

PAPM 3000A – Policy Research

Lectures: Wednesdays 14:35-17:25

Lecture Format: In-Person

Fall 2026 – September 09 to December 11

Department of Public Affairs and Policy Management: <https://carleton.ca/bpapm/>

Instructor: Michael E. Campbell

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Teaching Assistant(s):

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Course Description:

“An examination of the research strategies and techniques relevant to policy analysis and evaluation. Using the case study method, the role of research and research organizations in the policy process is discussed. The issue of ethical dilemmas in policy research is also considered.”

Course Overview:

Effective public policy is exemplified by a clearly defined problem and a proportionate response calibrated to its scale and nature. In practice, however, authoritative decision-makers often overreact or underreact when designing and implementing policy. This produces policies that are misaligned with the public problems they aim to address. Overtime, this can lead to the waste of valuable resources, unintended consequences and externalities, and the deeper entrenchment of intractable problems.

Diagnosing and addressing such shortcomings requires careful policy analysis or evaluation grounded in rigorous, evidence-based research. This course introduces students to the essential research processes and methods for conducting policy analysis and evaluation in professional and academic settings. Students will disentangle different types of research that constitute policy studies, analysis, and evaluation. They will also develop an understanding of sound research design while analyzing evidence required for high-quality policy research.

Policy inputs, outputs, and outcomes will be analytically separated from one another to highlight not only the activities and processes underpinning the creation of public policy, but also the short- and long-term effects of policy. With this knowledge, students will be prepared to produce high-quality policy research that is both methodologically sound and practically relevant.

Course Format:

Weekly lectures for this course are delivered in person. The focus of each lecture topic can be identified in the **Lecture and Reading Schedule**. Each week’s topic indicates assigned readings. There are also a number of recommended readings that provide additional insight into weekly

topics. Students are expected to attend each course in its entirety and participate when appropriate. All readings can be found on ARES course reserves via Brightspace.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and frame public problems by linking them to relevant policy interventions, actions, and intended outcomes
2. Apply conceptual and causal reasoning to evaluate how and why policies produce specific outcomes
3. Identify appropriate research methods for gathering and interpreting evidence in policy research
4. Analyze, compare, and assess policy options using a variety of methodological tools, including literature review, cost benefit analysis, and policy evaluation
5. Synthesize knowledge and research findings into a coherent, evidence-based project that demonstrates methodological rigor and analytical depth

Course Materials:

Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course. All readings are made available through ARES. This can be accessed through the Brightspace page for this course.

Course Evaluation:

Evaluation in this course is based on attendance to lectures, two written assignments, a mid-term exam, and a final exam. All assignments and exams are to be completed alone; no collaboration is permitted. Additional information on final letter grades and the percentage equivalents is presented in the **Appendix** of this syllabus.

Submission Policy: All written assignments must be submitted electronically via Brightspace. Each assignment will have its own dedicated module for uploading. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format only (*PDFs will not be accepted and their submission will incur a late penalty*). File names must follow the format: *lastname_firstname_assignment#* (e.g., Smith_Jane_Assignment1).

Late submission policy: Any assignments that are submitted after the stated due dates, and without valid reason for extension, will be penalized five percent (5%) per day. Furthermore, any assignment submitted seven days following the stated due date will not be accepted, resulting in an immediate score of zero (0%). Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis, and at the

discretion of the course instructor. Any requests for extensions must be submitted to the instructor at least 48 hours before an assignment's indicated due date. This requirement will only be waived in the event of emergency. Valid reasons for extension include medical or emergency situations.

Citation Style: The citation style for all assignments must be Chicago (author-date). This is to ensure that exact sources of information can be verified by the reader. Guidelines for this style can be found here: [Chicago Manual of Style: Chicago \(Author-Date\)](#)

Use of Artificial Intelligence: In this course, students may use AI tools for basic word processing functions, including grammar and spell checking (e.g. Grammarly, Microsoft Word Editor, Copilot). They may also use it to help them find sources, but the original documents should be assessed and sourced accordingly. Relying on AI tools for summaries or ideas is prohibited. It is not necessary to document the use of AI for the permitted purposes listed above. If you have questions about a specific use of AI that is not listed above, please consult your instructor.

