Course Description for Family Law Across Borders
Autumn semester 2025
JU724A and JU724B, 15 credits

Welcome to FLAB!

Family Law Across Borders is an advanced level elective course given in English at the Faculty of Law, Stockholm University. The course directors are professors Michael Hellner and Johanna Schiratzki. The course administrator is Helene Fotiadis Forssjö. The email address for the course is: fla@juridicum.su.se. Please send *any questions regarding the course, seminars, attendance, or the research papers to the course administrator at this address*.

1 Course Objectives and Examination

This advanced level 15-credit elective course has the objective of providing students with an opportunity to gain deeper insight into family law from different legal perspectives. The grade is based on class participation (Pass/Fail), a written exam (10 points) the written and oral presentation of a research paper (10 points), and the written and oral opposition of another student's paper (Pass/Fail).

2 Course Content

The focus of the course is on the legal problems that can arise with respect to the construction, organization, function and dissolution of families from a comparative and private international law perspective. Issues explored include the legal regulation of family membership status, parenthood, adoption, custody and care of children as well as maintenance, property division relating to marriage, cohabitation and de facto relations as well as and succession law. The comparative and private international law perspectives are related to normative structures, religious practices, family diversity, migration and gender roles in family law and in societies around the world.

The course is divided into two main parts – comparative law and private international law. The comparative law part will be examined through an essay and the private international law part through a written exam (see below).

2.1 Interaction with the surrounding society

We hope to be able to offer a lecture held by a representative of the Swedish Central Authority for the 1980 Hague Child Abduction Convention.

2.2 Learning Outcomes

After completing the course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a deepened knowledge of legal methodology and terminology as to family law from comparative, European and private international law perspectives,

- identify, apply, and analyze advanced and complex legal problems within the area of family law from comparative, European and private international law perspectives,
- demonstrate the ability to discuss, analyze, and assess the consequences of different legal solutions, from the perspectives of individuals and society,
- independently plan, write and defend a legal essay (research paper) as well as be the opponent (commentator posing questions and giving feedback) with respect to another student's essay.

2.3 Structure and themes of the course

The course is structured around the following themes:

- Comparative Family Law
- Private International Law
- Legal research and writing skills "across borders" (i.e. beyond your national system, and in English).

2.4 Teaching methods

The course consists of seminars and *active student attendance is required at all seminars*. Active attendance means that students have prepared (having read the relevant texts and completed the assignments given for the seminar in question) and are prepared to participate actively in discussions at the seminars.

Students will be divided into study groups of 4–6 students and are expected to meet and discuss the seminar assignments in advance in a student led pre-seminar. As far as possible the study groups will consist of students from different legal systems.

In the event a student misses a seminar, the student must complete a written assignment in the form of a short paper on the topic of the seminar (600 words, two A4 pages, 12 pt, 1.15 spacing) which is due no later than the due date of the research paper. Make-up assignments should be emailed to fla@juridicum.su.se. A student can miss up to three seminars without having to state a reason. After that, excused absences will only be for good cause, such as illness as attested by a physician's certificate. It is not possible to pass the course and miss more than seven seminars, whatever the reason.

All classes are held in (broken) English.

2.5 Required Preparation and Reading List

Each seminar has a list of required readings and have questions or exercises. These are posted in the folder for the seminar on the Athena course website. The course reading list (also posted on Athena) consists of a few recommended books on family law, on legal research, and on cross-border topics within family law, but the main texts students encounter will be those assigned from seminar to seminar – whether from the recommended materials or from other publications.

3 Examination and Grading

3.1 Grade

A student's final grade for the course is based on a written exam (10 points), the written and oral presentation of a research paper (10 points), the written and oral opposition on another student's paper (Pass/Fail), and class participation at the seminars (Pass/Fail) A student must have passed all seminars via active participation or the make-up assignment described above. In order to pass the course, a student must demonstrate achievement of all of the course's intended learning outcomes and thereby pass the four components (written examination, research paper, opposition and class

participation in seminars). All make-up assignments for missed seminars must be submitted and passed for a final course grade to be given.

3.2 Grading Scale

Students registered at the 270 ECTS law programme at Stockholm University (Swedish students) taking this course on the advanced level of the programme are graded according to the Swedish grading system: Pass with Distinction (AB), Pass with Credit (BA), Pass (B), or Fail (U).

Incoming exchange students are graded according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) (ECTS) seven-grade scale: passing grades include A (Excellent), B (Very good), C (Good), D (Satisfactory), and E (Sufficient). Failing grades include Fx (Insufficient) and F (Wholly Insufficient).

Swedish students who submit a request at least a week prior to the exam to the course administrator are entitled to a grade on the ECTS seven- grade scale.

3.3 The Research Paper Assignment

The comparative law part of the course will be examined through a research paper. Family Law Across Borders' objective is to convey a deeper understanding of comparative family law. Since the course's focus is the legal problems that can arise with respect to the organization, function and dissolution of families in a global context, research papers should tie into legal problems and into these themes.

The paper should should be individuallty and personally written by you (not by another individual or an AI) be approximately 3,000 words including footnotes (the title page, and bibliography are not included in the word count). The opposition summary is to be between 500-600 words total; bullet points are fine.

Please Consider the Following Questions:

- What is the *legal question* to be addressed? Is it clearly defined and will it be possible to cover in a paper of this length? Are sub-questions advisable to guide the research and its presentation in the paper?

- Are there aspects of the research question/aim that *could* have been covered, but will *not* be, in other words are *"delimitations"* (excluded elements) defined?

