

The Law and Economics of Human Behavior and Social Norms

University of Hamburg
July 20 – August 7, 2026

Institute of Law and Economics



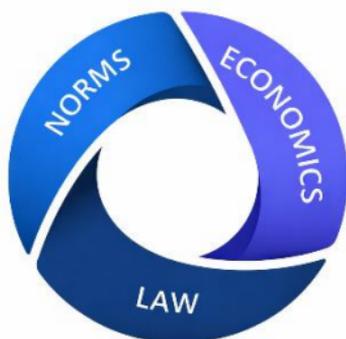
Universität Hamburg

DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

The summer school “The Law and Economics of Human Behavior and Social Norms” explores the dynamic interactions between human behavior, social norms, and legal institutions. The summer school goes beyond traditional law and economics approaches, integrating recent insights from behavioral research, experimental economics, and political psychology to develop a more comprehensive understanding of legal and economic phenomena. At its core lies the recognition that legal institutions do not operate in a vacuum, but are embedded within a complex web of social norms, political incentives, and cognitive constraints. The summer school provides participants with the theoretical foundations and methodological tools to analyze these interconnections and to understand their implications for designing effective legal and economic institutions. The program offers an innovative perspective that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries and opens up new avenues for research and practice.

Courses include:

- Applying Public Choice to Law and Economics
- Social Norms
- Behavioral Law and Economics



JULY 20 – 24

PROF. CHRISTIAN BJØRNSKOV

APPLYING PUBLIC CHOICE TO LAW AND ECONOMICS

This course introduces the students to a selection of topics within public choice and political economy, and the application of the unique methodology of public choice to questions within law and economics. The course is structured around five lectures, four exercises, and a final session discussing the main approach and questions for future research. The first of these focuses on public choice methodology, including diagnosing market and government failures, collective action problems, and logrolling. Subsequent lectures deal with rent-seeking and corruption, constitutional political economy, bureaucracy and regime transitions, and epistemological problems in law and policy-making. The topics include:

Topic I: Public choice methodology

Topic II: Rent-seeking, lobbying and corruption

Topic III: Constitutional political economy – and what do voters want?

Topic IV: Enforcement, bureaucracy and regime transition

Topic V: Epistemological problems and unintended consequences

Christian Bjørnskov is a Professor of Economics at Aarhus University in Denmark, Affiliated Researcher with the Research Institute of Industrial Economics in Stockholm, and Immediate Past President of the Public Choice Society. His research spans topics within the intersection of political economy, political science and law and economics, such as consequences of constitutionalized rights, illegal regime transitions, and the historical roots of political institutions. His research has been published in journals such as American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Law and Economics, Public Choice, Journal of Development Economics and Academy of Management Perspectives. His most recent book State of Emergency is coauthored with Stefan Voigt and published by Cambridge University Press.

JULY 27 – 31

PROF. FRANCESCO BOGLIACINO

SOCIAL NORMS

In this course, we will address the hypothesis that our choices are governed by social norms - widely shared, context-dependent rules of behavior.

We will begin by examining why traditional assumptions about social preferences or income/price effects find it difficult to account for several behavioral stylized facts. Next, we will define social norms and discuss to what extent they are useful in explaining behavior. In the second part of the course, we will take an in-depth look at experimental methods used to measure norms, assessing their robustness. We will conclude by analyzing how we can design incentives when social norms are involved, and we will explore the drivers of norm compliance. The topics include:

Topic I: Evidence on Pro-social behavior.

Topic II: The norm of Is and the norm of Ought.

Topic III: Measuring beliefs.

Topic IV: When incentives backfire.

Topic V: Norm manipulation and norm evasion.

Francesco Bogliacino is Associate Professor of Economics at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. He is a behavioral and experimental economist, studying social norms, emotions, social preferences and behavioral public policy. His work has been published in Management Science, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, World Development, PNAS, International Review of Economics, and others.

