



Lectures conducted in English – Spring Semester 2026

Title of Lecture /Module	ECTS	Lecturer(s)	Content
Artificial Intelligence: Technology and Law	6	Abraham Bernstein, Thouvenin Florent	Machines are increasingly capable of performing tasks considered to require "intelligence" if performed by human beings. Recent developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are fueled by novel data processing technologies, ever growing amounts of data, and increased computing power. AI systems come with great promises and opportunities, but they also raise concerns in many respects and they pose significant challenges to the application of today's legal order. Accordingly, regulators around the globe are currently investigating if and how the law should be adapted to meet these challenges. This course provides participants with an interdisciplinary view on AI by focusing on the capabilities of AI systems and the regulatory as well as technical responses in Switzerland and Europe. In doing so, it also highlights some of the fundamental differences in preventing undesired outcomes in law and computer science and challenges all participants to reflect on practical solutions for the future.
Climate Change Law	6	Johannes Reich	Anthropogenic climate change is arguably the most severe challenge facing humanity. The course seeks to situate "Climate Change Law" with its cross-cutting character in both international law and domestic (environmental) law. Students will gain insights into the relation between Climate Change Law and General International Law as well as International Environmental Law and acquire knowledge on the history of the emergence of the international regime to mitigate and adapt to climate change. On the basis of an introduction into the geophysical basis of human-induced climate change, provided by Professor Dr. Reto Knutti, Center for Climate Systems Modeling (C2SM), Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich), the course will enable the students to gain a profound understanding of the complex treaty-based regime of Climate Change Law spanning from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and discuss the implementation thereof both at the domestic level (Switzerland) and in the European Union. Students will get familiar with the potential and challenges of climate change litigation and the role private actors such as corporations and social movements can play in the combat against global warming. Presentations by external experts form an integral part of the lecture.



<u>Comparative Administrative Law</u>	6	Felix Uhlmann	<p>Many countries struggle with the amount of regulation that administrative authorities must implement. Although the subject areas of such regulation are quite di-verse, the implementation is usually guided by some general rules, often unwritten. These rules form what is called "Administrative Law" (or "General Administrative Law").</p> <p>The course looks into these rules from a comparative perspective. Common problems that may arise in the administrative context are illustrated by cases and other materials. Students are asked to comment on these cases and compare them - if possible - to their own legal background.</p> <p>The course is divided in two parts. At the beginning of the semester, students will be introduced to the typical topics of administrative law and discuss cases. In the second part, they will present a case from their home country (or from elsewhere) and discuss it in class (likewise the earlier cases). This will be the exam. Participation in class will be mandatory and be taken into account for the final mark (33 %).</p>
<u>Comparative Civil Procedure</u>	6	Samuel P. Baumgartner/Tanja Domej	<p>In this course we will discuss approaches taken in different jurisdictions towards key problems of civil litigation.</p>
<u>Contemporary History of Law</u>	6	Elisabetta Fiocchi Malaspina	<p>The course will focus the attention on the 16th to the 20th centuries, scrutinizing the «modern» development of State's theories and the creation of the international law system; the complex and contradictory relations between violence and law, between war and law, between race and law, between (in)equality of man and law and finally between economy and law. The course will outline and analyse the legal consequence of entanglements, interactions, collisions of law and relate this to the nature and construction of the social order from a historical perspective.</p> <p>Reading of primary sources combined together with a critical reconstruction on law and jurists in their context will be done during the course.</p>
<u>Cross-Border Litigation/Complex Procedure</u>	6	Samuel P. Baumgartner/Tanja Domej	<p>The module covers either: (1) international aspects of civil litigation in national courts, or (2) complex litigation in national courts involving a multitude of participants, such as bankruptcy proceedings, class or other forms of group actions, or collective redress.</p> <p>The precise content of the course will be announced separately for every semester in which it will be taught.</p>
<u>European Civil Procedure</u>	6	Tanja Domej	<p>In this course, we will discuss rules for cross-border litigation. A particular focus will be on the Lugano Convention that applies in the relationship between Switzerland, the EU, Iceland, and Norway.</p>
<u>European Economic Law</u>	6	Peter Georg Picht Andreas Heinemann	<p>The course gives an overview of the principles of European Economic Law.</p> <p>The economic constitution of the European Union and the foundations of the Internal Market are dealt with. The general perspective will be complemented by an analysis of the most important cases of the European Court of Justice. The focus will be on the free movement of goods, services, persons and capital as well as on EU competition law.</p>



