Stockholm University

Course description for Master's Thesis in International Commercial Arbitration Law

(15 ECTS) SPRING 26

General information about the course

Content and objectives

This course is the final course in the Master of Laws Programme in International Commercial Arbitration Law. During this course the students will author an independent, qualified research project (thesis). Students will concurrently take the course in Advanced International Arbitration Law.

The course aims to prepare and support students work on their master theses by focusing for example on the requirements for academic writing, handling and choice of methodology, selection choice of research inquiries, requirement of scholarly legal study, as well as the prerequisite for legal analysis and argumentation within the area of international arbitration.

The course includes the following course elements:

Students shall plan an author a thesis on an appropriate and limited subject within international arbitration law. Students shall also orally present their research and will also comment on another student's master thesis ("opposition").

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

Knowledge and understanding

After successful completion of the course, the student is expected to be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding, including an overview of international commercial arbitration law as well as in-depth knowledge of the area that the thesis deals with, including insight into current relevant research and development, and
- demonstrate detailed knowledge of international arbitration law methodology.

Skills and abilities

After successful completion of the course, the student is expected to be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and to assess complex questions;
- demonstrate the ability to systematically, critically and independently identify, formulate and analyze complex legal questions within the chosen topic;
- demonstrate the ability to clearly in oral and written format report their conclusions within specified time frames; and
- demonstrate the ability to constructively assess and comment another student's master thesis.

Values and attitudes

After successful completion of the course, the student is expected to be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to independently and critically assess and value the legal rules within the chosen subject area with regard to relevant scientific, societal and ethical issues;
- demonstrate the ability to have a professional approach to the law and the professional role, and;
- demonstrate the ability to identify their need for additional knowledge and continuously develop their competence.

Pedagogical approach

The Master thesis project is to be completed independently and individually and submitted as a single paper; it may not be divided into different essays. The subject for the thesis may be multi-disciplinary. The teaching and the degree project (thesis) take place in English.

More about the course structure

Seminars

During the course two seminars are offered (voluntary attendance):

- Defining the research question and delimiting the scope of an academic writing, and
- Methodology and the use of sources.

Supervision

Supervision takes predominantly the form of comments on the research proposal and a draft of the thesis, the opposition draft. Supervision can even be given to a limited extent individually through a meeting or correspondence. If there are special reasons, the course director can decide to change the supervisor.

An important part of supervision is students commenting on drafts of other students. Reading other students' text taking into account the grading criteria and the examination protocol helps with own independent work on the thesis.

Choice of topic

In order to aid the students with the choice of an appropriate topic, the students submit a research proposal. The supervisors are assigned on the basis of the proposed topics. The students get comments on the proposed research. It is possible to change the topic at a later stage, but it is advisable to commit to a topic as early as possible.

First draft for peer review

The first draft should contain at least the Introduction and some of the substantive chapters. The research question should be clearly defined, the scope delimited and the methodology explained. Moreover, a detailed outline (structure covering also the unready chapters) should be provided. The outline of the missing chapters can be provided as headings and subheadings. The draft should also contain a bibliography, list of cases and other sources referred to in the thesis. The draft should be uploaded to Athena by the given deadline. It is preferred that the draft is submitted as a Word document. Only drafts provided by the given deadline will receive comments.

Each student will be assigned two drafts to comment on. The comments of the reviewer should be detailed and constructive. Both strong points and weak points should be mentioned together with proposals for improvements. The comments should be uploaded in Athena. A minimum one-page

comment report should be provided. It can be added to the beginning of the thesis if additional comments on the text of the thesis are provided.

Opposition
The thesis sent for the opposition should be a full thesis. Formatting and some minor parts can be unfinished. Each student will be assigned a thesis to comment on.
The draft should be uploaded to Athena by the given deadline. Only drafts submitted by the given deadline will receive comments. Submit the text that you have at the time, even if it is not finished.
The purpose of the "opposition" is to subject the whole thesis to constructive critical review, allow the author to then make necessary amendments to the thesis before the final submission, and to give an opportunity to the commenting students to practice providing critical comments before the thesis seminar (examination).
Each student is to participate in an opposition seminar as an author of the thesis which is receiving comments and as an opponent.
Opponents can identify aspects of the work that they praise, as well as identify areas where improvements can be suggested. The comments should be detailed and follow the grading criteria for the thesis.
The comments on the thesis submitted for opposition are the last comments that the students receive from the supervisors before the final submission of the thesis.

International and comparative elements of the course

The research in international commercial arbitration contains international and comparative elements.

Interaction with the surrounding society

The students are free to discuss their research project with the practitioners and academic in the field.

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

The course further develops and deepens the student's knowledge, both in terms of subject and methodology, beyond the preceding courses in the Master programme.

Requirements regarding participation in the course

Registration

To be admitted, the student must have received a passing grade in the course International Commercial Arbitration Law.