This policy ensures that student voices and ideas are prioritized and authentically represented, maintaining the integrity of the work produced by students while allowing basic support to enhance clarity, correctness, layout and flow of ideas. The goal of adopting a limited use of AI is to help students develop foundational skills in writing and critical thinking by practicing substantive content creation without the support of AI.

General Overview of Assignments

Assignment/Task:	Due Date:	Value:
Attendance and Engagement	Ongoing	10%
Problem and Policy Identification	7 October	15%
In-Class Midterm	21 October	20%
Policy Analysis and Evaluation Project	9 December	25%
Final Exam	TBA (btw. Dec. 12-23)	30%

Assignments and Evaluation – Details:

- A note on assignments: *Additional details about assignments will be posted to Brightspace and discussed in class closer to the due date.*

Attendance and Engagement (10%): This course does not use a textbook. Instead, readings are drawn from a diverse range of books, scholarly articles, and grey literature. Lectures will weave these materials together, highlighting key themes and arguments to help students grasp their broader significance. As these connections are essential for contextualizing and understanding course content, regular attendance is expected. Attendance and active engagement will be tracked weekly and will contribute to 10% of students' final grades. Students are expected to arrive at lectures on time.

Problem and Policy Identification (15%): In this assignment, students will select a policy area of interest and clearly define a real-world public problem. Students will explain why the problem matters, who or what is affected, and why it deserves policy attention. Next, they will identify a specific and existing policy response and describe its main objectives and the tools it employs to

address the problem. By linking the concrete policy issue to the policy designed to confront it, students will begin to see how governments translate problems into actionable solutions. Please note that the choice of problem and policy is important, as the case you select here will form the foundation for the second course assignment. Be deliberate and thoughtful in your selection, ensuring it is both meaningful and manageable for deeper analysis. Assignments should be 750-1000 words, not including Works Cited.

Midterm (20%): The midterm will be during lecture, and it will include questions based on information that has been covered in lectures and assigned readings up to and including October 14. The test consists of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Policy Analysis and Evaluation Project (25%): In this assignment, students will expand on the research they conducted in the first assignment by examining the evidence surrounding the selected public problem and the policy responses developed to address it. Students will investigate the causes and consequences of the problem, critically analyze the design of two policy responses, assess their relative costs, benefits, and trade-offs, and develop a feasible framework for evaluating effectiveness. The assignment consists of four components: (1) a literature review, (2) a comparative policy analysis, (3) a cost-benefit analysis, and (4) a policy evaluation proposal. Students must synthesize evidence across these sections and identify important gaps in available evidence. This assignment should be 3000-3500 words, not including Works Cited.

Final Exam (During Final Exam Period – December 9-21) (30%): The final exam will take place during the University's exam period (*December 12-23*) and will include questions based on information that has been covered in the readings and lectures throughout the semester. The test consists of multiple choice, short answers, and essay questions.

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

Lecture 1 (September 9) – Introduction to Policy Research

Recommended:

- Chapter 3 – “The History of Social Research Methods,” in Pertti Alasuurti, Leonard Bickman, and Julia Brannen eds. 2008. *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Recommended for Those Interested in Writing the Honours Research Essay (HRE):

- Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs. 2024. “PAPM 4908 Honours Research Essay: Guidelines for Students,” Carleton University. <https://carleton.ca/bpam/wp-content/uploads/PAPM-HRE-Guidelines-Student-2024.pdf>
- Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs. 2024. “PAPM 4908: Honours Research Essay,” Carleton University. <https://carleton.ca/bpam/about-b-pam/honours-research-essay-papm-4908/> (See HRE Dates and Deadlines).

