



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Law

## Syllabus

### Central issues in western intellectual history of law and legal philosophy from antiquity to present time

<b>Course Code:</b>	JPA011
<b>Course Title:</b>	Central issues in western intellectual history of law and legal philosophy from antiquity to present time <i>Centrala frågeställningar i den västerländska rättens idé- och lärdomshistoria och rättsfilosofi från antiken till nutid</i>
<b>Credits:</b>	15
<b>Degree Level:</b>	Master's level
<b>Progressive Specialisation:</b>	Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements (A1N)

**Major Field of Study:**  
RVA (Jurisprudence)

#### Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2026-03-03, and is valid from the Autumn semester 2026 at Karlstad University.

#### Prerequisites

60 credits from semesters 1-2 and 90 credits from semesters 3-6 of the Law Programme (JALAW). An equivalence assessment can be made.

#### Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

##### Knowledge and understanding

1. provide a systematic account of the history of ideas in Western law from antiquity to the modern era, with particular emphasis on Roman law, natural law theory, social contract theory, and contemporary theories of justice,
2. analyse key concepts in legal philosophy within their historical and theoretical contexts,

##### Competence and skills

3. independently and methodically analyse classic texts in legal philosophy, in the original language or in translation, and identify their normative and conceptual structures,
4. apply legal-philosophical conceptual frameworks to contemporary legal issues and present well-founded arguments,

##### Judgement and approach

5. take an independent position on questions in legal philosophy and justify their conclusions, taking alternative viewpoints into account, and
6. evaluate historical and philosophical knowledge of law with regard to the professional responsibilities of legal officers in a society governed by law and shaped by technological and institutional change.

#### Content

The aim of the course is for students to acquire general legal knowledge at a time when AI is expected to be capable of performing central components of traditional legal work. Students are trained in intellectual work and historical overview.

The course covers central ideas in the intellectual history of Western law from antiquity to the present. The course begins with a general overview of the history of law, with a focus on Roman law, and then proceeds to an in-depth study of several of the central conceptual structures related to law.

Special weight is placed on:

- the concept of justice (from Aristotle to Rawls),
- equality and equal opportunities,
- the relationship between law and morality,
- the principle of *sum cuique* and the normative basis of property rights, and
- constitutionalism and legitimacy.

Studies consist of close reading of central texts, supplemented with analysis literature in legal history and legal philosophy. The course emphasises independent intellectual work, argumentation analysis, and conceptual precision.

Instruction is in the form of lectures and mandatory seminars with text discussions and oral analysis.

### **Reading List**

See separate document.

### **Examination**

The assessment is based on an on-campus written exam, as well as individual oral presentation and discussion in seminars.

If students have a decision from Karlstad University entitling them to Targeted Study Support due to a documented disability, the examiner has the right to give such students an adapted examination or to examine them in a different manner.

### **Grades**

One of the grades Pass with Distinction (AB), Pass with Some Distinction (Ba), Pass (B), or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course.

### **Quality Assurance**

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

### **Course Certificate**

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

### **Additional information**

The local regulations for studies at the Bachelor's and Master's levels at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.