

Marc Thommen

Introduction to Swiss Law

sui generis, Zurich 2022

Table of Contents

Preface	V
About This Book	VII
Index of Authors	IX
Brief Contents	XI
Table of Contents	XV

Swiss Legal System – Marc Thommen	1
I. Trivia	3
II. History	5
III. Confederation	6
1. Federal Assembly	6
2. Federal Council	7
3. Federal Supreme Court	8
IV. Cantons	11
V. Communes	12
VI. Direct Democracy	13
1. Federal Level	13
2. Cantonal Level	15
3. Communal Level	16
VII. Legislative Process	17
VIII. Case Citation	20
1. Official Compilation	20
2. Online Publication	22
3. Public Pronouncement	24
4. Press Releases	24
Selected Bibliography	25

Legal History – Andreas Thier	27
I. Plurality and the Traditions of Swiss Legal Culture	29
II. The Old Confederacy (13th/14th Century–1798)	31
1. Coniuratio, Covenants, and Charters	31
2. Customary Law, Records of Law, and Sumptuary Mandates	33
III. The Rise of Modern Swiss Statehood since 1798	36

1. Constitutional Developments in Europe	36
2. Constitutional Developments in Switzerland since 1798	37
a) Focusing on Individual Rights:	
The “Bürgerliche Rechtsstaat”	37
b) The (Slow) Rise of the Interventionist State	40
c) Towards the Prevention State	41
3. The Rise of Codifications in Swiss Legal Culture	43
Selected Bibliography	45

History of International Law – *Elisabetta Fiocchi Malaspina*

I. Introduction	49
II. Theories of Natural Law and the Law of Nations	50
1. The Spread of Theories of Natural Law and the Law of Nations	50
2. Emer de Vattel and his The Law of Nations (1758)	51
III. The Era of International Humanitarian Law	54
1. Henry Dunant and the International Committee of the Red Cross	55
2. Founding of the Institute of International Law (1873)	57
a) Gustave Moynier (1826-1910)	58
b) Johann Caspar Bluntschli (1808-1881)	60
IV. Conclusion	62
Selected Bibliography	63

Legal Philosophy and Legal Theory – *Matthias Mahlmann*

I. The Problems of the Philosophy of Law and Legal Theory	67
II. A Map of Philosophy of Law and Legal Theory	69
1. Descriptive and Analytical Theory	69
2. Explanatory Theories	70
3. Normative Theory	71
4. The Relationship of Law and Morality	73
5. Epistemology	75
6. Ontology	76
7. Grotius and Methodological Secularism	76
8. The Question of Universalism	77
III. The Point of Philosophy of Law and Legal Theory	79
IV. Theory of Justice	80
V. A Concept of Justice	82

VI. The Birth of the Human Rights Idea	83
VII. Contemporary Human Rights Theory	85
Selected Bibliography	87
<hr/>	
Legal Sociology – Christoph Beat Graber	91
<hr/>	
I. What is Legal Sociology?	93
1. Discipline	93
2. Method	95
II. Case Study: Law, Society and Direct Democracy	97
1. Political Autonomy	97
2. Direct Democracy	100
3. Public Service Broadcasting	104
a) Media Consumption and the Internet	104
b) Personalisation Technologies	106
III. Summary	109
Selected Bibliography	110
<hr/>	
Constitutional Law – Matthias Oesch	113
<hr/>	
I. Constitution	115
1. History and Overview	115
2. People	116
a) Swiss Citizens	117
b) Foreign Nationals	118
3. Fundamental Rights	119
4. Confederation, Cantons, Communes	121
5. Federal Assembly, Federal Council, Federal Courts	123
II. Principles	126
1. (Semi-) Direct Democracy	126
a) Popular Initiative	126
b) Referendum	127
c) “Landsgemeinde” as Cantonal Particularity	128
2. Multi-Party Government	128
3. Limited Constitutional Review	130
4. Excursus: The COVID-19 Pandemic	131
III. Landmark Cases	133
1. Women’s Suffrage	133
2. Naturalisation and Fundamental Rights	134
Selected Bibliography	136

