

Course Outline

COURSE:	LAWS 3503 A – Equality & Discrimination
TERM:	Fall 2025
PREREQUISITES:	(0.5 credit from LAWS 2105, LAWS 2302, LAWS 2502) and 0.5 credit in LAWS at the 2000 level.
CLASS:	Day & Time: Mondays 6:05pm - 8:55pm
	Room: Please check Carleton Central for current Class Schedule In-person
INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Philip Alexander Steiner
CONTACT:	Office Hrs: by appointment (virtually or on campus)
	Telephone: NA
	Email: philipsteiner@cunet.carleton.ca [I will aim to reply to emails within 24-48 hours of receipt]
BRIGHTSPACE:	Homepage - LAWS3503A Equality and Discrimination (LEC) Fall 2025

CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

Human rights issues and law in Canada; history and present-day experiences of discrimination; critical exploration of laws effectiveness in responding to discrimination; meaning(s) of equality and discrimination; focus on Human Rights Codes - interpretation, administration, enforcement with some reference to s.15 of the Charter.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the themes of inequality, discrimination, legality and justice as well as their structural reproduction/disruption through an exploration of:

- 1)** foundational concepts in socio-legal, political and sociological theory;
- 2)** specific historical and contemporary Canadian laws and cases; and
- 3)** current and historical social contexts in which both items (1) and (2) operate.

The course introduces students to key concepts and theoretical perspectives used to consider issues of discrimination, equality and inequality, including but not limited to themes of: justice, race and racialization, colonialism, sex and sexual orientation, recognition, constructions of femininity and masculinity, ability/ableism, environmental equality, poverty and class, as well as the intersection(ality) across and between them. Over the course of the term, students will explore various ways to understand and engage in socio-legal debates in the field of human rights, social justice, and equality – as well as consider the ways in which critical legal scholarship has, and can continue to, challenge, support, repute, and otherwise engage with both formal legal orders and the social norms such systems both reflect and encourage.

PRECLUSIONS

Precludes additional credit for LAWS 4604 (no longer offered).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course approaches the topics of Equality and Discrimination from a critical legal scholarship perspective. While the course will involve looking at specific Canadian laws, legal cases, and jurisprudence, students will spend a significant amount of time engaging with material on relevant social and legal theory, academic analysis of related topics, and academic debates on the nature of equality, law, and justice. As such, and explicitly as part of a critical legal studies approach, this course aims to both:

1. have students become familiar with a number of core socio-legal concepts and theoretical perspectives, historical and contemporary, as they relate to the social production and reproduction of in/equality; and
2. help students continue to develop their abilities to critically engage with and question the underlying principles, assumptions, and consequences (intended and unintended) of those concepts.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

This course is being delivered in-person, and therefore consistent attendance is required.

As a third year course, the material and course requirements are not insubstantial. Students will be expected to read challenging materials each week, engage with complex ideas, and produce high quality work. That said, this course has been organized to provide as much flexibility as possible while still acknowledging core requirements necessary to deliver a rigorous third year university level course.

Below are a number of concrete steps students can consider to maximize their success in this course given the exceptional circumstances:

1. Keep Up with Weekly Reading/Writing

The quantity and level of assigned reading forces you to “stay on top of” the weekly readings. While there can be a temptation to leave work to the end, materials in this course is both challenging and cumulative. As such is designed to be read over a longer period of time. A number of the readings we cover in this class are either by, or about, significant figures in social theory, justice theory, legal theory or philosophy. These can be challenging texts, and are not the same as summarizing a case or simple article. Such texts introduce complex ideas that need to be considered and digested over time. The number one thing you can do to set yourself up for success is to keep up with the lectures and course materials on a week by week basis. This represents an estimated 1-3 hours of preparation a week (obviously varying by week and individual).

2. In for a Penny, in for a Pound

The course is divided into three main requirements. Up to 20% of your final grade is determined by the submission of five lecture/reading engagements r – which are simply the written account of your notes and thoughts after doing the reading and attending lecture. The remaining 80% is broken down across a take-home style written assignment (40%) and your final exam (40%). Like the readings and lectures, the course work is meant to build off each other. Doing your lecture/reading engagements will prepare you for your first written assignment, which in turn will provide you with feedback to tackle your final exam. Students are strongly encouraged to ‘eat the elephant’ one bite at a time!