AUGUST 3 – 7

PROF. EVA VAN DER ZEE

BEHAVIORAL LAW AND ECONOMICS

This course provides an advanced survey and discussion of a number of current topics and debates in behavioral law and economics. We will read and analyze recent scholarly contributions by legal scholars, cognitive scientists, and behavioral economists. The aim is threefold:

- I. Students will become familiar with the basic notions in behavioral law and economics.
- II. Students will learn to analyze law through the lens of behavioral science.
- III. Students will improve their understanding of scholarly contributions by legal scholars, behavioral economists, and psychologists.

Example topics include how to incorporate insights from cognitive science and behavioral economics in legal interpretation and application, the methodological and normative limitations of including behavioral law and economics, the current role of cognitive science and behavioral economics in legal analysis and avenues for further research.

Eva van der Zee is a Professor in International Law with a focus on Behavioral Law and Economics at the Institute of Law and Economics at Hamburg University Faculty of Law. Her current research focuses on the role and interrelation of formal and informal legal systems in promoting sustainable development using insights from the social sciences, in particularly behavioral economics, social psychology, and sociology. Eva has published articles in *Transnational Environmental Law*, *Journal of World Trade*, *World Competition Law and Economic Review*, *German Law Journal*, *American Journal of International Law Unbound* and *Sustainability*, amongst others. In addition, she has advised governmental institutions on the role of law and policy to promote sustainable development. She is the co-founder of BRAIN (Behavioral Research Approaches in International Law Network) and the ESIL (European Society of International Law) Interest Group on Social Sciences and International Law.

Add-On Courses

In addition to our three core courses, we are pleased to offer two independent courses that are open to interested participants of our summer school.

COURSE 1

JULY 6 – 9

PROF. IBRAHIM SALAMA

Human Rights Diplomacy, a Global South Perspective

Human Rights Diplomacy is a distinct discipline that links international relations and international law. This course aims at elucidating its content through case studies on human rights mechanism, free speech vs hate speech as well as tensions and complementarities between religion and human rights. Topics include:

- Introduction to Human Rights and International Human Rights Law
- Third World Approaches to Human Rights Law
- Civil and Political Rights
- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Ibrahim Salama is the Dean of The Faculty of Law and Director of Human Rights Research and Training Center at the British University in Egypt (BUE).

COURSE 2

AUGUST 10 – 12

PROF. MAZEN HASSAN

Experiments on Social Norms in the Arab World: Theory and Evidence

This course introduces experimental approaches to studying social norms in the Arab world, combining core theory with empirical evidence. It examines how norms shape behavior in areas such as cooperation, gender, trust, and compliance. Students will engage with lab, field, and survey experiments conducted across diverse Arab societies.

Mazen Hassan is a Professor of Political Science at Cairo University. His research topics include social norms, pro-social behavior, parliamentary politics, and electoral and party systems. He has a PhD degree in politics from University of Oxford and has previously been a Visiting Professor at Harvard Kennedy School, University of Oxford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the University of Tokyo and Hamburg University. In the period 2018–2020, he was the Director of the Centre for Political Research at Cairo University. His publications appeared in *Democratization*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Public Choice*, *European Journal of Political Economy*, *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization*, *Government and Opposition*, *Mediterranean Politics*, *Political Studies*, and *Electoral Studies*.

Application

The Summer School provides a seminar atmosphere with groups not larger than 25 participants. Therefore, the number of places for each course is limited. The courses are open to master's and doctoral students from Law, Economics and other Social Sciences. Interested students can apply for the entire Summer School or select individual courses from the program. To apply, please use the form on Hamburg University's conference platform:

<https://www.conferences.uni-hamburg.de/event/711/>

Application deadline is March 31.



Fees

Interested students may apply for the entire Summer School or enroll in specific courses. While the courses are free of charge, a one-time registration fee of €40 applies. Payment is required within two weeks after receiving the acceptance notification.

