



Faculty of Law

JUZN21, Legal Methods in Theory and Practice , 15 credits

Juridiska metoder i teori och praktik, 15 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by Faculty of Law Board of education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels on 2026-03-06. The syllabus comes into effect 2026-03-06 and is valid from the autumn semester 2026.

General information

The course is an elective course in the Swedish Professional Law Degree Programme. The course is also open to students on the Master's Programmes in European Economic Law and European Business Law and the Master's Programme in International Human Rights Law as well as to international students participating in exchange programmes with the Faculty of Law.

The course is scheduled to require 10 weeks of full-time studies. It will introduce students to research methods used in law with an emphasis on doctrinal legal research, empirical legal studies, and legal historical research.

Language of instruction: English

Teaching is conducted in English. Students may submit their assignments in English or Swedish.

Main field of study

Specialisation

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A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

On completion of the course, the student shall be able to

- describe different research approaches, methods and tools, including for example doctrinal legal research, empirical legal studies, and legal historical research;
- distinguish and compare between different methodological approaches and their suitability for specific research questions;
- integrate insights from different methodological traditions to address complex legal problems;
- identify and critically appraise the ethical and academic integrity issues connected to legal research, including plagiarism and source reliability, as well as ethical dilemmas in conducting legal research; and
- problematize how legal research design informs and shapes scholarly outcomes.

Competence and skills

On completion of the course, the student shall be able to

- generate a legal research project that demonstrates methodological awareness and appropriate source selection;
- apply research methods to concrete legal problems across different jurisdictions and contexts;
- conduct systematic searches for legal sources using databases and other reliable tools; and
- collaborate effectively in workshops to develop, present, and defend methodological choices.

Judgement and approach

On completion of the course, the student shall be able to

- perform independent investigation and take full responsibility for the development of their own knowledge in an objective and critical manner;
- reflect critically on their own methodological choices and research design in light of academic and professional standards;
- justify methodological decisions with reference to both internal coherence and external relevance of legal research;
- assess the broader implications of methodological approaches for the development of law and legal scholarship;
- demonstrate awareness of ethical responsibilities in conducting and presenting legal research;
- critically assess and compare the potentials and limits of different methodological approaches for the resolution of legal research questions; and
- evaluate diverse perspectives in legal research with openness, objectivity, and critical independence.

Course content

This course covers the foundations of academic legal research as well as specific research methods. The course will provide an overview of main research methods commonly used in legal research including but not limited to (a) doctrinal legal research, (b) empirical legal studies, and (c) legal history. The research approaches and methods will be discussed in the context of international, European as well as Swedish law. The course will also educate students on other foundational aspects of academic legal research such as legal research design, plagiarism, academic ethics and the use of AI, referencing, and reliable sources for legal research.

This course is relevant for students who wish to deepen their understandings of legal methodology before writing their master thesis. Additionally, legal practitioners are often called upon to conduct research as part of their daily tasks, whether it is preparing for a trial, drafting a contract, or giving legal advice and, therefore, a research methods course will also provide future lawyers with the necessary practical and research tools for their careers. By equipping students with the ability to conduct thorough, ethical, and effective research, the course prepares them to engage with the law, whether in academia or in the legal profession, in a meaningful way.

Course design

The course combines lectures, seminars, workshops, and independent study of the required reading. Lectures will introduce key concepts and illustrative examples drawn from the course reading list. Seminars and workshops also encourage active student participation, offering a space for critical reflection, discussion of the readings, and the application of knowledge to the development of students' own research projects. Workshops will be dedicated to practical exercises. Additional learning takes place through independent study and the development of a final assignment that connects the course content to the student's own research project.

Assessment

Student performance is assessed by an independent individual written analysis of a self-identified research problem and a reflection on alternative ways of addressing the problem with the use of different methods presented in the course (13 credits), the presentation of the analysis orally in class (1 credit), and peer review on another student's paper (1 credit).

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with Credit, Pass with Distinction
The grading scale for the written analysis and the whole course are: Fail (U), Pass (B), Pass with credit (BA), Pass with distinction (AB). The grading scales for the other assessments are Fail (U) and Pass (B). The grade of the whole course is solely based upon the written analysis.

To pass the course, students must achieve at least a Pass grade in all examination components. To achieve a B grade in the course, all criteria for B must be met. To achieve a Ba grade on the course, most of the Ba criteria must be met. To achieve an AB grade in the course, most of the AB criteria and all the BA criteria must be met.

The following grading criteria apply to the written analysis.

- **B – Pass**
To obtain a B grade the student must demonstrate an ability to apply central legal research methods (e.g., doctrinal, empirical, comparative) to a defined legal question, to reflect on academic integrity and ethical considerations, and to produce a coherent, well-referenced piece of writing. The written assignment is submitted with some delay.
- **BA –Pass with credit**
To obtain a BA grade the student must demonstrate a high degree of competence in applying and combining different legal research methods, in critically evaluating sources, and in situating methodological choices within broader legal and scholarly debates. The written assignment is submitted with minor delay.
- **AB – Pass with distinction**
To obtain an AB grade the student must demonstrate a very high degree of competence in integrating and comparing multiple methodological approaches, in independently designing and justifying a sophisticated research strategy, and in producing work that displays originality, analytical depth, and critical reflection on both the practice and theory of legal methodology. The written assignment is submitted on time.
- **U – Fail**
The student does not meet all the criteria for grade B.

The following grading criteria apply to the presentation and peer review.

To obtain a **B** on this examination, the student must be able to

- orally present his or hers written analysis and
- present and receive criticism in a constructive manner.

- **U - Fail**
The student does not meet all the criteria for grade B.

Entry requirements

For students on the Professional Law Degree Programme the entry requirements for semesters 7 and 8 are outlined in the Programme syllabus (utbildningsplanen).

Passed examination in courses corresponding to the first year of the Master's programme in European Economic Law or European Business Law, amounting to at least 45 credits.

Passed examination in courses corresponding to the first semester of the Master's programme in International Human Rights Law, amounting to 30 credits.

Exchange students must have passed at least two and a half years of law studies at university level.

Further information

The University views plagiarism as a very serious academic offence and will take disciplinary actions against students for any kind of attempted malpractice in connection with examinations and assessments. The penalty that may be imposed for this, and other unfair practice in examinations or assessments, includes suspension from the University.

According to the Faculty of Law's Policy for Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) in Teaching and Assessment as Applicable to Students, all submitted texts in examinations must be based on independent work. As a student, you must be able to account for, justify, develop, and modify all parts of your submitted course assignments.