Stockholm University

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

General information about the course

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 is Laura Carlson, email: laura.carlson@juridicum.su.se, and the course administrator is Maria Schöning, email: maria.schoening@juridicum.su.se.

Content and objectives

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 includes the following course elements:

- This 10-week course is divided into four blocks. The first block focuses on the overarching comparative law theories and methods. The second block addresses different national legal systems, the Common Law, English, American, the Civil Law, French and German as well as other systems such as African legal systems and Chinese law. The third block addresses comparative legal theoretical approaches to substantive issues, including contract and torts. The fourth block consists of authoring a comparative law essay that is to be presented and defended orally. The students will also oppose another student's essay both in writing and orally.

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- demonstrate a knowledge of comparative legal theory and methodology as well as independently and critically reason as to choice of method and method risks in carrying out a comparative law investigation;

- demonstrate knowledge of the basic tenants in the legal systems and legal families studied within the framework of the course as well as analyze and evaluate similarities and difference between them;

- plan and carry out a comparative law investigation and report the outcomes both in writing and orally; and

- analyze and evaluation the comparative law investigations of others as well as present constructive criticism both in writing and orally.

Pedagogical approach

Each seminar will last two hours. Each hour will be led by the lecturer, with a focus on student groups answering the reading questions. Each seminar has assigned readings and questions as listed in Athena.

More about the course structure

The different course elements:

Written and oral exercises

The grade in the course is based on active student participation during the seminars (P/F), a written paper (20 points) and the oral presentation of the paper as well as opposition of another student's paper (4 points together), for a total of 24 points.

The topic of the paper and choice of method is to submitted before the tutorial according to the schedule.

Mandatory course elements

The Comparative Law course consists of seminars and active student attendance is required at all seminars. Active attendance means that the student has prepared the seminar assignment and participates in the seminar discussions.

In the event a student misses any seminar, the student is to complete a written assignment in the form of a short paper on the topic and questions addressed during the seminar (600 words, two A4 pages, 12 pt, 1.5 spacing). The make-up assignments can be handed in at any time, but a grade will not be given in the course to the student until all the make-up assignments have been submitted.

Completing the make-up assignments before the essay is recommended. The make-up assignment should be called 2025 Comparative Law Makeup [students name and seminar no.] and emailed to comp@juridicum.su.se. Each student needs to keep check of their own absences and turn in a make-up assignment for each absence.

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. The essay presentation and opposition are mandatory and cannot be made up. Grades will not be released until all the make-up assignments are handed in and examined.

International and comparative elements of the course

This comparative law course includes both international and comparative elements, focusing on the study and comparison of different legal systems across the world. The international element encompasses how international law affects and interacts with domestic legal systems. The comparative element involves close analysis of various domestic legal systems (such as civil law, common law, and other traditions), comparing legal concepts, institutions, and problem-solving approaches across countries to better understand similarities, differences, and the potential for legal transplants or reforms.

Interaction with the surrounding society

This comparative law course interacts with surrounding society by equipping students to address social, economic, and political challenges through a cross-cultural legal perspective. The curriculum is designed to enhance understanding of how legal systems shape—and are shaped by—societal values, social structure, cultural differences, and global trends.

How the course relates to other courses and to the law programme as a whole

This course in comparative law is closely related to legal education in general by broadening students' understanding of law beyond a single domestic system. It provides an interdisciplinary perspective that enhances critical thinking, analytical skills, and legal reasoning by exposing students to different legal traditions, concepts, and methods. This broadens the student's horizons and better prepares them for globalized legal practice and transnational legal issues.

Requirements regarding participation in the course

Registration

A **Swedish student** who intends to participate in the course must be registered by the second day of the course at the latest.

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

Re-registration

Re-registration on the course is done by the course administrator.

De-registration

If for some reason, a student does not intend to take the course, they 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.

Study instructions

Source materials

Each seminar has assigned readings and questions as listed in Athena to be prepared prior to the seminar.

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Examination

Examined moments

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 grade is based on a weighing of the individual presentations within the framework for the different examination moments. All of the course's learning outcomes must be achieved and all activities passed in order to pass the course. All make-up assignments for missed seminars must be submitted for a grade to be given.

Exam registration and submission

There is no requirement as to registering for the exam as the essay is to be written during the term. There are two essay due dates in the course. The first due date, which is voluntary with the exchange students having a right of priority, ensures that the examination will occur before Christmas. The second date in January entails examination during exam week for the fall B courses. Those wishing to turn the essay in by the December voluntary deadline need to contact the course administrator according to the schedule.

The essay is to be submitted electronically by the time and date as stated in the schedule on the course website via Athena. It is also to be submitted to the course administrator at comp@juridicum.su.se and, the student who is to be the opponent The essay should be an attached file named: 2025 Complaw XXX, with XXX being the student author's last name.

An essay submitted after 10:00 a.m. is late and will not be able to be uploaded to Athena, and consequently cannot be presented. If you do not receive the essay you are to oppose in time, first check your spam mail, and if not there, let the course administrator know immediately. All essays are automatically sent by Athena to the text-matching program, Inspera Originality. Please check their rules with respect to plagiarism (https://inspera.com/inspera-originality/).