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

The thesis project is based on independent work of the students. The students are responsible for finding the sources needed for their research project. The author of the thesis is responsible for the quality of the thesis submitted.

Examination

Examination occurs through:

- Independently written master thesis,
- Oral presentation at the examination seminar, and
- Opposition of another student's thesis at the examination seminar

Examination is carried out in connection with the student presenting and defending his essay at an examination seminar. The grading is done on the basis of the written master thesis - on a criterion-referenced scale of seven grades with passing grades of A (Excellent), B (Very good), C (Good), D (Satisfactory), or E (Sufficient). Failing grades are Fx (Insufficient) or F (Entirely insufficient). For other examination stages, only the grades Passed (G) and Fail (U) are used.

In order to pass the course, it is required that all learning objectives for the course are met.

A thesis which completed not within the timeframe is examined, but can reach a grade of C (Good) at most. A resubmitted thesis which was initially failed is considered to be completed not within the timeframe.

Note that in order for the thesis to be examined within the same academic year, the thesis has to be submitted in good time before the examination seminar to allow the opposing student to comment on the thesis. Participation in the examination seminar is obligatory.

The thesis seminar which takes place after the final submission of the thesis is part of the examination process. The examiner is the chair of the thesis seminar. The supervisor is not present. The students will be assigned their roles ahead of the seminar.

The purpose of the thesis seminar is for the author of the thesis to show the ability to orally report and discuss the conclusions and the knowledge and arguments that form the basis for the conclusion and for the opponent to show the ability to critically review and discuss an academic work. The author of the thesis is to answer to the questions of the examiner about the thesis. The student can only refer to the text of the thesis when under examination. Thereafter the opposing student will provide comments on the thesis based on the grading criteria (see below). The comments should be detailed, insightful and focusing on both positive and negative aspects of the thesis. The opponent is expected to have read and analyzed the thesis in detail.

The examiner is appointed by the head of the department. The supervisor may not be the examiner.

Students who initially fail the examination are given the opportunity to be assessed a second time. Students who have received a passing grade are not allowed to be assessed again in order to achieve a higher grade. Students who fail the course twice from the same examiner have the right to request a different examiner for their next examination. This, however, does not apply if there are particular reasons that a different examiner cannot be appointed.

Submission of the thesis
The thesis is to be submitted in Athena by 22 May 2026, 12:00 in a pdf format.
Name your thesis in the following way: "Last name, first name, Master thesis 2025".
Use the Master thesis master document available in Athena.
The thesis should be approximately 11,000 – 13,000 words, including footnotes. Footnotes should contain only sources. The word count excludes the cover page, abstract, table of contents and bibliography, list of cases, laws and other sources.
Please read carefully the disciplinary guidelines of the Stockholm University: https://www.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.303348.1476968013!/menu/standard/file/SU%20FV-2.5.1-2623-16%20Guidelines%20for%20disciplinary%20matters%20at%20Stockholm%20University.pdf
Each thesis is submitted to an anti-plagiarism program.

Grading criteria

Assessment criteria for the master thesis:
- problem formulation,
- factual knowledge and insight into the subject,
- presentation,
- material,
- method,
- analysis and argumentation,
- conclusions,
- formalities etc.,
- language, and
- ability to plan and implement the work within given time frames (schedule).

Assessment criteria for the opposition:
- ability to constructively assess and oppose another student's master thesis.

Assessment criteria for oral presentation:
- ability to verbally clearly report the results and respond to relevant criticism

The thesis is assessed on the basis of weighing the above assessment criteria. The grading criteria, which are connected with the expected results upon completion of the course are as follows:

Assessment criteria	**Grading criteria**
Problem formulation	A The research inquiries are formulated in an excellent way with appropriately justified limits of the scope allowing for systematic and critical analysis of complex legal questions. B The research inquiries are formulated very well with appropriately justified limits of the scope allowing for systematic and critical analysis of complex legal questions. C The research inquiries are formulated well with appropriately justified limits of the scope allowing for systematic and critical analysis of complex legal questions. D The research inquiries are formulated sufficiently well with justified limits of the scope allowing for systematic and predominantly critical analysis of complex legal questions.

	E The research inquiries are formulated adequately with justified limits of the scope allowing for systematic and generally critical analysis of complex legal questions. Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E. F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Factual knowledge and insights to the subject	A The contents are relevant and demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding, including an overview of international commercial arbitration law as well as in-depth knowledge of the area that the thesis deals with, including insight into current relevant research and development. B The contents are relevant and demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding, including an overview of international commercial arbitration law as well as in-depth knowledge of the area that the thesis deals with, including insight into current relevant research and development. C The contents are relevant and demonstrate good knowledge and understanding, including an overview of international commercial arbitration law as well as in-depth knowledge of the area that the thesis deals with, including insight into current relevant research and development. D The contents are relevant and demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding, including an overview of international commercial arbitration law as well as in-depth knowledge of the area that the thesis deals with, including insight into current relevant research and development. E Acceptable knowledge and understanding of the international commercial arbitration as well as the detailed chosen topic, including insights into current research are demonstrated Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E. F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Presentation	A The thesis is very well structured for the purpose, logical, coherent and to the point. B The thesis is well structured for the purpose, logical, coherent and to the point. C The thesis is generally well structured for the purpose, logical, coherent and to the point. D The structure and outline are sufficiently clear and logical.