European Institutions	6	Matthias Oesch	Selected questions of constitutional/institutional law of the EU and of the bilateral relations between the EU and Switzerland; a special focus lies on the discussion of current developments and challenges (e.g., Brexit, fundamental rights, democratic legitimacy, rule of law, EU external relations law, the EU and the People, Swiss-EU relations and institutional issues).
European Private Law	6	Leander D. Locker	Although Switzerland is not a Member State of the European Union, European legislation is highly relevant for Swiss courts and jurisprudence, since EU Market Law is also implemented and applied in Switzerland in different contexts. The most important examples stem from the fields of EU Consumer Law, EU Competition Law, EU Business and Financial Market Law, EU Employment Law. Building on the four market freedoms and the efforts of legislative alignment within the EU Single Market, the course aims at presenting the main precepts of substantive private law created by the European Union and to make students aware of the peculiarities of its application in Member States as well as in Non-Member States such as Switzerland.
European Tax Law	6	René Matteotti	The course European Tax Law is divided into three parts and begins with an introduction into the general principles of EU law looked at from a tax perspective and an overview of the tax relevant aspects of the relationship between Switzerland and the EU. In Part two, the ECJ jurisdiction on the fundamental freedoms in tax matters and its impact on the domestic tax laws of the EU member states will be discussed. Part III deals with the tax directives and the EU state aid rules with a focus on direct taxes. Part II and Part III will consist of presentations of the students.
Foundations and Trusts	6	Dominique Jakob	The course will deal with the fundamentals of (private and charitable) foundations with a focus on Swiss and Liechtenstein law; it will further deal with trusts and the recognition of trusts under the Hague Trust Convention.
History of International Law	6	Oliver Diggelmann	The course's objective is to deepen the understanding of contemporary international law and international relations. It introduces milestones of the development of international law and sheds light on the genealogy of important rules. In the first part of the course, we will discuss topics such as the historical roots of international law and diplomatic relations, international law and colonization, peace and stability, decolonization, world wars and collective security, and the emerging age of human rights. In the second part, a number of participants will be given the opportunity to hold a presentation on a jointly agreed topic. The slots for presentations are limited. 30 students are admitted to the course. The participants can either hold a presentation and submit a seminar paper of 3,500 words (15 slots) or take an oral examination at the end of the semester (15 slots). Attendance in class is mandatory, active participation expected.
International Commercial	6	Lorenz Droese	The module provides students with a level-appropriate overview of the fundamentals and practice of arbitration and thus gives insight into a conflict resolution instrument that is particularly significant for



Arbitration			international business life. Lectures by experienced, internationally active experts ensure a high level of practical relevance.
International Criminal Law	6	Sarah Summers	<p>The first part of the lecture will introduce students to the foundations, goals, and present-day challenges of international criminal law. Students will be acquainted with the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression. The course will briefly discuss issues of sentencing and enforcement of sentences.</p> <p>The second part of the lecture will be dedicated to the enforcement of ICL. Jurisdiction over international crimes, the evolution of international tribunals, and international criminal procedure will be discussed in the context of the present political environment. Particular attention will be paid to the legal options available to avert impunity in today's ongoing conflicts.</p>
International Economic Law	6	Christine Kaufmann	The course addresses different forms of economic cooperation in public international law. It will discuss the multilateral world trade system (WTO), international investment regulations and international monetary law and their interactions with other areas of international law such as environmental and human rights law.
International Financial Law	6	Kern Alexander	This course is designed to examine the role of international financial law and regulation in the operation of financial markets. It also seeks to enhance understanding of the rationale, methods and institutional design of the regulation and supervision of financial markets from an international, European and comparative perspective.
International Human Rights	6	Christine Kaufmann	The course will provide an overview of the current international human rights regime: It will cover the main international and regional human rights instruments and the different monitoring mechanisms. A substantial part of the Course is dedicated to the discussion of cases.
Internet Law	6	Florent Thouvenin	<p>Students will gain a deeper understanding of various internet-specific legal issues, namely in the area of Internet Governance, Data Protection, E-Commerce, and Copyright Law; the focus will (mostly) be on European law.</p> <p>The course consists of three parts: (1) seven introductory lectures from February-April; (2) writing of the paper in March/April; and (3) a two-day recess in early May. During the recess, the students will have to present their findings and discuss them with the professor and their fellow students.</p>
Introduction to Insurance Law and Regulation	6	Helmut Heiss	<p>This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of insurance as a risk management tool and the basic principles governing the creation, sale and enforcement of the most common forms of insurance. The course will present both economic and legal aspects of insurance in order to ensure a thorough understanding of insurance as both social and individual necessity.</p> <p>The legal part of the course will give the students the broadest possible exposure to the issues lawyers confront regularly in this area of practice.</p>



