

## Comparative Law (Autumn 2022) Course Evaluation Report

After the delivery of the paper, students were asked to fill out a course evaluation form in Athena. Despite the course evaluation not being scheduled, the answer rate was good (40%), although worse than the year before (62%). The course evaluation was carried out anonymously.

**On the first question, “How well do you think the course corresponds with the learning objectives in the course’s syllabus?”**, 92% of students responded “very well” or “well”, while 8% responded “reasonably well”.

**When asked what they liked best with the course**, students stressed the quality of the teaching, the subjects of the course and the level of the seminars.

### Comments:

“To learn about different jurisdictions which weren’t really addressed in any of my previous studies. I’ve gotten some new and very interesting aspects to law and its background.”

“The topics”

“The teaching!”

“I really liked the setting of the course, especially making students professors for a lecture.”

“The chance to meet and interact with students from different countries and legal cultures as well as the very stimulating seminars and discussions.”

“The head teacher is very charismatic, funny and end explains difficult legal matters in a way that anyone could understand. The atmosphere in the class room was very friendly with an open minded mindset, it was encouraged to speak and discuss freely and different opinions were allowed without ever anyone made any one feel that what was sad was wrong or irrelevant.”

“I liked the variation and that I feel like I have grasped many different legal systems. It was very interesting to have discussions in the class since everyone came with their own perspective.”

“Competent teachers and overall well organized course.”

“Nice and interactive seminars.”

“Personally, I really liked that the course extended my knowledge of different legal systems and legal approaches. I really liked the lessons, in which [the teacher] taught and lead the seminars because I learned a lot and it was intellectually stimulating.”

“The chance to meet people from other countries and be able to discuss the function of law and different legal systems. It gave a deeper understanding of "my" legal system.”

“Filippo Valguarnera for being such an outstanding teacher and pedagogue; impressively knowledgeable, responsive, creative and - not least - wittily funny. Mainly thanks to him, this course has been the most rewarding one of the whole program. I also know that my appreciative words are shared by my co-students of the course.”

**When asked, which improvements to the course they would like to see**, some students criticized the student led seminars. These are a mode of teaching which was introduced to activate the quieter students. In 2023, I may still use student led seminars but perhaps reserve a wider slot of time for the teacher.

#### Comments:

“I would either skip the mock negotiations or provide more information throughout the course what it is about. I also would prefer the group seminar to be scheduled earlier in the semester due to the first deadline.”

“I don't think students should do the most important part of the seminar.”

“A bit more information about the essay.”

“I don't have anything in mind.”

“I don't have any changes to suggest, in my opinion the course was structured in a very good way.”

“The student led seminars are a good idea. However, they were not always interesting. Maybe some more guidance could be provided so that students know what is expected of them. They could be part of the grade to urge students to be more invested in their presentations, this could on the other hand be unfair to the Swedish students since some of the exchange students cannot convert their grades and only need to pass while in Sweden. The questions presented in Athena for each seminar could be used as a guidance for the seminar leaders and not to be used during the seminar, this could create a situation where seminar leaders need to really think about their subject and provide relevant questions of their own.”

“I am not sure, maybe a bit more about the comparative law method. But I think you addressed some of my questions in the seminar when we talked about what sources to use and how to overcome the law in books and law in action when writing about another legal system.”

“Like I said under 2/7 I liked the seminars which were given/led by [the teacher]. These were my favorite seminars in my entire exchange.”

However, I did not like the idea to let students lead a seminar. To be honest the course quality dropped rapidly when we (most students) gave the lecture. From language barriers to simply not enough knowledge (which obviously cannot be expected from us) the quality really decreased. Also, the readings became kind of pointless, there were barely any good discussions and I didn't feel like I learned a lot during the student presentation. It would've been better in my opinion if we would've been more active on the student side at the discussion part and if you would've

continued to lead the seminars.

But just to clarify, I really liked the course and the criticism is probably a little bit rough because I was actually sad that the course didn't keep up with being as amazing as it was in the beginning.”

“Perhaps lesser/fewer reading requirements would make it easier to understand everything enough to discuss it.”

“None, except the mock negotiation assignment. The fact that each student of my seminar group had his or her own different interpretation of the instructions for the assignment unfortunately made it more confusing than rewarding, as well as (unnecessarily) stressful due to the other assignments of the course, which ran in parallel. Thus, I suggest it be abolished. However, the seminar leader, Kelly Chen, was excellent!”

When asked **whether the mock negotiation was useful tool to improve their understanding of the course** (open question), a majority of students expressed appreciation, but a few seemed confused by the rationale behind it. In 2023, I will try to discuss the mock negotiation a bit more during the introduction.

#### Comments:

“It was interesting.”

“For sure. A lot! Was my first mock case and I was really happy at the end discovering that the work that I made was quite correct. All the theory that I study was useful.”

“It certainly did give some useful insights, primarily with regards to international contract law, and was a welcome part of the course.”

“Not at all. It was at the very end of the course, it was not a negotiation per se and the instructions were so vague that I did not really understand what was expected of us. The teacher was very nice and she had a lot of interesting things to say. It could have been more interesting as a discussion were the groups could have prepared solutions within all the systems and then have short presentations and a discussion so that everyone had read about everything. It is hard to discuss when you only have insight to one part out three.”

