Stockholm University

Course description for Comparative Law, JU44AA/JU44BB (15 credits)/ Autumn 2026

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).

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

Pedagogical approach

Instruction is in English and given in the form of obligatory seminars. Active student attendance is required at all seminars. Active attendance means that the student is to have prepared the seminar questions and reading assignments and be prepared to participate in seminar discussions in small groups and in class. Each seminar has assigned readings and questions as listed in Canvas.

More about the course structure

This 10-week course is divided into four blocks and includes the following course elements:

- 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, Sharia law and Chinese law;
- The third block addresses comparative legal theoretical approaches to substantive issues, including contract and torts: and

- 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.

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 be submitted before the tutorial according to the schedule.

Mandatory course elements

The Comparative Law course comprises several mandatory course elements: active student attendance, the written essay, the oral presentation and defence of the essay, the written and oral opposition of another student's essay in the final week of the course. The assignments regarding the essay are set forth below under the heading, 'Examination'. The presentation, defines and opposition of the essays during the final seminar are mandatory and exemptions as a rule are not granted.

Active student attendance

The course comprises seminars and active student attendance is required at all seminars. Active attendance means that the student has prepared the seminar assignment prior to class, and contributes to the group discussions both internally and during the seminar. Reading text from a computer or cell phone is not considered active participation. Everyone in the small groups is expected to be able to answer and discuss all the assigned discussion questions.

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 (maximum 600 words, two A4 pages, 12 pt, 1.5 spacing). The make-up assignments can be loaded up in Canvas 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.

Each student needs to keep check of their own absences, and can see their absences in Canvas. A make-up assignment needs to be submitted for each absence. The make-up assignment should be named 2026CompL Makeup [students name and seminar number]. A student can miss up to three seminars without stating a reason but a make-up assignment still needs to be uploaded. After that, excused absences will only be for good cause, such as illness as attested by a physician's certificate. Grades will not be released until all the make-up assignments are uploaded and examined. Consequently, completing the make-up assignments before the essay is recommended.

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 certain 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 the 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 listed in Canvas to be prepared prior to the seminar. See below for the use of AI policy.

Examination

Examined moments

The grade in 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 as stated above.

Exam registration and submission

There is no requirement as to registering for the exam as the essay is to be written during the term.

Essay submissions

The due dates for submission of the tutorial, essay and summary opposition are scheduled for a certain date and a certain time, after which submissions cannot be uploaded.

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

There are two essay due dates in the course. The first due date, which is voluntary with the exchange students starting their home term in January having a right of priority, ensures that the examination will occur before Christmas. The second date in January entails examination during typical 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 and as stated, international students with home terms starting in January have priority as places are limited. Grades are not released until three weeks after the end of the fall term in January.

An essay submitted after the time and date stated in the schedule (deadline) is late and will not be able to be uploaded to Canvas 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 Canvas to the text-

matching program, Inspera Originality. Please check their rules with respect to plagiarism (https://inspera.com/inspera-originality/).

The Formal Requirements for the essay

The essay is to be approximately 4,500-6,500 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, number of words and the Declaration of AI use (see below). The essay must fulfil the requirements as set out in two documents, the essay description and the Legal English guidelines, both on Canvas.

Footnotes are to be used for references. The spacing for the paper is to be 1.5, with Times New Roman 12 pt.

The student is to pick the topic for the paper based in part of the themes covered in the course in the seminars and the essay must address a legal topic. The topic of the paper is to be approved at the tutorial but can be changed at a later date after a discussion with one of the course directors.

The Formal Requirements for the Opposition Summary

The opposition summary is to be between 500-600 words in total, bullet points are fine. A Declaration of AI use is to be included (see below). The opposition summary 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 need to be physically present only at your own time slot for your presentation and opposition.

The Formal Requirements for the Oral Presentation and Opposition

For each 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)

- If there are three students, student 1 opposes student 2, student 2 opposes student 3, and student 3 opposes student 1.

- 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).

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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, defence and opposition of the essays at the final seminar are mandatory and as a rule 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 research problem formulation, the student has in a structured manner clearly articulated the subject and research problem for the essay;
- Subject and topic, the student has demonstrated knowledge of the subject and insight into the topic of the essay;
- Materials, method and methodology, the student has chosen an appropriate methodology/method and clearly explained as well as applied it throughout the essay;
- Analysis and argumentation, the student has conducted a relevant and appropriate analysis based on the presentation including an independent conclusion;
- Formalities, the student has followed the formal requirements set out in the essay description as well as Legal English guidelines, including correct citations and meeting deadlines;
- Inclusion of an AI disclosure statement and the student followed the AI course guidelines and could explain the use (or non-use) of AI in the paper; 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;
- The ability to independently and in a professional manner criticize and oppose in another student's academic work within the given timeframe; and
- Inclusion of an AI disclosure statement and the student followed the AI course guidelines and could explain the use (or non-use) of AI in the paper.

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;
- Ability to explain the use of AI in the submissions; and
- Ability to arrive at legal conclusions as well as communicate them.

