

Course Report for Comparative Law, JU44AA/JU44BB (15 credits)/ Autumn 2025

Comparative Law is an upper-level elective course taught in English at the Department of Law, Stockholm University, email: comp@juridicum.su.se. The course director in 2025 was Laura Carlson and the course administrator Maria Schöning.

This upper-level 15-credit elective course has the objective of providing students with the opportunity to gain deeper insight in the use of comparative law methods in research and in practice. The grade on the course is based on class participation (P/F), the written and oral presentation of an essay (20 points), and the written and oral opposition of another student's essay (4 points).

The course evaluation was filled out by 5 of the 30 students taking the course. In addition, during the presentation of the final essays in the course, the students were encouraged to give feedback as to the course, which most did. On the whole, the students were positive to the substance of the course, as well as the examination method. Some students commented that the groups (which are changed every few weeks) where students were not active did not give much. There was also a reliance on AI instead of group discussion for finding the answers.

The AI comments led to a modification of the Course Description to explicit describe the types of AI use permissible both in the class room as well as in the final paper. A greater focus on the writing of the essay as well as method are incorporated in the structure of the course now.

Results of the 2025 Course Evaluation:

Antal svaranden: 5

Fråga 1

How well do you think the course corresponds with the learning objectives in the course's syllabus?

Antal som har svarat: 5

- Very well

Antal svar: 2

- Well

Antal svar: 1

- Reasonably well

Antal svar: 2

- Not well

Antal svar: 0

- Not well at all

Antal svar: 0

Fråga 2

What did you like best about the course?

Antal som har svarat: 4

- Laura Carlson was absolutely amazing. Kind and pedagogical. It was very nice to have a more personal relationship with the classmates as well. The seminars were nice.
- Learning about the different legal systems, and their historic and cultural origins.
- I very much liked the first few seminars which covered the evolution of the tort for negligence in the USA/UK. These seminars really introduced a judicial reasoning not weighed down by the often very technical terminology of modern courts. This allowed us non-native speakers to learn follow the logic/reasoning of the courts in the relevant cases while still building our legal English proficiency.
- The variety of the subjects analyzed, especially "un-conventional" law systems, and the opportunity to see and have a class in a law firm.

Fråga 3

What changes in the course would you suggest?

Antal som har svarat: 3

- I think it would be beneficial to have more check-ins in regards to the essay earlier in the course. Maybe more scheduled meetings in a group format to critique each other's essays - or have an extra deadline for a draft of sorts in the middle of november.
- The essay and methods need to be explained at an earlier stage, so that we can begin to reflect on the assignment earlier. The seminar group assignments needs some work to increase participation and presentation from all within a group. Athena needs to be cleaned up and/or restructured. It has too many files in too many places, making orientation difficult.
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Fråga 4

Was the mock negotiation a useful tool to improve your understanding of the course?

Antal som har svarat: 2

- There was no mock negotiation this year.
- there was no mock negotiation

Fråga 5

Is writing a paper an adequate way of testing and applying the knowledge acquired during the course?

Antal som har svarat: 4

- Maybe not. Perhaps some presentations in addition to the paper? And then shorten the essay a little bit.
- Yes. It was one of the reasons that I chose the course. I wanted to be better prepared for writing my thesis.
- To an extent, It is a very useful tool for gaining depth in a certain area, and for improving writing in an academic and legal style. It does however also allow for a lax attitude toward a large portion of the course.
- I think so

Fråga 6

Are there areas of the law that you would have liked to explore more deeply?

Antal som har svarat: 4

- No, I think it was good.
- No, because the essay gave me the opportunity to deeply explore a subject that I was interested in. Diving more deeply into something that would interest everyone would be difficult. Also, the course is intense enough as it is.
- Considering how large a portion of the world lives in Asia, it would have been interesting to explore some other jurisdiction there a bit more (India/Japan/South Korea/Indonesia etc).
- Islamic law

Fråga 7

Would you recommend this course to other students? Why or why not?
Antal som har svarat: 4

- Yes - very much so
- I would recommend it. It gives more perspectives on the law than the traditional "global north". It was refreshing to learn how the law can be studied in other ways than solving a dispute or legal issue.
- Yes, because I liked the pedagogical approach and kindness of the teacher. I also thought that it put everything I've learned about the Swedish system in a completely different perspective. In spite of the course material width, the comparative essay actually made me reflect much more about my chosen legal area (for my essay) of my native country, By this I mean that I was able to view it from an outside perspective and therefore better understand its strengths and weaknesses,
- Yes, because it is really interesting and gives you the opportunity to know more about different areas of the law and different countries' legal systems.

The course director received the following email from one of the students directly:

This is your former student xxx from Comparative Law 2025. I hope that all is well. At the end of the course in January, I promised I'd get back to you with more feedback.

Comparative Law method turned out to be instrumental for structuring both my thesis at SU and my essay at XXX. Especially the application of tertium comparationis as a neutral point of reference for studying a friction between two competing perspectives turned out to be invaluable. It's not only used to study two different legal systems, as I first presumed. Perhaps tertium comparationis could be emphasized more during the course? I feel that this kind of

academically universal approach is otherwise unknown to other students (and I've talked to several about it). By expanding its application, it would make it more meaningful.

Meaningfulness was something that I struggled with during the course. Although I found the topic very interesting per se, it was a challenge to grasp which elements were central. I felt that we were constantly shifting between methods, legal systems and material law (tort, contract etc) and with three seminars per week it became rather hectic. Perhaps something could be streamlined here? And yes, I remember that you told me you'd already eliminated some content of the course which was even more extensive the year before.

Continuing on what can be improved, I also did not find the student-part of the seminars as rewarding (the teachers did great though). Students mostly read out loud their pre-defined answers to fact-centric questions. It was more like a monologue, rather than interesting discussions. And it was usually the same people answering the questions. I don't know how this can be improved though, but perhaps by applying open-ended questions? Questions that require knowledge of facts to answer. I did however enjoy rotating groups, as we got to know more members of the class.

Finally, a very direct point of improvement is the structure on Athena. It was very difficult to navigate through all the folders and documents. In particular regarding the essay. With it being central to our grade, it was stressful to more than me to not getting a clear picture of this important part of the course. I believe that some re-structuring would be helpful to future students.

All in all Comparative Law was a very interesting course, and I am happy that I took it. A reason that I selected it was to train on writing an essay before writing my thesis. And I can safely say that it was very helpful! As my thesis is in English and includes some comparative law easter eggs, I am attaching it to this e-mail, in case you have the time and appetite for reading. It shows how I applied tertium comparationis.