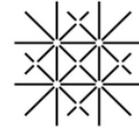




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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Spring School

Criminal Law and the Anthropocene

Cross-disciplinary perspectives and critical approaches

25-29 May 2026, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, Pisa, IT

Sant'Anna School, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Universität Basel organize **the Spring School on Criminal Law and the Anthropocene Cross-disciplinary perspectives and critical approaches**.

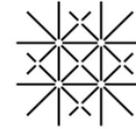
The Spring School aims to explore and debate the significant implications of the Anthropocene framework for Criminal Law from methodological, conceptual, normative, and practical perspectives. It will take place in Pisa from May 25th to 29th, 2026.

Background and Objectives

The Anthropocene has emerged as one of the most significant, yet deeply contested concepts of our time. Initially introduced by atmospheric scientist Crutzen and biologist Stoermer (Global Change Newsletter 41 [2000], p. 17 f.) in 2000, the term refers to a proposed geological era characterized by two diagnoses carried across the entire spectrum of natural sciences: Firstly, that humanity has become the determining factor influencing all geological processes on the planet (atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, pedosphere, and lithosphere) and therefore literally acts as a force of nature. Secondly, that the destructive consequences of this influence are the cause of the cascading, interdependent, and potentially catastrophic ecological polycrisis (Crutzen, Nature 415 [2002], p. 23 ff.)

Both diagnoses are discussed in combination not only as justification for proclaiming a new geological epoch to replace the Holocene, which was characterized by largely stable environmental conditions and the associated epistemic certainties. Rather, this stratigraphic





Gegenwartsbestimmung (geological eras have been determined retrospectively and named after extinct index fossils) has an immanent reflexivity, which led Crutzen et al. to speak of an “Anthropocene concept”: If humans act as a (destructive) force of nature, they must at the same time develop a conceptual idea of how to deal with this « geochronological role » (Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, 2021).

The « Anthropocene » has now become an interdisciplinary key concept and refers to a corresponding theoretical and discursive context. Leaving aside internal perspectives, that work on consistent theorizing or on different (sometimes: contradictory) definitions of the Anthropocene as a concept and an epoch, the Anthropocene's immanent reflexivity may serve as a structuring guideline: «Thinking the Anthropocene» requires a reconsideration of central concepts and problems of the human-nature relationship, if not a whole new epistemology, that follows its ontological shattering (« a quake in being », Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 2013).

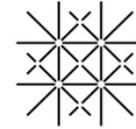
On the one hand, the Anthropocene implies a reconfiguration of the „environment“ as a complex, unstable and dynamic Earth system with humans as the central influencing factor. On the other hand, it implies a reconfiguration of the ‘human’ category itself. In other words, the Anthropocene breaks with a dualistic conception of the relationship between « human » and « the nonhuman » and its underlying epistemic, actorial, temporal and spatial structures as basic categories through which we understand the world (Fleurke et al., *JHRE* 2024, p. 5 ff.).

The perspective of the Anthropocene has significant implications for law, and criminal law in particular. The literature has begun to explore the meaning of the concepts of the Anthropocene for the categories, paradigms, and basic structures of criminal law.

The Spring School aims to provide participants with a comprehensive and critical understanding of the implications of the Anthropocene for Criminal Law. In this sense, the program will focus on several crucial issues, such as:

- How the Anthropocene scenario challenges the liberal, anthropocentric, and related paradigms of modern criminal law, along with the methodological, epistemic, and conceptual consequences of these challenges.