Lecture 2 (September 16) – Policy Studies, Analysis, and Evaluation

- Walker, Warren E. 2000. “Policy Analysis: A systematic Approach to Supporting Policymaking in the Public Sector,” *Journal of Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis*. 9: 11-27.
- Torgenson, Daniel. 2006. “Promoting the Policy Orientation: Lasswell in Context,” pp. 52-73 in Frank Fischer and Gerald J. Miller eds. *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis*. Routledge.
- Chapter 8 – “Policy Evaluation: Policy-Making as Learning,” pp. 241-273 in Howlett, Michael, M. Ramesh, and Anthony Perl. 2020. *Studying Public Policy: Principles and Processes*. Oxford University Press.

Recommended:

- Chapter 1 – “What is Policy Analysis?” pp. 1-15 in David L. Weimer and Aiden R. Vining. 1991. *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. Prentice Hall.

Lecture 3 (September 23) – Argumentation and Classifying Policy

- Daviter, Falk. 2019. “Policy analysis in the face of complexity: What kind of knowledge to tackle wicked problems?” *Public Policy and Administration* 34 (1): 62-83.
- Chapter 7 – “Arguing and Explaining,” in Bruce Oliver Newsome. 2016. *An Introduction to Research, Analysis, and Writing: Practical Skills for Social Science Students*. SAGE Publications.
- Chapter 5 – “Policy Formulation,” pp. 132-175 in Michael Howlett, M. Ramesh and Anthony Perl. 2016. *Studying Public Policy: Principles and Processes*. Oxford University Press. **(Only pages 142-170).**

Recommended:

- Chapter 3 – “Selecting a Problem,” pp. 25-39 in Gary D. Bouma and Rod Ling eds. *The Research Process*. Fifth Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Albright, Leif K. 2023. “The Process of Scientific Writing: Developing a Research Question, Conducting a Literature Review, and Creating an Outline,” pp. 53-63 in Annette K. Griffith and Tyeler C. Ré eds., *Disseminating Behavioral Research*. Springer.

Lecture 4 (September 30) – Policy Science

- Chapter 3 – “Research Design,” pp. 31-55 in C.R. Kothari. 2004. *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. Second Revised Edition. New Age International Publishers.
- Chapter 1 – “The Definition and Measurement of Concepts,” pp. 1-34 in Phillip K. Pollock III and Barry C, Edwards. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. Sixth Edition. SAGE Publications.

Recommended:

- Chapter 6 – “Causal Thinking and Design of Research,” pp. 73-96 in W. Phillips Shively. 2013. *The Craft of Political Research*. Ninth Edition. Pearson.

Lecture 5 (October 7) – Theoretical Frameworks and Conducting Literature Reviews

- Grant, Cynthia and Azadeh Osandoo. 2016. “Understanding, Selecting, and Integrating a Theoretical Framework in Dissertation Research: Creating a Blueprint for Your “House”,” *Administrative Issues Journal* 4 (2): 12-26.
- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. “Doing a Literature Review,” *PS, Political Science & Politics* 39 (1): 127-132.
- Chapter 5 – “The Traditional Review,” pp. 73-89 in Jill K. Jesson, Lydia Matheson, and Fiona M. Lacey. 2011. *Doing Your Literature Review: Traditional and Systematic Techniques*.

Recommended:

- Chapter 5 – “Conduct a Deep Analysis of the Articles,” pp. 53-64 in Jose L. Galvan and Melisa C. Galvan. 2017. *Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Routledge.
- Chapter 8 – “Completing a Literature Review: Accessing Published (β) Information,” in Roger Pierce. *Research Methods in Politics*. SAGE Publications.
- Anyebe, Adam. 2018. “An Overview of Approaches to the Study of Public Policy,” *International Journal of Political Science* 4 (1): 8-17.

Lecture 6 (October 14) – Policy Alternatives and Cost-Benefit Analysis

- Chapter 1 – “Introduction to Cost-Benefit Analysis,” pp. 1-28 in Anthony E. Boardman et al. 2018. *Cost-Benefit Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. Cambridge University Press.