- How is comparative theory and method applied to the research question? What materials will be required and how will they be used and evaluated?

- What are your conclusions?

Please note that the Department of Law at Stockholm University uses a text-matching (plagiarism prevention) system, at this time Urkund. All final essays are submitted to Urkund for analysis. Plagiarism is considered cheating and if discovered in a research paper, the paper will be failed immediately, and further disciplinary measures may be taken. Please, do inform yourself as to how to avoid plagiarising.

The essay is to be submitted electronically on the date and time as stated in the schedule on the course website, on Athena.

3.4 Oral Presentation of Each Paper and Another's Constructive Feedback/Opposition

During the presentations students should orally, in an objective and constructive manner, critically comment on another student's paper. The presentations and oppositions will be held in

accordance with time slots on the schedule posted on Athena. Time is allocated in the following manner:

- Student 1 presents his/her paper (about 5 minutes).
- Student 2 opposes that paper (about 8-10 minutes).
- Student 1 addresses the main points made during the opposition (3-5 minutes).
- Discussion ensues.

Directly after the opposition of a paper, the opponent should provide a printed copy of his or her written opposition summary to the examiner and to the student whose paper it concerns.

The examiner will give oral feedback to each student and the grade will be posted within three weeks of the oral presentation.

3.5 Written Exam

The private international law part of the course will be examined through a written exam. Students must register for the exam no later than 10 calendar days before the date of the exam. Registration for the exam requires registration on the course. *Students who have not registered for the exam are not allowed to write the exam.*

All students are required to show a valid ID on the day of exam. Driving licenses, passports and ID cards that are still in date are approved as identification. In case of stolen or lost ID, students may also prove their identity by providing a police report no more than three months old. Foreign ID documents are also accepted, preferably passports and ID cards.

Students must be in the examination room at least 15 minutes before the exam is set to start.

In this course, Department of Law examination option 2 is applied. This option entails that only laws and international treaties may be brought to the exam. Notes, post it notes, underlining and the like (regardless of form) in the specified texts are allowed. A list of laws, regulations and international treaties that may be printed out and brought to the exam will be posted on Athena.

The presence of unauthorized exam aids as well as other violations of exam regulations may lead to a notification to the university Disciplinary Committee. The Disciplinary Committee, led by the vice-chancellor of Stockholm University, can decide on a warning or a suspension.

3.6 Should You Not Pass the Course

Students who fail a regular graded component – either the research paper or the written exam – are given an opportunity for re-examination. Students who have passed are not entitled to undergo re-examination for higher grades. Students who are failed twice by the same examiner have the right to demand a different examiner when doing additional re-examinations. This does not however apply if there are specific reasons for not appointing a different examiner.

Completed compulsory assignments are valid for two years. This also applies in cases where a student de-registers from the course by withdrawing.

A student has the right – for a period of two years after registration – to invoke the course requirements contained in the course syllabus applicable at the time the student first registered for the course.

4 Registration and De-registration

Swedish students intending to participate in the course must be registered by the second day of the course at the latest.

Exchange students must register on the course through their university account in Ladok at the beginning of their exchange, the week before the semester starts.

If for some reason, a registered student no longer intends to take the course, he or she must de-register within three weeks after the start of the course (known as "early withdrawal period"). This is done through the student's university account in Ladok. This is of great importance to guarantee a place in a group the next time the student applies for the course. The early withdrawal period is calculated from the Monday of the week the course starts and three weeks ahead. The last day is always a Sunday.

Please note that de-registrations may have consequences for the right to receive student grants, including Erasmus grants. Please, contact CSN for more information if you are a Swedish student, or the Office of International Affairs if you are an international master student or an exchange student.

5 Studying with a disability

5.1 General Information

Stockholm University offers various forms of extra pedagogical support for people with permanent disabilities. The support offered depends on the individual's situation and the resources of the university and is intended to facilitate studies as far as is possible and reasonable.

To take advantage of the support offered, disabled students must submit an application to the university's Disability Services (part of the Student Services). To do this, they must log into the system NAIS via a link found on Student Services's web page (Stockholm University > Education > Studying with a disability > how to apply for support) and fill in the online form. To complete the application, a certificate confirming the disability must be attached.

When the application is received, the student will be contacted by the Student Services to book a personal meeting.

If a student is granted support, he or she will need to contact their department's contact person and submit the certificate issued by the Student Services. The contact person at the Department of law for Swedish students is Viktoria Pettersson, director of studies, Tel.: 08-16 13 04 or e-mail: viktoria.pettersson@juridicum.su.se. Exchange students must also contact the OIA using the email exchange@juridicum.su.se.

5.2 Examination

Note that the course administrator must be informed of a student's documented disability no later than 3 weeks before each examination in order for the extra pedagogical support to be in place in time. If the information is received later, the department cannot guarantee that the examination can be carried out as desired. Please also note that registration for the exam must be done in the usual manner no later than 10 calendar days before the exam. Also note that in order to receive extra pedagogical support during the entire course (e.g. note-taking assistance) or special extra measures (e.g. dividing up the exam), the course administrator/teaching assistant must be contacted at the latest by at the start of the course.

6 Student Influence and Course Development

All students are asked to complete an anonymous electronic course evaluation at the end of the course. The course evaluation is of great importance for the quality assurance of the course content and its pedagogical structure. The course is constantly changing and evolving, and the views and ideas expressed in the course evaluation are always carefully considered.