



7 JULY–18 JULY 2025

Max Planck Summer Academy

FOR LEGAL HISTORY 2025



The Academy

The Max Planck Summer Academy for Legal History provides a selected group of highly motivated early-stage research students, usually PhD candidates, with an in-depth introduction to traditional and contemporary approaches and methods in legal history.

THIS YEAR'S THEME

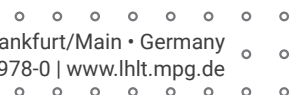
The struggle for law

The Summer Academy consists of three parts. The first part introduces the international group of PhD students to sources, methodological approaches and theoretical models as well as to controversial research debates on fundamental issues of legal history. The introductory courses are led by members of the Institute and external guest speakers.

In the second part, the invited participants present their own projects within the context of the respective year's special topic.

The third part of the Academy offers the opportunity to all participants to further develop their own research by making use of the library and by discussing their projects with the Institute's experts in the different fields of legal history.

The course will take place at the Max Planck Institute
for Legal History and Legal Theory in Frankfurt am Main, Germany (mpilht).





THIS YEAR'S THEME

The struggle for law

'The end of law is peace. The means to that end is war. [...] The life of the law is a struggle, a struggle of state power, of classes, of individuals.'¹ Rudolf von Jhering, a law professor from Vienna, who wrote these lines in 1872 referred to two kinds of struggle. First, he thought of the rivalling societal interests and forces who aimed to influence the law-making process. Secondly, he referenced the fight of individuals for their rights. One hundred and fifty years later, the emphasis on the conflictual and violent character of law, the notion of the 'struggle for law' remains as provocative and topical as ever. While there are countless examples in global legal history supporting it – e.g. legal disputes over compensation, armed resistance against oppression and enslavement, wars for independence and democracy – it is nevertheless questionable to what extent the emergence and transformation of law can be adequately described by the narrow perspective of strife. Might Jhering's notion of law as 'continuous work' be better suited not only to analytically grasp the antagonistic forces but also the processes of mediation and the search for solutions which are at work in the fight over the law and subjective rights? The Summer Academy will focus on the agonal moments in legal history that have served as driving forces or forces of persistence in the formation of law. Which practices of conducting and resolving controversies can be observed, and which interests and actors were behind the attacks on and defences of both the legal system and individual rights? Applicants are invited to submit projects on case studies of 'work on law', which may come from any field of law, time period or region of the world.

Eligibility Requirements

Early-stage research students, usually PhD candidates.

Working knowledge of English is required, German is not a prerequisite.

Application

All applications must be supported by a CV, a project summary (approx. 10 pages) and a letter of motivation. Please send your applications via e-mail to: summeracademy@lhlt.mpg.de

Submission deadline for applications is 31 January 2025.

Fees

The Academy is generously funded by mpilhl. There is no participation fee. Accommodation will be provided by the organisers for free. Participants, however, will be responsible for covering their travel expenses (in cases of hardship these can be covered by a limited number of scholarships).



Contact

Dr. Stefanie Rütter
summeracademy@lhlt.mpg.de

¹Rudolf von Jhering, The struggle for law, translated by J.J. Lalor, Chicago 1879 (Kampf um's Recht, Wien 1872), 1.

