

Seminar on «Environmental Damage»

Prof. Dr. H. Keller / Dr. iur. C. Heri

Description of the Seminar

Content and Aims of the Seminar

Different types of environmental harms – from industrial pollution, to the protection of ecosystems and natural resources, to transboundary impacts on shared resources such as waterways – have long been relevant for the law. Today, the realities of climate change raise a number of additional pressing legal questions. This makes it more relevant than ever to grapple with the law's response to environmental damage. The present seminar invites students to discuss how environmental damage, including climate-related damage, can be understood, modelled, litigated, and remedied. Students are invited to draw on international (environmental) law, human rights law, and European law to discuss the assessment and proof of damage as well as questions of evidence, causation, (shared) responsibility, and remedies. The aim of the seminar is to build on existing legal principles and to identify new approaches to these challenging questions.

Conditions of eligibility

The seminar is designed for Bachelor's and Master's level students of the Faculty of Law, with a limited number of places open to students minoring in law. In order to be eligible, students must have successfully completed the Assessment; preferably they will have already completed their 4th semester of study. In order to submit a Master's thesis in this seminar, students must already be enrolled in the Master's program at the time of registration. It would also be advantageous if students have basic knowledge of international and human rights law.

The number of participants is limited to 18 students. Topics will be assigned post-registration and according to their respective degree of difficulty and the students' own interests.

Registration takes place through the Faculty of Law's seminar registration tool. Through this tool, students can give priority to several seminars. The registration tool will then assign students to the selected seminars, taking their overall priorities into account as best as possible. The registration period begins on 6 October 2022.

The obligatory preliminary discussion of the seminar will take place on **28 November 2022**, at 17:15. The venue will be communicated to the students who register for this course.

Evaluation and credits

The seminar will be held as a two-day event in Zurich (on **1-2 June 2023**). The two seminar days form an integral part of the course, and attendance on both days is mandatory.

An individualized supervision meeting for each student will be scheduled on **12-13 January 2023**.

To successfully complete the seminar, students are required to submit either a Bachelor's thesis (6 ECTS points) or a Master's thesis (12 ECTS points) and to participate actively in the two seminar days. During these two days, the participants are required to carry out a group presentation on an assigned topic. This presentation will be prepared during two group sessions preceding the seminar days. The group sessions will take place on **2 and 15 May 2023**. Attendance of these two preliminary group sessions, in addition to the two seminar days, is mandatory.

Thesis grades may be rounded up by half a point for students whose efforts during the group presentation (originality, didactics and rhetoric, content, etc.) and participation in the discussion are judged to be excellent by the instructors.

Submission deadline for the Bachelor's and Master's theses

The deadline for all theses is **21 April 2023**.

Seminar Block Days and Group Trip

The two block days in Zurich will take place on 1-2 June 2023 at the University of Zurich.

In the event that a public hearing on a relevant case takes place at the European Court of Human Rights during the course of the spring semester 2022, a group trip to Strasbourg will be organized to attend the hearing. More information will be circulated once the dates of relevant hearings become available. Attendance of this hearing would be encouraged but optional and students would be asked to bear the costs of the trip.

Contact

If you have any questions, please contact Pranav Ganesan at pranav.ganesan@rwi.uzh.ch.