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 whatever documents they wish 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, defence 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. Active participation in seminars is P/F.

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.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):

The expectations regarding academic integrity and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for all components of the Comparative Law course are as follows.

Requirement for Independent Work

The primary objective of this course is for students to demonstrate their ability to "independently and critically reason" regarding comparative law methodology and to "independently plan and complete" a legal investigation. To meet these learning outcomes, all work submitted or presented—including written assignments, oral presentations, and seminar contributions—must be the student's own original work.

Written Essay and Opposition Summary

- Originality: The written essay (20 points) and the written opposition summary (part of 4 points) must be authored entirely by the student.
- Declaration as to AI Use: Both the essay and the Opposition Summary are to include the following declaration on their first page:

  Declaration of AI use

  I, [student name], declare that this Comparative Law [essay/opposition summary] is my own independent work. I have not used generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to draft whole paragraphs or sections, to generate legal analysis, or to perform comparative reasoning. Any AI tools used ([names of tools]) were employed only to [e.g. check grammar or suggest alternative phrasing] in relation to text that I had already written myself. I have independently verified all legal sources, comparisons, and citations. I accept full responsibility for the content of this [essay/opposition summary] and understand that undeclared or prohibited AI use may constitute academic misconduct.

- Verification: All essays are automatically submitted to the text-matching program Inspera Originality to ensure compliance with plagiarism rules.
- Criteria Fulfilment: Use of AI to generate these documents will result in a failure to meet the assessment criteria, which require the student to demonstrate their own "knowledge of the subject," "analysis and argumentation," and "independent conclusions".

Essay presentation, defence and opposition

- Prohibition on AI Scripts: During oral presentations, defence and opposition of the essay, students are expected to demonstrate the "ability to... independently and systematically argue" within a limited timeframe.

- Declaration of AI use: I, [student name], declare that this Comparative Law oral [essay presentation/opposition/defence] is my own independent work. I have not used generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to draft whole paragraphs or sections, to generate legal analysis, or to perform comparative reasoning. Any AI tools used ([names of tools]) were employed only to [e.g. check grammar or suggest alternative phrasing] in relation to text that I had already written myself. I have independently verified all legal sources, comparisons, and citations. I accept full responsibility for the content of this oral presentation and understand that undeclared or prohibited AI use may constitute academic misconduct.
- Authenticity of Responses: Reading from a response generated by AI during these sessions is strictly prohibited. AI-generated responses are not the student's own work and do not satisfy the requirement for the student to demonstrate their own "ability to arrive at legal conclusions" or their ability to "independently and in a professional manner criticize" another's work.

Seminar Discussion Questions

- Active Participation: Mandatory attendance requires "active student participation," which is defined as the student having "prepared the seminar assignment" and participating in discussions.
- Declaration of AI use: I, [student name], declare that any answer to the seminar discussion questions is the result of group discussions in which generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools have not been used to draft the answer, generate legal analysis, or perform comparative reasoning.
- Independent Preparation: Using AI to generate answers to the assigned reading questions does not constitute personal preparation. Presenting AI-generated answers during seminars fails to meet the requirement for active participation.

Consequences for Course Criteria

The course grade is a holistic assessment of whether all learning outcomes have been achieved. Because the course specifically tests a student's individual analytical and communication skills in English, any work found to be generated by AI:

- Will be deemed not the student's own work.
- Will not fulfil the course criteria or the mandatory requirements for active attendance.
- May result in a failing grade (U/F) as the student has failed to demonstrate the required independent legal reasoning and investigative skills.

Images in contrast may be generated in AI with the correct acknowledgement as images in general are not required in any of the course activities.

Appropriate use of AI in this course

To use AI for research without violating the requirement that all work must be "independently" produced, students should treat AI as a supplemental search tool rather than a content generator. The core of the policy is to ensure students demonstrate their own "knowledge of the subject," "analysis," and "argumentation". Appropriate use of AI can include:

- **Legal terminology and keywords**: Asking an AI, "What are the key terms used in German tort law regarding negligence?" to then use those terms to find primary sources in the library or legal databases.
- **Broad Contextual Understanding**: AI can provide a high-level overview of comparative law theories or the basic tenets of a legal system to help a student narrow down a topic.
- **Improving Language Clarity**: As the course is taught in English and assesses "language" as a formal requirement, students may use AI-based grammar checkers to refine their own drafting in English. For example, it is okay to write a paragraph independently and then using a tool to check for "Legal English" errors or grammatical flow.

Avoiding AI-misuse

- No Copy-Pasting: Any text generated by AI must not be directly cut and pasted into the essay.
- Verify Everything: AI often hallucinates legal citations. Students must personally check every source cited to ensure they are real and relevant.
- Links are not citations.

A good rule of thumb that the AI-use is inappropriate is that the student has learned less using AI than they would have had they not used AI. The student must understand and have checked everything in the assignment and be able to vouch for the work. 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' web page (Stockholm University > Education > Studying with a disability > 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.