3. Don’t be shy to Ask for Help (YOU ARE NOT ALONE!)

Your Teaching Assistant and I are here to help you succeed in the course. While you may feel you are “on your own”, especially if we are forced to return to a virtual learning environment, **you are not alone!** Your TAs and I want you to succeed, so you should contact us if you need to. You are also part of a “class” and you should not underestimate the value of peer support and academic community. Don’t be afraid to get to know your peers and ask (and answer) questions. This may be intimidating at first, but part of the university experience is recognizing **you are now part of a community of learning** in which we all have a shared interest in fostering understanding, disseminating knowledge, and forwarding new ideas.

4. Be open to new ideas and new ways of thinking (and communicating)

Good courses ought to challenge us to think differently about what we think we already know and/or force us to find new ways to articulate our positions or experience. Consequently, they may prompt us to reflect on ourselves, our relationships with others, and the structures of the world around us. This can sometimes be an unsettling and uncomfortable process and different people react to these challenges differently. In this

class the source of these challenges may be the course materials (lectures or the readings) but they may also come through interactions with your peers. Be attentive to this fact and be “generous” in your communication with others in the class.

5. Know the difference between using and abusing AI tools

The rapid mass adoption of advanced generative AI tools is already transforming the way societies think about producing and trusting information. While the use of generative AI is not prohibited to help organize thoughts, plan work or test ideas – the complete outsourcing of work to generative AI is not permitted. Except where explicitly allowed by an instructor, the use of generative AI to produce assessed work constitutes a breach of academic integrity and is subject to disciplinary action.

That said, not only does the use of Generative AI to complete submitted work represent a breach academic integrity, it is unlikely (even if undetected) to lead to passing grades. Additionally, the assignments in the first half of the course are meant to prepare students for their final examination, where the prohibition of AI tools will be closely monitored. As such, students are strongly encouraged not to self-sabotage through the abuse these emerging technologies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required texts for this course. Each week materials will be assigned, and students are responsible for retrieving all readings (available through the library portal or made available via the course page on Brightspace).

Students will be responsible viewing two Documentary films:

1. Anne Braden: Southern Patriot

Themes: Racism, US Civil Rights movement, Legal Reform, Social Activism, Allies

Cost: can be streamed through <https://www.seedandspark.com/> for pay-what-you-can membership

2. In Particular, barbara findlay

Themes: Canadian Charter, LGBTQ+ rights, Legal Reform

Cost: Can be rented (\$2.99) or purchased (\$5.99) from iTunes

EVALUATION

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Department and 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 Department and the Dean.

Weekly Reading/Lecture Summaries	20%
Mid Term Assignment	40%
Final Examination	40%

Weekly Reading/Lecture Reviews (20%)

Each week students will be have the opportunity to complete and **2-3 page reading and lecture review**, critically engaging with the key concepts and ideas from the assigned readings and lecture discussion for that week. Students do not have to do one each week, but rather are asked to complete 5 over the course of the term. Students will be expected to demonstrate they have read and understood the assigned materials by engaging with **the key ideas/concepts** (not simply summarize the articles) and putting them in conversation with the ideas and examples given in that week's lecture (not lecture slides). Over the course of the term, students may accumulate up to 20% by completing reading reflections, with each completed reading reflection providing 4%.

Critical Reading/Lecture Reviews must be submitted **via Brightspace, double-spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman font with standard 1" margins**, within 6 days of the lecture they are engaging with (or the day before the next lecture).

Reviews will be accepted on a pass/fail basis. Grades will be posted on **Brightspace**, however **papers will not be commented on week to week**. Students are, however, encouraged to bring reading reflections to meetings with the Teaching Assistant or the Instructor if they wish to discuss their writing or their understanding of a given week's assigned materials.

Students are strongly encouraged to keep copies of their summaries as study aides for their final examination. Students are also encouraged to update their own copies, even after submitting them, to reflect any additional information/perspectives they may wish to flag for future review purposes.

Mid Term Assignment (40%)

Students will be asked to prepare responses to up to three questions. Required answers will range from traditional essay style responses, working through provided scenarios, or collecting and analyzing interview data. The total assignment length (answers to all questions) will not exceed **15 pages** (excluding title page and bibliography). Additional information will be provided closer to assignment date.

Assignment instructions will be distributed Monday October 27th. Students will have two weeks (14 days) to complete the assignment.

Final Examination (40%)

The final examination will take the form of a **formally scheduled closed book examination**. Students will prepare short answers to provided questions, with answers organized in essay format (full sentences as opposed to bullet points).