For updates on times and venues, please visit

www.ile-hamburg.de

Contact

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Institute of Law and Economics

Alsterterrasse 1

20354 Hamburg

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To direct questions regarding the summer school, please use:

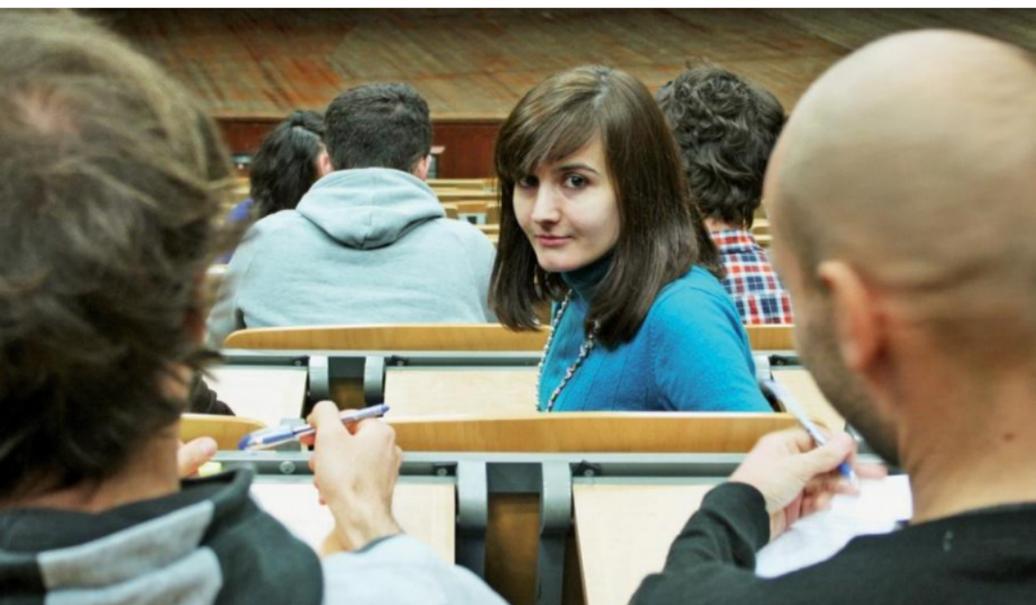
summerschool@ile-hamburg.de

European Doctorate in Law and Economics

The European Doctorate in Law & Economics is one of the largest doctorate programs in the field of Law and Economics. It is a joint doctoral program by four of the leading European universities: the Universities of Bologna, Hamburg, Rennes 1 and Rotterdam. The stipend-based program aims at addressing a new class of outstanding PhD researchers from all over the world. The EDLE is sponsored by the DAAD. In Hamburg, the program is chaired by Prof. Dr. Stefan Voigt.

For more information, please visit

www.edle-phd.eu



Master in Law & Economics of the Arab Region

The Master in Law and Economics (MLEA) is a joint programme between Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS), Cairo University and Faculty of Law, Hamburg University. MLEA graduates receive an LL.M./M.A. from the Faculty of Law, Hamburg University (Specialization in Law). Egyptian Nationals receive additionally an M.Sc. from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University (Specialization in Economics). The programme, with its courses provides students with necessary tools to explain the behaviour of legislators, prosecutors, judges, bureaucrats and other actors using the economic methodology.

For more information, please visit

<https://mlea-studies.org/>



DAAD

Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst
German Academic Exchange Service

Funded by

Hamburg International Summer School

Department of International Affairs

The Hamburg International Summer School (HISS) is a short international summer program that was offered at Universität Hamburg for the first time in 2017 and has been held annually ever since. The summer school contributes to the positioning of Universität Hamburg on the international education market and aims to attract qualified foreign students and doctoral candidates as well as to increase the attractiveness of Hamburg as a study and research location. It also serves the intercultural exchange on the current research situation and the expansion of international research cooperation.

For more information, please visit

<https://www.uni-hamburg.de/internationales>



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