	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
O.U.P Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
Dalloz.fr	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
JURIS Zusatzmodul Hochschulen, BGB Staudinger Online	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
Kluwer Law Online (30 journals)	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
IAReporter. Investment Arbitration Report	**https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/**
Cambridge Core (Law)	**https://www.cambridge.org/core/browse-subjects/law**
EBSCO	**https://research.ebsco.com/c/quc7ji/search/advanced/filters?autocorrect=y&isDashboardExpanded=true**
ProQuest Central	**https://www.proquest.com/central/topicpaths/AbiGlobal_business/0?accountid=8359#0**
Springer link	**https://link.springer.com/**
Taylor & Francis e-books	**https://www.taylorfrancis.com/search?subject=SCLW**
Taylor & Francis e-journals	**https://www.tandfonline.com/subjects/law**
The Making of Modern Law: Legal Treatises 1800-1926 (Gale)	**https://go.gale.com/ps/start.do?p=MOML&u=arist&cookieConsent=true&analyticsOptout=false&aty=ip**

Wiley online Library	**https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/showPublications?startPage=&ConceptID=85**