Students will be asked to prepare responses to provided scenarios, critical engagement questions, or questions testing understanding of specific assigned materials. Students will be assessed on their ability to **demonstrate** understanding of the assigned materials and concepts/ideas discussed in class. Students will have 3 hours to complete the examination.

Examinations will be held during the formally scheduled examination period.

All components must be successfully completed in order to get a passing grade.

Students who cannot attend on-campus assessments in person may apply to write their exams remotely, if they meet certain criteria. More information for instructors and students is available at <https://carleton.ca/ses/distance-exams/>.

Assessments will occur on campus outside of regular class time (which can include Friday evening, Saturday or Sunday).

LATE PENALTIES AND REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

The granting of extensions is at the discretion of the instructor, who will confirm whether an extension is approved and its duration. For information about requesting short-term or long-term extensions, deferrals for final exams, or academic consideration due to illness, injury, or other extraordinary circumstances, please visit the Academic Consideration Policy page and complete the relevant forms as required. All requests must be submitted to the instructor before the assignment due date or, in the case of exam deferrals, directly to the Registrar's Office. Full details and instructions can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-policy/>.

Extensions for longer than 7 days will normally not be granted. In those extraordinary cases where extensions lasting longer than 7 days are granted, the student will be required to provide additional information to justify the longer extension (up to a maximum of 14 days).

Assignments submitted late, without formal extension, will be subject to penalty of 5% per day.

POLICY ON PERMISSIBILITY OF USING GENERATIVE AI

Students may use Generative AI tools like CoPilot, ChatGPT, or Gemini but only in specific,

limited ways. AI tools can be used to assist with tasks such as gathering ideas, looking for additional contextual information online, or proofreading a final draft for grammar and style. However, students are not allowed to use AI to organize or communicate their core ideas. Any use of Generative AI to create work that is submitted for assessment is considered a violation of Carleton's academic integrity provisions.

Any use of AI must be clearly documented and cited, including how the tool assisted in the process.

PERMISSIBILITY OF SUBMITTING SAME WORK MORE THAN ONCE

Students may engage with the same core ideas in assignments for multiple classes, but submissions made to this course must be unique from other courses in writing and primary content. Within the course, students are allowed to resubmit work when prompted by the teaching team.

PERMISSIBILITY OF GROUP OR COLLABORATIVE WORK

As there are no group assignments in this course, no group submissions are permitted. Each student must submit their own distinct submission for each assignment.

SCHEDULE

Lecture schedule, including assigned readings and any additional changes or instructions, will be posted to the courses **Brightspace** page – and maintained as an evergreen document. **Students are responsible for checking the schedule on an ongoing basis – as it may be subject to adjustments as the term progresses.**

Fall 2025 Sessional Dates and University Closures		
<p>Please find a full list of important academic dates on the calendar website: https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/</p>		
September 3, 2025	Fall term begins.	
September 8, 2025	Week 1 – Introduction	No required readings – but please download and review the syllabus .
September 15, 2025	Week 2 – The Idea of Justice	Rawls, John. (2001) Justice As Fairness : A Restatement, edited by Erin I. Kelly, Harvard University Press.

		(pages 39-50)
September 16, 2025	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in fall and fall/winter courses.	
September 22, 2025	Week 3 – Civil Rights (and Responsibilities)	<p>Cook, B. (2013) “Double Consciousness” in <i>McNair Scholars Journal</i>, 15, California State University, Sacramento. (pages 1-18)</p> <p>Sartre, Jean-Paul, Preface to Fanon’s “Wretched of the Earth” – On the complicity of the French (and other) citizens who do not speak out against injustice.</p>
September 29, 2025	Week 4 – The Power of Law & Legal Language	Smart, Carol. (1989) <i>Feminism and the Power of Law</i> . (Introduction & chapter 1 – pages 1-25)
October 6, 2025	Week 5 – Objectification, Bias, and Relations of Ruling	Smith, Dorothy. (1987) “Beyond Methodology – Institutionalization and its Subversion” in <i>The Everyday World as Problematic</i> . (pages 211-227)
October 13, 2025	Statutory holiday. University closed.	
October 20-24, 2025	Fall break, no classes.	
October 27, 2025	<p>Week 6 – Redistribution vs. Recognition</p> <p>Instructions for Assignment distributed.</p>	Nancy Fraser “ Redistribution or Recognition? ” – (pages 7 to 48)
November 3, 2025	Week 7 – Economic Inequality – Reflections on Gramsci and Law	Research Handbook on Law and Marxism , edited by Paul O’Connell, and Umut Özsu, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021. (pages 139 – 155)

