

Challenges and Chances of Interdisciplinary IP Teaching

Peter Ganea

**Coordinator M.A. Modern East Asian Studies
(MEAS)**

Context

New and interdisciplinary biannual M.A. Modern East Asian Studies (MEAS) at University of Frankfurt
(founded 2009, not yet accredited)

Accommodates both students with a background in Social Sciences (economics, politics, law, etc.) and
students with a BA in Asia-related Cultural Studies (Japanese, Chinese, etc.)

Involvement of four departments:

- Economics
- Law
- Political and Social Sciences
- Cultural Studies (institutes of Japanese Studies, Chinese Studies, Korean Studies, and South East Asian Studies)

Teaching language: English

No students with legal background
German – foreign student ration 80:20)

Special challenge to teach IP to students without legal knowledge

Content of the program

The program comprises the following modules:

Advanced language courses for students with B.A. in cultural sciences (12 CP)	Beginner course for students with B.A. in social sciences (12 CP)
Introduction to law, economics, social sciences for students with B.A. in cultural sciences (12 CP)	Beginner course for students with B.A. in social sciences continued (12 CP)
Core lecture (18 CP)	
Young scholars forum (12 CP)	
Elective: legal aspects of East Asia (12 CP)	
Elective: economic aspects of East Asia (12 CP)	
Elective: social and political Aspects of East Asia (12 CP)	
Skills and Competences (6 CP)	
Master's Thesis (24 CP)	

Relevance of IP within the programme



IP comprises roughly one sixth of the curriculum

Other areas:

Corporate and business law

Institutional economy

Politics/authoritarian regimes

Gender studies

Media and politics

Human geography

Why IP as one core area of an Asia-related Master programme?

Why IP?

At latest since mid-1990s (TRIPS!), IP debate no longer confined to „insiders“: politicians, activists, NGOs, journalists, scholars from non-legal disciplines joined the debate

IP linked to:

- poverty
- development / industrial policy
- access to culture and information

⇒ Danger of misconceptions/dilletantism, due to surficial understanding of difficult concepts (e.g. „exhaustion“, „doctrine of equivalents“, etc.)

⇒ Some IP topics are highly emotional (resp. emotionalized) > example: proposal of a WIPO Treaty for Improved Access for Blind and Visually Impaired > danger of losing neutral academic viewpoint

Why IP? (Cont'd)

Present IP-related courses within MEAS programme:

- “International Intellectual Property: Asia within a framework of multilateral treaties and bilateral agreements”
- “Emergence and present practice of Japanese copyright”
- “Translation of Chinese intellectual property material - court decisions and comments”
- “Translation of Japanese intellectual property material - court decisions and comments”

Method of teaching

- Detailed introduction: explanation of unfamiliar concepts & terms (quite time-consuming);
- Sensitizing students for correct use of terms in presentations and seminar papers;
- Holistic/historical approach: international harmonization and legal transplants: avoid that students develop an isolated view on certain Asian countries;
- Drawing on the huge variety of educational backgrounds/encourage students to apply their methodological or language skills adopted during BA studies:
 - => encouraging student with a BA in Business Informatics to present/write on patent protection for computer programs in Japan;
 - => encouraging student with a BA in Politics with focus on International Relations to present/write on Free Trade Agreements between, e.g. EU and ASEAN economies
 - => encouraging students with a background in Cultural Studies to draw on their Chinese, Japanese, etc. proficiency

Experiences

- Student performance negligibly lower than performance of students at other IP-related LL.M. programs (at least the one I am familiar with)
- Student performance seems to depend on „soft skills“ like openness towards new concepts and schools of thought rather than previous education
 - => similar experiences made by other teachers:
experience that some students with a BA in „hardcore“ cultural studies (e.g. Chinese ancient literature, poetry) performed better than fellow students with a BA in Economics, even in a seminar on Economy in Japan
 - => Skepticism among a number of professors whether students with such diverse backgrounds can be integrated into one program turned out to be largely unfounded...



INTERDISZIPLINÄRES
ZENTRUM FÜR
OSTASIENSTUDIEN



Thank you!