	E The structure and outline are adequately clear and logical. Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E. F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Material	A The choice and use of material show excellent ability to integrate knowledge. B The choice and use of material show very good ability to integrate knowledge. C The choice and use of material show good ability to integrate knowledge. D The choice and use of material show sufficient ability to integrate knowledge. E The choice and use of material show adequate ability to integrate knowledge. Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E. F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Method	A The thesis reflects excellent detailed knowledge of the methods chosen for the topic and the chosen methods are well-suited and appropriately implemented in the study. B The thesis reflects high degree detailed knowledge of the methods chosen for the topic and the chosen methods are well-suited and appropriately implemented in the study. C The thesis reflects good knowledge of the methods chosen for the topic and the chosen methods are well-suited and appropriately implemented in the study. D The thesis reflects satisfactory knowledge of the methods chosen for the topic and implemented in the study. E The thesis reflects basic knowledge of the methods chosen for the topic and implemented in the study Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E. F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Analysis and argumentation	A The development of the legal argument is highly analytical, systematic and critical. Legal rules are independently and critically assessed with regard to

	scientific, societal and ethical issues as appropriate for the chosen topic. Excellent ability to assess complex questions. B The development of the legal argument is analytical, systematic and critical. Legal rules are independently and critically assessed with regard to scientific, societal and ethical issues as appropriate for the chosen topic. Very good ability to assess complex questions. C The development of the legal argument is appropriately analytical, systematic and critical. Legal rules are independently and critically assessed with regard to scientific, societal and ethical issues as appropriate for the chosen topic. Good ability to assess complex questions. D The development of the legal argument is sufficiently analytical, systematic and critical. Legal rules are independently and critically assessed with regard to scientific, societal and ethical issues as appropriate for the chosen topic. Sufficient ability to assess complex questions. E The development of the legal argument is adequately analytical, systematic and critical. Legal rules are independently and critically assessed with regard to scientific, societal and ethical issues as appropriate for the chosen topic. Adequate ability to assess complex questions. Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E. F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Conclusions	A The thesis demonstrates excellent ability to draw and present conclusions from the conducted analysis. The conclusions answer fully and in a nuanced way to the research questions and place the conclusions against a broader background. B The thesis demonstrates very good ability to draw and present conclusions from the conducted analysis. The conclusions answer to all the research inquiries and are placed against a broader background. C The thesis demonstrates good ability to draw and present conclusions from the conducted analysis and to answer the formulated questions. D The thesis demonstrates sufficient ability to draw and present conclusions from the conducted analysis and to answer the formulated questions. Some nuances might not be taken into account. E The thesis demonstrates adequate ability to draw and present conclusions from the conducted analysis and to answer the formulated questions. There might be minor aspects that have not been addressed. Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.

	F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Language and formalia	A The use of language is excellent, analytically nuanced, concise, linguistically coherent, and stylistically correct. Citations, footnotes or endnotes, and the list of sources used are complete and accurate. B The use of language is very good, concise, linguistically coherent, and stylistically correct. Citations, footnotes or endnotes, and the list of sources used are complete and accurate. C The use of language is good concise, linguistically coherent, and stylistically correct. Citations, footnotes or endnotes and the list of sources used are accurate and thorough. D The thesis is generally well-written with only minor linguistic and stylistic errors. Citations, footnotes or endnotes and the list of sources used are accurate and thorough, even if some mistakes exist. E The thesis is acceptable, although there are a number of errors and stylistic deficiencies. Citations, footnotes or endnotes, and the list of sources used do not have major defects. Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E. F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Time frame	A, B The thesis is completed within the timeframe. C, D, E The thesis is completed later than the timeframe. Fx Minor deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E. F Considerable deficiencies exist such that the student does not fulfill all the requirements necessary for a grade of E.
Presentation	Ability to verbally clearly report the results and respond to relevant criticism.
Opposition	Ability to constructively assess and oppose another student's master thesis.

Request for grade review:

Requests for grade reviews are submitted on a special form to the course administrator/teaching assistant. The request must be carefully supported 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. International master students must contact the Office of International Affairs at master@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. 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.

Recommended reading

ICAL Master Thesis Handbook available on Athena

Any reading which is relevant to the topic of the thesis and methodology and other aspects of legal research.