November 10, 2025	Week 8 – Binary Oppositions, Moral Panics and (Un)intended Consequences Assignment due.	Singer, Samuel. (2020) “ Trans Rights Are Not Just Human Rights: Legal Strategies for Trans Justice ” in Canadian Journal of Law and Society, volume 35, issue 2 (pages 293-315)
November 17, 2025	Week 9 – Equality, Jurisprudence and Everyday Life	The Supreme Court Law Review: Osgoode’s Annual Constitutional Cases Conference – 2012 Hughes, Patricia - Supreme Court of Canada Equality Jurisprudence and “Everyday Life” (pages 245-272)
November 24, 2025	Week 10 – Sexuality, Law and Absences	Documentary Screening In Particular, barbara Findlay
December 1, 2025	Week 11 – Inequality, Discrimination and Environmental Justice	Dayna, Nadine and Garance Malivel. “ Intergenerational Environmental Justice and the Climate Crisis: Thinking with and beyond the Charter ” in Journal of Law and Equality. Vol. 17 no. 1 2021 (pages 165-203)
FRIDAY DEC 5, 2025	CLASSES FOLLOW A MONDAY SCHEDULE	
December 5, 2025 (Friday pretending to be Monday)	Week 12 – Denouement: Intersectionality, Understanding, and the Politics of Becoming	Connolly, William. “ Suffering, Justice and the Politics of Becoming ” in Campbell, David and Michael J. Shapiro (eds) Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis – 1999. (pages 125-153)
December 8-20, 2025	Final examinations in fall courses and mid-term examinations in fall/winter courses will be held.	

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Please find a full list of important academic dates on the calendar website: https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/	
September 3, 2025	Fall term begins.
September 16, 2025	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) for fall, and fall/winter courses.
September 30, 2025	Last day to withdraw from fall term and fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment (financial withdrawal).
October 13, 2025	Statutory holiday. University closed.
October 20-24, 2025	Fall break. No classes.
November 15, 2025	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall courses.
	Last day to request formal exam accommodations for fall, and fall/winter examinations to the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities.
November 24, 2025	Last day for summative tests or examinations or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade in the fall or fall/winter before the official examination period.
December 5, 2025	Fall term ends.
	Last day of fall term classes.
	Classes follow a Monday schedule.
	Last day for take home examinations to be assigned.
December 6-7, 2025	No classes or examinations take place.
December 8-20, 2025	Final examinations in fall term courses and mid-term examinations in fall/winter courses will be held.
December 20, 2025	All final take-home examinations are due on this day, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
December 24, 2025 – January 2, 2025	University closed.

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Please review the following webpage to ensure that your practices meet our Department's expectations, particularly regarding standard departmental protocols and academic integrity requirements: <https://carleton.ca/law/student-experience-resources/>.

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; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of 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 conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

As a University 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/>

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

- <https://wellness.carleton.ca/get-help-now/>

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: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

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).

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows.

Pregnancy and Family-Status Related Accommodations

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details about the accommodation policy, visit the [Equity and Inclusive Communities \(EIC\)](#) website.

Religious Obligation

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, please go to: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/discrimination-harassment/religious-spiritual-observances/>.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. You can find the Paul Menton Centre online at: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. Read more here: <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>.

For more information on academic accommodation, please visit: <https://students.carleton.ca/services/accommodation/>.

Academic Consideration for Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances

Due to medical and other extenuating circumstances, students may occasionally be unable to fulfill the academic requirements of their course(s) in a timely manner. The University supports the academic development of students and aims to provide a fair environment for students to succeed academically. Medical and/or other extenuating circumstances are circumstances that are beyond a student's control, have a significant impact on the student's capacity to meet their academic obligations, and could not have reasonably been prevented.

Students must contact the instructor(s) as soon as possible, and normally no later than 24 hours after the submission deadline for course deliverables. If not satisfied with the instructor's decision, students can conduct an "informal appeal" to the Chair of the department within three (3) working days of an instructor's decision. We have created a webform specifically for appeals to the Chair, which can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/law/application-for-review-of-refusal-to-provide-academic-consideration/>. *Note: This form only applies to LAWS courses and is not the same as a formal appeal of grade.* More information about the academic consideration can be found [here](#).