



6 JULY–17 JULY 2026

Max Planck Summer Academy FOR LEGAL HISTORY 2026



The Academy

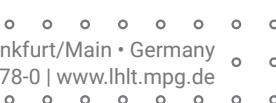
The Max Planck Summer Academy for Legal History provides a selected group of highly motivated early-stage research students, usually PhD candidates, with an in-depth introduction to traditional and contemporary approaches and methods in legal history.

THIS YEAR'S THEME Legal Literacy

If law is understood as a knowledge-based social practice, it becomes essential to reflect on the forms of legal knowledge that guide the actors. But what, in fact, constitutes legal knowledge? How can it be reconstructed? Is it the black-letter law, the practitioners' law, or rather the background knowledge managed by laypeople, subaltern actors, or members of the elite? How can legal historians approach the reconstruction of such knowledge?

In recent years, scholars have emphasized the importance of legal literacy of a variety of actors and have shed new light on the diverse media through which this knowledge is expressed and transmitted. We invite participants to submit proposals that engage with these and related questions.

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





The Course

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.

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@lhlmpg.de

Submission deadline for applications is 31 January 2026.

Fees

The Academy is generously funded by mpilhlt. 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

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