International Relations – <i>Matthias Oesch</i>	137
I. Treaties	139
1. United Nations and Specialised Agencies	139
2. Trade and Investment	140
3. Switzerland and Europe	142
a) General Framework	142
b) Bilateral Agreements	143
c) Autonomous Adaptation of Swiss Law to EU Law	145
II. Constitution	147
1. Goals and Means	147
2. Competences	148
a) Federation and Cantons	148
b) Federal Council, Federal Assembly, Federal Supreme Court	149
c) Direct Democracy	150
3. Relationship Between International Law and Swiss Law ..	152
III. Landmark Cases	155
1. Supremacy of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons	155
2. US Safeguard Measures on Steel Products	157
Selected Bibliography	160
<hr/>	
Administrative Law – <i>Felix Uhlmann</i>	161
I. Codes	163
II. Principles of Administrative Action	164
1. Constitutional Principles in Administrative Law	164
2. Principle of Legality	164
a) Legal Basis for Administrative Action	164
b) Legality of the Law	164
c) Delegated Legislation	165
d) Judicial Review	166
3. Public Interest	166
4. Proportionality	166
5. Legitimate Expectations	167
a) Basis	167
b) Legitimacy of Expectations	168
c) Private Arrangements	168
d) Causality	168
e) Balancing Test	168

6. Good Faith	169
7. Prohibition of Arbitrariness (Reasonableness)	169
III. Forms of Administrative Action	171
1. Administrative Decisions	171
a) Definition	172
b) Rights and Obligations	172
c) Individual Acts	173
d) Unilateral Acts	173
e) Public Law	174
f) Form	175
2. Administrative Law Contracts	175
3. Private Law Contracts	176
4. Informal Acts and State Liability	176
5. Administrative Rulemaking	177
IV. Landmark Cases	178
1. State Liability: <i>Vacherin Mont d'Or</i>	178
2. Protections of Legitimate Expectations: <i>Piano Teacher</i> ...	179
3. Principle of Legality: <i>Headscarf</i>	180
Selected Bibliography	181

Administrative Procedure – *Felix Uhlmann* 183

I. Legal Sources	185
1. Historical Developments	185
2. Constitutional Framework	186
3. Federal Act on Administrative Procedure and Cantonal Laws	187
II. Procedural Rights and Principles	188
1. Administrative Action	188
2. Right to be Heard	189
3. Right to a Decision Within Reasonable Time	191
4. Right to Legal Aid and to Counsel	191
5. Right to Appeal	192
6. Right to Challenge Legislation	193
III. Institutional Framework	195
1. Administrative Authorities	195
2. Courts	197
3. Other Bodies and Procedures	198
4. European Perspective	199
IV. Landmark Cases	200

1. Necessity of Issuing an Administrative Decision: IWB	200
2. Procedural Fairness: Naturalisation	201
3. Direct Challenge to Legislation: Police Act of Zurich	202
Selected Bibliography	204
<hr/>	
Tax Law – Madeleine Simonek / Martina Becker	205
<hr/>	
I. Fiscal Sovereignty and Constitutional Principles	207
1. Federalism and Fiscal Sovereignty	207
a) Distribution of Fiscal Sovereignty	207
b) Federal Tax Harmonisation Act	208
2. Main (Constitutional) Principles	209
a) Principle of Legality	209
b) Principle of Universality	209
c) Principle of Uniformity and Ability-To-Pay Principle	209
d) Prohibition of Inter-Cantonal Double Taxation	210
e) Principle of Good Faith	210
II. Most Important Taxes and Tax Codes	212
1. Federal Taxes	212
a) Federal Direct Taxes	212
b) Withholding (Anticipatory) Tax	216
c) Federal Value Added Tax	217
d) Other Taxes	218
2. Cantonal and Communal Taxes	218
a) Taxes on Income and Net Wealth	218
b) Taxes on Net Profit and Capital of Legal Entities	219
c) Further Cantonal Taxes	220
3. International Tax Agreements	222
a) Multilateral Conventions	222
b) Double Taxation Treaties	222
c) Bilateral Agreements with the European Union	222
III. Landmark Cases	223
1. Principle of Equality: Taxation of Married and Non-Married Couples	223
2. Ability-To-Pay Principle: Degressive Income Tax Rates	223
3. Principle of Good Faith: Swiss Ruling Practice	224
4. Principle of Non-Discrimination: Salary Withholding Tax	225
Selected Bibliography	227