“Yes, I thought that it was interesting. It was a good example of how jurists in different legal systems might solve the same problem differently, as well as why and how they would do that.”

“Not really.”

“Yes, as someone from a civil law country who had to represent a lawyer from a common law country it was useful and challenging.”

“To be honest I did not really like it and it did not really benefit me. Kelly was great, I just didn't understand the point behind the concept. It would've been more fun if we could've stuck to our own legal system and go for a real in depth discussion which

might be the better system.”

When asked whether **writing a paper is an adequate way of testing and applying the knowledge acquired during the course**, the students clearly agreed.

Comments:

“Yes i think weiting a comparative paper is a great way to test the knowledge of the course. An actual comparison is way more interesting then just having a written exam about the lecture topics.”

“Yes, definitely.”

“Yes, I think it is adequate since it required us to apply what we learnt about methodology and in most cases the topic of the paper will be related in some way to the different aspects and areas of comparative law that we studied throughout the course. I think that the quality of the papers might suffer slightly if other forms of examinations were introduced on top of it since it already takes a significant amount of time to produce a well-written and well-argued paper.”

“I am not sure. Maybe if we would have had more time in the beginning to learn about different methods in comparative law and what methods are best suited when comparing different systems. I felt that my essay was two merged into one, rather than a complete comparative analysis as inteded since I did not have enough insight into comparative methods. I also feel that the course in itself is more of a presentation of different legal systems and we did not really learn about the comparative aspects. But I think that an essay is better than an exam, or if it would have been an exam, it shoud be a home exam to be done during 3-5 days. Maybe this could be more faire since if you chose a harder topic you could get a lower grade but you might not have realised until it was too late in the writing process.”

“Yes I think so. Even if it is only going to concern a part of the course, and not all knowledge acquired during the course, I still used a lot of articles that we had read during the course. If I would attempt to write the same paper without attending this course it would have been completely different and not at all as good. It was fun going to class to learn because you wanted to, and not because you had to study it for an exam, and also to write about something you feel passionate about.”

“Both yes and no. But a combination of oral and writing is a good way.”

“Yes.”

“I definitely think so. It was a great way of showing knowledge about basic concepts like the method part and going more into detail about different aspects!”

“Yes, definitely!”

“Yes, indeed.”

When asked **whether there are areas of the law that they would have liked to explore more deeply**, the students expressed a general satisfaction with the current

structure of the course, with some exceptions.

Comments:

“I would have loved to also hear a bit about the african system besides south africa Since it’s a course of Comparative Law, it would be interesting to explore the regional systems as a whole.”

“I liked the fact the we touched almost every aspect of the law, public and private law.”

“Not really. Potentially some more intellectual property law, although this is purely based on a personal interest in the subject. From an objective standpoint I think that the course contained an excellent mixture in terms of areas of law and topics for discussion.”

“I think that all systems should have been explored deeper and not have so many seminars about judicial review, code or no code etc. It was more factual than to get a deeper understanding.”

“No, not that I could think of.”

“I thought the selection was great.”

“Perhaps issues in translation and similar areas.”

“None than I can think of. The course involved comparative studies into Western and non-Western legal families and traditions alike and, according to me, in a balanced and sufficient way.”

When asked **whether they would recommend the course to others and to motivate their answer**, the students showed great appreciation for the course.

Comments:

“Yes i totally would if one is interested in the basics of european law and also is curious about other legal systems besides his/her own.”

“If this student is from the EU yes, if they’re not, no.”

“Yes. Great way to improve your legal english through the essay and the course itself has a good chronology, hence it’s quite nice to comprehend.”

“Yes for sure. First of all for the professors, very kind, prepare and very available if needed.”

“Absolutely, mainly because of the competent way in which this course was handled, which is something that I would like to see more of in general. It helps if you find Comparative Law interesting to begin with, but I think other courses throughout the Study Programme in Law at Stockholm University could benefit from the interactive and engaging way in which the teaching was done.”

“Yes, it is very interesting to learn about other legal systems and I believe that it could be important to understand that we don't have the same sources of law, we don't use sources the same way and in a society such as this, it is probably more and more important since any lawyer could be put in a situation where the other party is from a different country or the client is used to a different system. It also provides good insights into the particularities of your own legal system and could offer a more open minded perspective and make us think outside the box in our professional careers.”

“Yes, I already have. I have always been interested in civics and I wanted to have another perspective to law than what I have previously been taught at uni. I feel like I have gotten an understanding on how all legal systems are in some way interrelated and it is also useful to understand legal systems that we deal with all the time, e.g., EU law, and why they would write their judgements a certain way etc. I do not feel like other legal systems are as foreign as I would previously this course, and I feel like this knowledge will be useful moving forward with international jobs/studies.”

“Sure!”

“This course is adequate for those who want to obtain knowledge on different legal systems. Good for those who want to study or live abroad and can use the knowledge later in their everyday life.”

“Yes, I learned a lot and got a broad perspective of different legal systems around the world.”

“Absolutely like I said it was my favorite course.”

“Yes! It was really fun and I learned a lot.”

“Yes, indeed! By studying and discussing the similarities and differences between legal families and traditions, the student will, amongst other things, most likely gain a deeper and more reflective understanding not only of the foreign objects of study, but also of those to which his or her own country (or culture) belongs. This understanding will thus be of great value irrespective of what career path, national or international, the student will embark upon in the future.”

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Course Director