			<p>The course is recommended to students who want to explore insurance law and regulation in details for their professional purposes but also to students who wish to gain practical skills of understanding and using insurance contracts for their individual purposes.</p> <p>The course gives strong foundation for the topics covered by European / Swiss Law of Insurance Markets, therefore students are recommended to attend the course before choosing European Law of Insurance Markets.</p>
Introduction to Sports Law	6	Ulrich Haas	The course will primarily cover the following topics: sports organisation and governance, rules and regulations (including financial stability, anti- doping and fight against match-fixing), dispute resolution.
Introduction to U.S. Business Law	6	Andreas Kellerhals	The lecture offers an introduction and an overview of the most important business law regulations in the United States. After an introduction to the US-American legal system and the most important "players", individual areas of business law will be dealt with in depth and compared to EU and Swiss rules. It is also planned to involve US lawyers for individual lectures.
Introduction to U.S. Civil Procedure	6	Samuel P. Baumgartner	Introduction to U.S. civil procedure. We will focus particularly on those aspects of U.S. civil procedure that are quite different from continental European civil procedure and, in some cases, different from civil procedure anywhere else in the world.
Law and Anthropology: Introduction	3	Alice Margaria	<p>This course invites students to engage with a broad, legally pluralist understanding of law—one that extends beyond written legal texts to consider the roles of diverse social and legal actors in shaping the law. After exploring foundational questions—What is anthropology? What is law?—the course proceeds to address key themes such as kinship, litigation, human rights, and legal education, engaging with seminal works that have influenced the intellectual development of the field.</p> <p>Students will gain hands-on experience with anthropological methods for studying law and legal practice through a mini-fieldwork project, which involves observing court proceedings or law classes. Subject to the schedule of the European Court of Human Rights, there will also be an optional field trip to Strasbourg to attend and observe a hearing. Some sessions will feature guest anthropologists—conducting research mostly in Global South contexts—who will share their empirical insights related to the course themes</p>
Law and Development	3	Yesim M. Atamer	Law is widely thought of as a key ingredient, if not a prerequisite to economic development. “Good institutions lead to good economic outcome” is how the World Bank put it in one of its reports. In this rendering, economic development means growth, measured typically by GNP or GDP – the gross domestic product or the gross national product (the latter adding what nationals might have produced abroad). Only what is measurable in terms of pecuniary value is included, which excludes much of care work and the informal economy. This course will unpack the notion of development and growth in light of the costs (or externalities) for different peoples and society both historically and comparatively. It introduces students to recent debates on degrowth in light of climate change and their implications