- How and to what extent different concepts of the Anthropocene contribute to contesting and reversing the normative and epistemological foundations of modern criminal law, particularly in the areas of theories of criminalization, punishment, and legitimacy.
- How the Anthropocene contributes to challenging the methodological orthodoxies of criminal law by integrating science, socio-legal, philosophical, and empirical approaches, thereby enriching criminal law with new methods and languages. In this sense, it also opens the way to a new era of “immanent critique” of modern criminal law, endorsing critical approaches to be applied in this field.
- How the Anthropocene prompts a reconceptualization of the fundamental categories of criminal responsibility, attribution, causation, and mens rea, particularly concerning new offenses aimed at preventing and addressing anthropogenic (environmental) harm.
- As the Anthropocene proposes a reconfiguration of the human-not-human dichotomy and the human relationship with nature, it prompts a repositioning of law and criminal law within the context of regulation, governance and policy, not only in the field of environmental law and climate change law.
- The Anthropocene perspective opens criminal law to a new temporality, emphasizing the protection of intergenerational interests and the safeguarding of present and future conditions for the Earth, as seen in the field of climate criminal law.
- The Anthropocene brings into question the Westphalian assumptions underlying modern criminal law by further questioning the public-private divide, law’s partitions, spatial, actor-based, and temporal categories. This reshaping trend, for instance, affects the conceptual relationships between the planetary, the international, the national, the local, and the global.
- The Anthropocene framework triggers unusual processes of victimization that need to be framed from epistemic, cultural, and legal perspectives, and fosters the emergence of new subjectivities requiring room and voice in criminal justice procedures, such as in restorative justice processes.
- The Anthropocene supports the reconceptualization of Atrocities Law, including international criminal law, against a set of phenomena that transcend legal frameworks and the underlying substantive assumptions. This framework disrupts the ways in which (international) criminal law understands war crimes, atrocities, ecocide, genocide, and so forth.

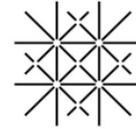




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The Spring School aspires to explore these issues, as well as others, through a wide and ambitious program involving leading scholars and authoritative experts, who have been called to engage participants in understanding what the Anthropocene Age means for criminal law.

The Program

The Spring School provides selected participants with a **highly interdisciplinary program** that welcomes voices from criminal law, including legal theory and other fields of law, as well as areas beyond law. The program (**40 hours distributed over five days**) is organized into **three thematic streams**: (i) Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Anthropocene, (ii) Fundamentals of Law and/in/for the Anthropocene, (iii) Criminal Law and/in/for the Anthropocene.

The program offers an **intensive, residential, and inclusive educational experience** structured around four thematic streams and various formats. **Lectures** delivered by internationally recognized academics comprehensively address the multifaceted concept of the Anthropocene, while **keynote speeches** provide critical perspectives aimed at problematizing the implications of this viewpoint for modern legal systems.

The thematic **panels** are designed to host scholars with diverse perspectives who engage in critical conversations about the Anthropocene and the transformations it entails for law, particularly criminal law.

The Spring School also aims to stimulate research and support innovative projects on this topic. To that end, the program actively involves selected participants through **writing workshops**. During these sessions, participants share draft papers based on their application submissions. Each participant discusses their paper in a group setting, following a precise methodology, and receives feedback and guidance from more experienced peers and faculty on how to further develop their research projects.

Eligibility and Application

Eligible participants for the course include students who have completed or are in the process of completing a master's degree, PhD students, and post-docs who have obtained their doctoral degree no more than five years ago (*Early Career Researchers*).

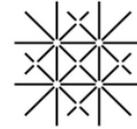




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The Spring School can accommodate a maximum of **25 participants**. For this reason, a selection process will be implemented, managed by the scientific committee of the Spring School.

To apply, candidates are required to submit: (1) a brief curriculum vitae (maximum 2 pages); (2) an abstract of the paper (maximum 500 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography) that will be discussed during the writing workshops, which should be consistent with the thematic framework outlined in this document; (3) a motivation letter (maximum 2 pages) explaining briefly how the Spring School program can contribute to the development of your research activities.

Applications can only be submitted by email to: springschoolCLA@santannapisa.it

The application deadline is the **9th of March 2026**. All applicants will receive a notification regarding the outcome of the selection process by **the 16th of March 2026**.

The selection process adheres to principles of inclusivity and equality that inform the training activities at the universities promoting the Spring School.

Selected participants are expected to develop a **draft paper** of no more than 8,000 words **by the deadline of May 20, 2026**.

Participation in the Spring School is free for selected participants. The Spring School cannot cover travel or accommodation costs, but may provide selected participants with logistical assistance.

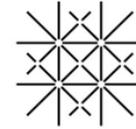




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