Exam Grades

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 grade is based on a weighing of the individual presentations within the framework for the different examination moments. All of the course's learning outcomes must be achieved and all activities passed in order to pass the course. All make-up assignments for missed seminars must be submitted for a grade to be given.

Grades are given on either the Swedish four-grade scale or the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) seven-grade scale. The Swedish grading scale is: Pass with distinction (AB), Pass without distinction (BA), Pass (B) or Fail (U). 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. The ECTS seven-grade scale is as follows: A (Excellent), B (Very good), C (Good), D (Satisfactory) or E (Sufficient). Failing grades are Fx (Insufficient) and F (Wholly insufficient).

Swedish students will receive a grade on the learning outcome-based four-grade grading scale AB-U. International master students and exchange students will receive a grade on the learning outcome-based seven-grade grading scale A-F(x).

All students have the right to receive grades according to the grading scale A-F(x). Swedish students who wish to do so must report this to the course coordinator at course start.

Students with a documented disability who have been issued a certificate of extra pedagogical support from Stockholm University must report this to the course administrator/teaching assistant as soon as possible (see below, "studying with a disability").

Documents allowed at the exam

Students are allowed to take what they want to the presentation and opposition of the essays.

Grading criteria

Each student is to present and defend an essay, as well as act as opponent with respect to another student's essay, in the last week of the course. The presentation, defense and opposition of the essays at the final seminar are mandatory and cannot be made up. The grading for each moment is based on a holistic assessment of the following criteria.

Objectives of the written and oral presentations:

With the paper and oral presentations, the student is to demonstrate:

- Knowledge as to the fundamentals of comparative law theory and method as well as the ability to critically reason around choice of method and different method problems with the execution of comparative law studies;

- Knowledge as to the fundamental characteristics in different legal families as studied within the course;

- The ability to independently plan and complete a legal investigation and present the results both in writing and orally in English; and

- The ability to independently and in a professional manner criticize and oppose in English another student's academic work.

Assessment criteria with respect to the course essay:

- subject and problem formulation
- knowledge of the subject and insight into the topic
- presentation materials and methodology
- analysis and argumentation including independent conclusions,
- sources and
- formal requirements (including deadlines), and
- language.

Assessment criteria with respect to the opposition summary:

The student is to demonstrate with the opposition summary the following:

- Contains objective, relevant and constructive feedback as to another student's essay; and
- The ability to independently and in a professional manner criticize and oppose in English another student's academic work within the given timeframe;

Assessment criteria applicable to the oral presentations of the essay and opposition

The student is to demonstrate the:

- Ability to formulate legal problems;
- Ability to within a limited timeframe in a legally correct manner independently and systematically argue based on the problem formulation; and
- Ability to arrive at legal conclusions as well as communicate them.

The Formal Requirements for the Essay:

The essay is to be approximately 4,000-6,000 words including the title page and bibliography. The title page is to contain the title of the paper, the student's name, course name, date and number of words. The spacing for the paper is to be 1.5, with Times New Roman 12 pt.

Footnotes are to be used for references. The legal usage rules as found in the document, Legal English Checklist, as in the Athena essay plan is to be followed.

The student is to pick the topic for the paper based in part of the themes covered in the course in the seminars. The topic of the paper is to be approved by your teacher at the tutorial.

The Formal Requirements for the Opposition Summary:

The oppositions summary is to be between 500-600 words total, bullet points are fine. It will be handed (only) to the examiner in class after the presentation and opposition of the essay. The presentations and oppositions will be held in accordance with the schedule posted on the website. You only need to be present at your own 1-hour time slot for your presentation and opposition.

The Formal Requirements for the Oral Presentation and Opposition:

For each 1-hour time slot, the time is to be allocated in the following manner:

- Student 1 presents the essay (about 6-8 minutes) Student 2 opposes the essay (about 8-10 minutes) Student 1 addresses the main points of the opposition Discussion (if wanted/needed)

- Student 2 presents the essay (about 6-8 minutes) Student 1 presents the essay (about 8-10 minutes) Student 2 addresses the main points of the opposition Discussion (if wanted/needed)

- Feedback is then given by the examiner individually (not to both at the same time). However, the grade and grading protocol are not released at this time (to allow for reassessment by the examiner).

Request for grade review:

Requests for grade reviews are submitted on a special form to the course administrator/teaching assistant. The request must be state the basis for the request of reassessment as supported by the student's essay fulfilling the grading criteria and a copy of the exam must be attached.

Studying with a disability

General

Stockholm University offers various forms of extra pedagogical support for people with permanent disabilities. The support offered depends on the individual's situation and is intended to facilitate studies. The goal is for all students to have an opportunity to study on equal terms.

To take advantage of the support offered, 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.

Once the student is granted support, they 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. International master students must contact the Office of International Affairs at master@juridicum.su.se. Exchange students must also contact the OIA using the email exchange@juridicum.su.se.

Examination

Note that the course administrator/teaching assistant 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**.** 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**.

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.