Civil Law Principles and Family Law

– <i>Peter Georg Picht / Goran Studen</i>	229
I. Swiss Civil Code	231
1. History	231
2. Legislation	232
3. Gender Equality	233
4. Content	235
5. Marital Property Law	236
6. Maintenance Foundations and Fee Tails	238
II. Principles	239
1. Application and Interpretation of the Law	239
2. Good Faith	241
3. Rules of Evidence	244
4. Capacity of Judgement	245
5. Separation Principle	247
III. Landmark Cases	248
1. Formal Invalidity and Good Faith (Article 2)	248
2. Uniform Calculation of Maintenance	249
Selected Bibliography	251

Law of Persons – *Elisabetta Fiocchi Malaspina / Giulia Rossi* 253

I. Legislation	255
1. Natural Persons	255
a) Adults and Capacity	255
b) Place of Origin and Domicile	256
c) Beginning and End of “Personality”	256
2. Juridical Persons	257
a) Associations	257
b) Foundations	258
II. Principles	260
1. Natural Persons and Juridical Persons	260
2. Legal Entities and Their Rights	261
3. Protection of Legal Personality	262
4. Civil Status and Registration	263
III. Landmark Cases	264
1. Uwe Barschel	264
2. Challenged Autopsy	265
3. Caisse de Famille	266

4. Change of Name I	269
5. Change of Name II	271
Selected Bibliography	273

Inheritance Law – Peter Georg Picht / Caroline Kopp 275

I. Swiss Civil Code	277
II. Principles	279
1. The Heirs	279
a) Intestate Succession	279
b) Succession Due to Disposition	282
c) Right to a Compulsory Share	287
2. The Succession	288
a) Transfer of the Estate	288
b) Requirements for the Heirs	289
c) Division of the Estate	289
d) The Liability	290
III. Landmark Cases	292
1. Legacy Hunter	292
2. The Revocation of the Revocation	294
Selected Bibliography	296

Property Law – Ruth Arnet 297

I. Swiss Civil Code (Property Law)	299
1. Legal object	299
a) Impersonality	300
b) Corporeality	301
c) Delimitation	302
d) Controllability	302
e) Animals	302
f) Categories	303
2. Right in rem	304
a) Characteristics	304
b) Types	304
3. Ownership and Possession	305
II. Principles	307
1. Publicity	307
2. Tradition and Entry	308
3. Numerus Clausus	308
4. Speciality	308

5. Causality	309
6. Accession	310
7. Priority of Age	310
III. Landmark cases	312
1. Principle of Causality	312
2. Bona Fide Acquisition	313
Selected Bibliography	316
<hr/>	
Contract and Tort Law – Tina Huber-Purtschert	317
<hr/>	
I. Codes	319
II. Principles	323
1. Conclusion of a Contract	323
2. Interpretation of a Contract	324
3. Defects in the Conclusion of a Contract	325
4. Defects in Consent	326
a) Fundamental error	326
b) Fraud	326
c) Duress	327
d) Consequences of fundamental error, fraud and duress ...	327
5. Unfair Advantage	327
6. Claims According to the General Provisions of the Code of Obligations	328
a) Contractual claims and breach of contract	328
b) Unjust enrichment	329
c) Obligations in tort	330
7. Quasi-Contractual Claims	331
8. Prescription	331
9. Types of Contractual Relationship	333
a) Sale (Articles 184-236)	333
b) Lease (Articles 253-273c)	333
c) Individual employment contract (Articles 319-355)	333
d) Contract for work and services (Articles 363-379)	333
e) Simple agency contract (Articles 394-406)	334
10. Innominate Contracts	334
III. Landmark Cases	335
1. Swissair	335
2. Market Value Estimate	336
3. Revocability of Simple Agency Contracts	336
Selected Bibliography	338

