SCOPE AND CONTENT OF COURSES ON THE LAW OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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Due to the historical background copyright law and industrial property law are taught under two separate sub-fields in the University of Helsinki Law Faculty: copyright law as part of general civil law (the law of obligations) and industrial property law as part of trade law (market law, law of international trade, company law). When trade law once was separated from the general civil law and made into an educational sub-field of its own, the aim was to gather under the head of trade law all those parts of civil law which were central from the point of view of the business enterprises.

Every law student has to acquire a certain basic knowledge both in the field of copyright law and industrial property law. This requirement may be filled either by studying textbooks or by taking a specific course in the subject matter. There is so far no separate textbook for this field, but both copyright law and industrial property law are dealt with in the textbooks on general civil law.

The course on copyright law has included first of all a general introduction into the goals and purposes of the protection provided by copyright law from the point of view of legal policy. This has been followed by a presentation of the basic content of the most important conventions in the field as well as of the national Finnish legislation. The object and legal content of copyrights as well as the possibilities of utilizing these exclusive rights have also been discussed. The so-called neighbouring rights and photographer's rights have likewise been dealt with. The goal has been to provide the students with the kind of knowledge in the field which, without going into detail, is useful for anyone holding a law degree, regardless of which particular field he will later be active in. Therefore the emphasis has been in elucidating the purpose of copyright protection as well as its most important legal implications.

The scope of the course in industrial property law has been the same as that of the Paris Convention, which means that the students have been initiated into the protection of patents and industrial designs, trade mark law and trade name law as well as the law of unfair competition. The content of courses in this field has been, briefly, aimed at making the student familiar with the background and purpose of the various forms of protection from the point of legal policy, the object of the protection, how it can be acquired and what the content of it is. The emphasis in the courses on industrial property rights law has been, just as in the field of copyright law, in the presentation of the general features of this norm system. The main concern has been with patent law and trade mark law, even though the specific features of the protection of industrial designs and trade names have also been pointed out. As far as the law of unfair competition is concerned, courses in industrial property rights law have mainly been restricted to dealing with the protection of trade secrets, since consumer protection has recently become to form a separate sub-field in the teaching of law.

Studies in the law faculty have been undergoing a reform during the last few years. After completing the mandatory courses required from all law students, the last academic year is devoted to so-called advanced studies which are pursued within the framework of a so-called project. The theme of the project under trade law will be chosen from the field of industrial property rights law about once in every five years. The first project dealing with this subject matter will be arranged in 1982. The topic of this project will be "Industrial Property Rights and Competition". The purpose of the project, which will have about twenty participants, will be to study the law of rights to patents, industrial designs, trade marks and trade names as well as the law of trade secrets from the point of view of economic competition, and to investigate the significance of these legal institutions as means of competition. Special attention will be attached to the position for industrial property rights. Specific problems that will be dealt with in the project include the following:

- the role and significance of industrial property rights in the world economy today (comparison between the industrialized countries and the developing countries etc.)

- the efficiency of the national Finnish legislation on industrial property rights

- the significance of employees' inventions from the point of view of innovations activity and competition

- the efficiency and appropriateness of the sanctions system in industrial property rights law

The project studies consist of lectures held by university teachers and outside practitioners with legal expertise in the field, study paper assignments, team work assignments, work on one larger study paper by each student etc. A student who in this way has worked with the project and concentrated on the industrial property rights law for one whole year has reasonably extensive knowledge in the field when taking his degree from the faculty.

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