			<p>for less developed countries. Law and the state play a central role in most development narratives, if only by pointing to the central role of property rights and their enforceability in a court of law. There are, however, numerous other ways in which law affects development for different constituencies as well as for nature. This course will take a close look at the role of business organizations, labor, and money. The major goal of the course is to shed a critical light on conventional stories that emphasize the beneficial role of law to growth and growth to development.</p>
Law and Technology: A cross-continental perspective	6	Florent Thouvenin	<p>This course will explore the interaction between law and modern technology. It will introduce students to the potentially problematic relationship between legal rules and technological change, and then begin to explore real substantive problems at the interface between them. This will require some understanding of particular legal doctrines and particular technologies, which the course itself will provide. It is the aim of the course to teach, encourage and nurture creative legal (and technological) thinking when contemplating questions such as the possible regulation and/or promotion (for example, through patents) of technology and technological change.</p>
Law, Reproduction and Ethics: Fundamental Debates	6	Alice Margaria	<p>Advancements in reproductive medicine have given rise to significant legal and ethical dilemmas. Legal frameworks governing this area are heterogenous and often lag behind the rapid pace of scientific progress and societal changes. This has led to legal gaps – often filled in by individual autonomy and practices – or to the imposition of ineffective legal prohibitions – often circumvented by crossing national borders in pursuit of (more) permissive legal regulations. These dynamics highlight the urgent need for deeper reflection on the ethical dimensions of reproductive technologies and practices. In light of this context, this course adopts a transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to critically examine some of the most pressing issues at the intersection of reproduction, law, and ethics. It begins with a lecture by a reproductive biologist and a visit to a research laboratory working in the field. The curriculum will then examine the legal frameworks governing reproductive medicine in Switzerland and abroad, alongside internationally relevant topics such as trans procreation, ectogestation, and gene editing. This transdisciplinary approach is further reinforced by welcoming both law and biology students into the course, and by fostering open, interactive dialogue between lecturers and students.</p>
Lecture Series in Law & Equality (Crime, Punishment, Law)	6	Sarah Summers	<p>Equality before the law and the equal application of law are fundamental principles of justice in constitutional democracies. These principles are of considerable importance in the context of crime and punishment. The power to attribute criminal liability and impose punishment is an essential aspect of the operation of the state. In the institution of punishment, the liberal state conveys a distinct form of authority which is defined not by power or faith but by law. The attribution of criminal liability and imposition of punishment is characterized by its institutional, limited, uniform, and universal character. Everyone is subject to the might of the penal state and punishment's legitimacy rests on the idea that all individuals could and should have refrained from committing criminal offences. At the same time, it is precisely this narrowness of focus on individual responsibility for an act or omission and the silencing of worries about other causes of, or reasons for, criminal behaviour (sociological, economic etc), that</p>



			<p>gives rises to concerns that to treat everyone equally might be to treat some people wrongly. Such concerns will be the focus of this course. It will also allow for consideration of the political dimension and the liberal assumption that the ideal state is a constitutional democracy which guarantees rights through law. Current political challenges to the political-legal order are of relevance here. When a US president can pardon his son or a tech billionaire close to Government feels able to brazenly assert that political decision making would best be served by replacing democratic government with a 'republic of high-status males', the importance of law and equality take on particular resonance. The course will be made up of 4 reading seminars and 8 lectures by leading experts on crime, punishment and equality from law, philosophy, sociology and politics. The lectures will be based on papers which will be circulated to the students in advance.</p>
Legal Anthropology of the Postcolonial World	3	Andreas Their	<p>This course offers an introduction to a broadly-defined legal anthropology of the postcolonial world by way of focussing on the emergence, current present and potential future(s) of «transformative constitutionalism» in post-apartheid South Africa in light of persisting demands for profound societal change.</p> <p>Combining both lectures and seminar sessions based on key readings, the course situates the contemporary constitutional framework within the colonial history of European settler expansion since the 17th century, persisting legal and normative pluralities (with only partial official recognition of customary laws) and expansive law-based racial discrimination against the non-white majority for most of the 20th century. Against this backdrop, students will engage with the potentials and pitfalls of law-driven change in the emotionally charged and politically contested field of land reform, including legal debates around «expropriation without compensation» (which, as one international repercussion, recently led President Donald Trump to provide for refugee status of white South African farmers in the US). Against this backdrop, the course will also discuss current proposals by both South African political actors and legal scholars to overcome liberal constitutionalism, seen as part of the problem of persisting (neo)coloniality, and replace it with some Africanist decolonial normativity. The potential resemblance of such decolonial projects with a growing legal-authoritarian backlash against liberal constitutionalism in many parts of the contemporary world will thereby form a broader comparative context, in which to discuss the potentials and pitfalls of law-driven change in general and of transformative constitutionalism in particular.</p>
Legal Sociology (MLaw)	6	Tilman Altwicker	<p>This course undertakes an in-depth discussion on the fundamental issues concerning the relationship between law and society, with questions in respect to history, methodology and philosophy of science playing an important part. In doing so, specific questions on the functioning and meaning of law in modern legal systems will be addressed. The significance of legal sociology in the various workings of the law will be elucidated on the basis of practical examples.</p>
Legisprudence and Legislation: Theoretical and	3	Felix Uhlmann	<p>Traditionally, in many countries, most legal education and scholarship tended to focus on courts and case-law, while legislatures and legislation have largely been neglected. This course, however, will shift focus to legisprudence – the legal field dedicated to studying the theory and practice and</p>