Corporate and Banking Law – Kern Alexander	339
I. Codes	341
1. Civil Code	341
2. Code of Obligations	341
3. Financial market regulation	342
4. Miscellaneous	343
II. Principles	345
1. Company Forms	345
2. Partnerships and legal entities	348
3. Liability	349
4. Corporate Governance	350
5. Voting rights and restrictions on transfer of shares	350
6. Company-groups	352
7. Bank secrecy	353
a) Historical background	353
b) Current regulation	356
c) Automatic Exchange of Information	358
III. Landmark Cases	359
1. Insider Trading–Hans Ziegler	359
2. Geneva bank disclosure	359
3. UBS data transfer	360
4. Biber	361
Selected Bibliography	362
Competition and Commercial Law – David Roth	363
I. Codes	365
II. Principles	366
1. Characteristics of Swiss economic law	366
2. Fostering innovation through effective and undistorted competition	367
a) The interplay between cartel law, unfair competition law and intellectual property law	367
b) Cartel law	369
c) Unfair competition law	374
d) IP law (by the example of patent law)	376
3. Enabling responsible business activities	377
a) Company law	377
b) Reorganisation and takeover law	380

III. Landmark cases	382
1. Cartel law: Assessment of agreements affecting competition	382
2. Unfair competition law: Unclean hands defence	382
3. Company law: Business judgment rule	383
Selected Bibliography	385

Civil Procedure – Luisa Lichtenberger / Sophie-Katharina Matjaz 387

I. Swiss Civil Procedure Code	389
1. Constitutional Framework	389
2. Legislation	391
3. Content	393
II. Principles	398
1. Party Disposition	398
2. Ex-Officio Assessment	398
3. Party Representation	399
4. Ex-Officio Investigation	400
III. Institutions and Procedure	401
1. Conciliation Proceedings	401
2. Ordinary Proceedings	402
3. Other Proceedings	403
4. Appellate Proceedings	404
IV. Landmark Cases	405
1. Dürrenmatt's Heirs	405
2. Agreement on Jurisdiction	405
3. Filing an Appeal at a Court without Jurisdiction	406
Selected Bibliography	408

Criminal Law – Marc Thommen
 409 |

I. Criminal Code	411
1. History	411
2. Legislation	412
3. Content	412
4. Dualism of Sanctions	414
5. Death Penalty	416
6. Euthanasia / Assisted Suicide	419
II. Principles	421
1. Nulla Poena Sine Lege	421
2. Nulla Poena Sine Culpa	422

III. Landmark Cases	425
1. Rolling Stones	425
2. Domestic Tyrant	426
3. Deadly Car Race	426
4. Hiking in the Nude	427
Selected Bibliography	429
<hr/>	
Criminal Procedure – Marc Thommen	431
<hr/>	
I. Criminal Procedure Code	433
1. Constitutional Framework	433
2. Legislation	433
3. Content	435
II. Principles	441
1. Ex Officio Investigation	441
2. Mandatory Investigation	442
3. Nemo Tenetur Se Ipsum Accusare	442
III. Institutions and Procedure	443
1. Preliminary Proceedings	443
2. Principle Proceedings	445
3. Constitutionality	446
IV. Landmark Cases	448
1. Schenk v. Switzerland	448
2. Huber v. Switzerland	449
3. Champ-Dollon	450
Selected Bibliography	451