- Chapter 1 – “Introduction to Benefit-Cost Analysis,” pp. 1-12 in Richard O. Zerbe Jr. and Dwight D. Dively. 1994. *Benefit-Cost Analysis: In Theory and Practice*. HarperCollins College Publishers.
- Chapter 3 – “Listing Alternatives,” pp. 112-144 in Duncan MacRae Jr. and Dale Whittington. 1997. *Expert Advice for Policy Choice: Analysis and Discourse*. Georgetown University Press.

Recommended:

- Chapter 11 – “Case Studies,” pp. 290-308 in Richard O. Zerbe Jr. and Allen S. Bellas. 2007. *A Primer For Benefit-Cost Analysis*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Part I – “Step Three: Construct the Alternatives,” pp. 21-31 in Eugene Bardach and Eric M Patashnik. 2020. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. Sixth Edition. SAGE.

Lecture 7 (October 21) – In-Class Midterm

- No reading

Fall Break (October 26-30) – No Classes

Lecture 8 (November 4) – Criteria for Evaluation

- Chapter 4 – “Definitions and Criteria for Evaluations,” pp. 14-22 in Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB), the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <https://english.iob-evaluatie.nl/documents/2009/10/01/evaluation-policy-and-guidelines>
- Chapter 1 – “What is This Book About?” pp. 3-20 in Laura Langbein and Claire L. Felbinger. 2006. *Public Program Evaluation: A Statistical Guide*. M.E. Sharpe.
- Chapter 8 – “Policy Evaluation” pp. 118-129 in Christopher A. Simon. 2010. *Public Policy: Preferences and Outcomes*. Second Edition. Pearson.
- Chapter 6 – “Assessing Policy Proposals,” pp. 146-178 in Michael Kraft and Scott R. Furlong. 2007. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. Second Edition. CQ Press. (*Primary Focus on pages 147-156*)

Lecture 9 (November 11) – Comparative Public Policy and Case Studies

- Chapter 3 – “Doing Comparative Public Policy” pp. 39-64 in Anneliese Dodds. 2018. *Comparative Public Policy*. Second Edition. Palgrave.

- Chapter 7 – “Small-n Research: Case Study and Comparative Approaches” pp. 139-151 in Loleen Berdahl and Keith Archer. 2015. *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*. Third Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Gerring, John. 2009. “The Case Study: What it is and What it Does,” Chapter 4 in Charles Boix and Susan C. Stokes eds. 2009. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford University Press.

Recommended:

- Peters, B. Guy. 2020. “The comparative method and comparative policy analysis,” pp. 20-32 in B. Guy Peters and Guillaume Fontaine eds. *Handbook of Research methods and Applications in Comparative Policy Analysis*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Lecture 10 (November 18) – Qualitative Methods of Data Collection

- Yanow, Dvora. “Qualitative-Interpretive Methods in Policy Research,” Chapter 27 in Frank Fischer and Gerald J. Miller. 2006. *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Practice, and Methods*. Routledge.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2007. “Field Research,” Chapter 5 in Charles Boix and Susan C. Stokes eds. 2009. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Dalgish, Sarah, Hina Khalid, and Shannon A McMahon. 2020. “Document Analysis in Health Policy Research: the READ Approach,” *Health Policy Plan* 35, 10: 1424-1431.

Recommended:

- Chapter 5 – “Oral Accounts and the Role of Interviewing,” pp. 102-124 in Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson. 2019. *Ethnography: Principles and Practices*. Routledge.
- Chapter 7 – “Qualitative Methods,” pp. 111-128 in Josh Franco et al. 2020. *Introduction to Political Science Research Methods*. Creative Commons.

Lecture 11 (November 25) – Quantitative Methods of Data Collection

- John, Peter. 2020. “Using Experiments in Comparative Policy Analysis: From Policy Evaluation to the Policy Process.” In *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Comparative Policy Analysis*, pp. 153–166. Edward Elgar.