<p>Comparative Perspectives</p>			<p>legislation – and to the legislative process. Rather than focusing on the legislative process of a specific country, it will discuss these subjects in theoretical and comparative perspectives. We will learn about the stages of the legislative process. Then, we will study theories of the legislative process, such as public choice theory, procedural theories and institutional theories. We will then discuss the law of lawmaking - the laws and rules that regulate the legislative process. Among other things, we will discuss the conceptual and theoretical development from the traditional concept of supreme and sovereign legislature, according to which there could be no legal restrictions on the legislative process, towards the modern concept of the rule of law in the legislature. We will also discuss the purposes of the law of lawmaking. In addition, we will examine the court's role in judicial review of the legislative process. We will also deal with central and controversial developments in the legislative process: the rise of unorthodox lawmaking (and particularly omnibus legislation); and the rise of temporary legislation. Finally, subject to time limitations, we will also deal with legislative interpretation, focusing on legislative interpretation in light of insights on the legislative process. Additional possible subjects, time permitting, will include the operation of legislatures during emergencies and pandemics, and the future of legislatures in the age of artificial intelligence.</p>
<p>Modern Times</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Johannes Liebrecht/Andreas Thier</p>	<p>Legal History often deals with remote, albeit very interesting and relevant, issues. However, legal history can also provide a picture of more recent developments which form the basis of our current laws. This course will do exactly that. It will provide students with an account of some of the crucial lines of development within Europe's Legal History of, roughly speaking, the last 200 years. Thus, the course will combine legal history with an assessment of today's legal culture. In contrast to the Master-Vorlesung Rechtsgeschichte der bürgerlichen Moderne (which is delivered in German), this course will not adopt Switzerland as its starting point. Instead, it will trace, and thus follow, the developments of the law in Europe from the French revolution onwards, thereby providing students with a general comparative framework. The course is designed for students who wish to obtain a broad overview of some common, specifically modern, features of the Western legal tradition. It is open to Swiss students (both students at the UZH and those doing a Joint Degree) as well as students from abroad who are spending part of their studies at Zurich University (e.g. Double Degree and Master Program students). Students do not need to fulfill any particular preconditions for attending this course, nor will they be expected to have attended legal history courses before. The only prerequisite is curiosity. This course will be offered in the Spring Semester.</p>
<p>Onlinekurs I: Introduction to Computational Law: LegalNLP, Document Automation, Large</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Tillman Altwicker</p>	<p>The online course teaches the basics of computer and web based legal research. It aims to provide advanced students with the skills they need in order to design and conduct their own empirical projects based on text data (typically as part of a dissertation or master's thesis). This includes basics in programming, Natural Language Processing (NLP) for law, web scraping and the use of large language models (LLMs). The course is an online-only course. The assessment consists of a multiple-choice part and a small capstone project to be submitted to the module coordinator.</p>



[Language Models
and Prompting](#)

[Onlinekurs II:
Introduction to
Legal Data
Science](#)

6

Tilman Altwicker

This online course aims to introduce students to legal data science and teach them competences in the statistical software R and basic statistics. The course is designed for law students who are interested in expanding their skillset to data science and intend to use these skills to conduct simple legal data science projects, for example as part of their master's thesis or dissertation. The course is conducted solely online and will be self-paced.

[Public Law and
Economics](#)

6

Yoan Hermstrüwer

How should the law address the problem of excessive CO2 emissions? Why do voting procedures sometimes fail? When should a task be delegated to the administration or courts? How can the law deter corruption and collusion? And why do states comply with international law? This course will uncover the economic foundations of public law. In doing so, the course will explore a diverse set of topics ranging from bargaining problems, voting mechanisms, the economics of fundamental rights, economic theories of delegation, enforcement and compliance to comparative constitutional law and legal origins. The course will discuss both the conceptual foundations of the economic analysis of law and more recent developments in public law and economics, in particular recent methodological advancements. Drawing on specific examples from national public law and public international law, the course will shed light on how experimental methods, empirical legal studies and data science can inform our understanding of public law.

[Workshop and
Lecture Series in
Law and
Economics](#)

6

Yoan Hermstrüwer

This workshop and lecture series is a joint project of the ETH Zurich, the University of Zurich and the University of St. Gallen. It provides an overview of current interdisciplinary research in law and economics. Legal, economics, and psychology scholars give a lecture and/or present their current research. All speakers are internationally well-known experts from Europe, the U.S., and beyond.