- Chapter 1 – “Using Administrative Data for Research and Evidence-Based Policy: An Introduction,” in Shawn Cole et al. *Handbook on Using Administrative Data for Research and Evidence-Based Policy*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
<https://admindatahandbook.mit.edu/book/v1.1/intro.html>
- Jilke, Sebastian and Gregg G. Van Ryzin. 2017. “Survey Experiments for Public Management Research,” pp. 117-138 in Oliver James, Sebastian R. Jilke, and Gregg G. Van Ryzin eds. *Experiments in Public Management Research: Challenges and Contributions*. Cambridge University Press.

Recommended:

- OECD. 2022. “Measuring Citizen Satisfaction With Public Services” in *Serving Citizens: Measuring the Performance of Services for Better User Experience*. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, No. 52. OECD Publishing.
https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/05/serving-citizens_9e6ed66f/65223af7-en.pdf
- Van Ryzin, Gregg G. 2004. “The Measurement of Overall Citizen Satisfaction,” *Public Performance and Management Review* 27 (3): 9-28.
- Chapter 4 – “Developing a Questionnaire,” pp. 66-106 in Peter M. Nardi. 2006. *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods*. Pearson.

Lecture 12 (December 2) – Mixed Methods and Research Ethics

1. Mixed-Methods:

- Harbrs, Imke and Matthew C. Igram. 2020. “Mixed-Methods Designs,” Chapter 58 in Luigi Curini and Robert Franzese eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*. SAGE Publications.
- Johnson, R. Burke and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie. 2004. “Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time has Come,” *Educational Researcher* 33 (7): 14-26.

Recommended:

- Richwine, C., Luo, Q.E., Thorkildsen, Z., Chong, N.J., Morris, R., Barnow, B.S. and Pandey, S.K., 2022. Defining and assessing the value of canonical mixed methods

research designs in public policy and public administration. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 41(3): 891-920.

2. Research Ethics:

- Schwester, Richard W. 2020. “Ethical Considerations in Public Administration Research,” pp. 365-376 in Eran Vigoda-Gadot and Dana R. Vashdi. 2020. *Handbook of Research Methods in Public Administration, Management and Policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Chapter 2 – “Research Ethics: Doing the Right Thing,” pp. 17-34 in David E. McNabb. *Research Methods in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management*. Routledge.
- Chapter 10 – “Professional Ethics,” pp. 163-172 in Ernest R. House. 1993. *Professional Evaluation: Social Impact and Political Consequences*. SAGE publications.

Lecture 13 (December 9) – Review Class

- No Reading

Appendix

i. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.”

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor.

The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of “F” for the course.

ii. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools (e.g., Chat GPT)

In this course, students may use AI tools for basic word processing functions, including grammar and spell checking (e.g. Grammarly, Microsoft Word Editor, Copilot). They may also use it to help them find sources, but the original documents should be referenced and sourced accordingly. Relying on AI tools for summaries is prohibited. It is not necessary to document the use of AI for the permitted purposes listed above. If you have questions about a specific use of AI that is not listed above, please consult your instructor.

This policy ensures that student voices and ideas are prioritized and authentically represented, maintaining the integrity of the work produced by students while allowing basic support to enhance clarity, correctness, layout and flow of ideas. The goal of adopting a limited use of AI is to help students develop foundational skills in writing and critical thinking by practicing substantive content creation without the support of AI.

iii. Requests for Academic Accommodation

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

- If you require supporting documentation for short-term considerations, you may only request the [Academic Consideration for Coursework form](#). You may **not** request medical notes or documentation.
- Consult the [Academic Consideration Policy for instructors](#) information page for more details.

iv. Statement on Student Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

- Mental Health Resources:

Emergency Resources ([on and off campus](#))

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30)
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or

- connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>

v. Final Grade Approval

As per the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar, letter grades are assigned based on the following percentages:

	+		–
A	90-100	85-89	80-84
B	77-79	73-76	70-72
C	67-69	63-66	60-62
D	56-59	53-56	50-52
F	Below 50		

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

vi. Statement on Student Conduct

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

vii. Student Conduct

All communications, whether in-person or via e-mail should be professional and respectful and should remain consistent with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy:

<https://carleton.ca/studentaffairs/student-rights-and-responsibilities/>