

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE NUMBER - TITLE	LAWS 4801 – RISK AND THE LEGAL PROCESS
SECTION:	B
TERM:	Winter 2026
PREREQUISITES:	LAWS 2908 or PAPM 3000 and fourth-year Honours standing
DAY & TIME:	Monday 6-9pm
DELIVERY METHOD/ROOM:	IN-PERSON / Please check Carleton Central for classroom information
INSTRUCTOR (CONTRACT):	Tara Ashtakala
CONTACT INFORMATION:	OFFICE HOURS: By appointment EMAIL: Tara.Ashtakala@carleton.ca
BRIGHTSPACE PAGE	https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/370967

UNDERGRADUATE CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION (GENERAL)

Application of risk assessment and management in various legal arenas including insurance, liability and tort, litigation management, environmental protection, and sentencing and parole.

INSTRUCTOR COURSE DESCRIPTION (SPECIFIC)

Risk management is **not just for business majors** anymore; it is an increasingly important aspect of both public and private activities. Nowadays, the ability to anticipate the consequences in law of a proposed or uncontrollable event is essential for legal counsel, whether your client is an individual involved in an everyday consumer transaction or a construction company carrying out a megaproject or a government institution concerned with protecting the safety of the public. Policies, contracts and even lifestyle choices can benefit from the scrutiny of the legal professional in order to avoid lawsuits or other adverse legal consequences. This course is intended to introduce students of law and legal studies to the situations, actors, methodology and societal impact of risk management. You will be surprised and intrigued by the diversity of issues that you will be exposed to in this course and you will use the skills you learn herein in your future law-related career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- to identify situations of risk with legal implications
- to determine which actors (individuals, governments, courts) are affected by the risk issue
- to evaluate the strategies employed by those actors for preventing or mitigating (ie managing) risk
- to explore the impact of the risk and its management on law and society as a whole

REQUIRED TEXTS

There is no textbook for this course. **Required Readings will be posted in PDF form on Brightspace;** The specific pages to be read will be indicated in the pre-lecture notes which will also be posted on Brightspace.

COURSE DELIVERY:

- This course will be delivered in person, on the day and at the time noted above
- Pre-lecture notes will be posted on Brightspace prior to each class, indicating readings to be done ahead of lecture and containing questions that help the student understand the readings.
- It is during lecture that the answers to the questions in the pre-lecture notes will be discussed.
- Case study exercises, involving group discussions, will also be conducted during the class period
- The presentation and research paper components of evaluation in the course will be submitted by students as per the deadlines indicated in the “Evaluation” section below.

NOTE-TAKING:

The pre-lecture Power Point slides are designed to allow you to enter notes directly on the slides during lecture. Alternatively, you can inscribe notes in a single Word document. Whether you save notes in the Power Point slides downloaded from Brightspace or in a separate Word doc or both, **PLEASE DO NOT SAVE NOTES IN GOOGLE DOCS OR ANY OTHER APP BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO ACCESS SUCH SITES DURING THE EXAM.**

EVALUATION**Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools:**

It is prohibited in this course to use generative AI tools (eg ChatGPT) to produce assessed content. Any work submitted for evaluation that has been produced using AI will be considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

Standing:

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 have been approved by the Department and Dean.

All components must be completed in order to obtain a passing grade in course**1. Audio-visual Presentation - 35% of final grade**

- Each student will be required to complete a 10-minute presentation on a risk issue of your choosing.
- Your task in the presentation assignment is to **take a position** on the risk topic you have chosen **and** to impart – to your colleagues and to me – your **understanding** of:
 - why the current social and legal impacts of the risk are a problem;
 - how the law has dealt with the risk so far;
 - the defects in the law (this is why the risk is causing social and legal problems); and
 - how the defects in the law should be rectified, using law.

By the end of the presentation, you should have persuaded your audience that your position on the issue is in fact the best way to minimize the risk of the adverse legal consequences recurring in the future.

- Since, as we will learn in the course, legal risk cannot be entirely prevented, the assignment is generally about finding the best **legal** course of action – whose benefits outweigh the risks - to deal with the ongoing legal problem you have identified.
- Format: the assignment consists of **two (2)** segments:
 - **Creative segment:** the first 5 minutes is a VIDEO, that should use a FICTIONAL STORYLINE to ILLUSTRATE:
 - why the risk you have selected is a social and legal problem
 - You must create ORIGINAL content and film it.
 - Do NOT submit a video of you simply reading off notes.
 - Do NOT use illustration apps to create your video content. You need actual human characters in your video.
 - You can ask fellow students, friends or family members to play the characters in your storyline. Note that you do not need special equipment to create videos: filming can be done with mobile phones and video editing apps are usually included with computer operating systems like Windows, or are otherwise available to download for free online.
 - Law and risk tends to address serious topics, so have fun with this part and try to make your audience laugh about your chosen risk!
 - **Analysis segment:** the remaining 5 minutes of your assignment must consist of a LIVE FORMAL PRESENTATION to the class about:
 - how the law - which is legislation and cases - has dealt with the risk so far;
 - the defects in the law; and
 - how the defects in the law should be rectified
 - You can use presentation software (Powerpoint, Prezi) for this portion..
 - THE CONTENT OF THE PRESENTATION MUST BE PRESENTED IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE CLASS AND FROM MEMORY; YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO READ OFF A PHONE, LAPTOP OR NOTES. IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THIS FORMAT, THEN YOU SHOULD RE-CONSIDER WHETHER YOU STILL WANT TO TAKE THIS CLASS, AS NO ADJUSTMENTS TO THE FORMAT WILL BE MADE FOR ANY REASON.
 - Bullet points on your slides must not contain full sentences; instead, they should consist of key words to help you remember the point. Graphics or illustrations are allowed.

PRESENTATION SUBMISSION DEADLINES :

- **THE DATES FOR SUBMITTING PRESENTATIONS WILL BE DETERMINED AS OF THE 1ST LECTURE, WHEN FINAL ENROLMENT IN THE COURSE CAN BE CONFIRMED.**
- **YOUR SUBMISSION DATE WILL BE ASSIGNED RANDOMLY.**
- **ONCE ASSIGNED, YOU MAY REQUEST A CHANGE OF DATE - BUT ONLY IF A VACANT SPOT IS AVAILABLE ON THE SCHEDULE. REQUESTS CAN BE MADE ONLY UP UNTIL 26 JANUARY.**

- **ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN ARRANGE WITH ONE OF YOUR COLLEAGUES TO SWAP SUBMISSION DATES. IF YOU DO SO, YOU NEED TO INFORM ME OF THE CHANGE RIGHT AWAY. OTHERWISE, I WILL BE EXPECTING YOUR SUBMISSION ON THE ORIGINAL DATE.**

2. Term Essay - 25% of final grade

The essay builds upon the basic arguments made in the presentation on the chosen risk topic: it is meant to be a SCHOLARLY RESEARCH PIECE that conducts a more in-depth analysis than the presentation. By the end of the paper, your research and arguments should persuade the reader that your proposed legal solutions are the best way to minimize the risk of the adverse legal consequences recurring in the future.

- **Due on 8 April 2026** : upload to Brightspace
- Length: 10-12 pages, plus bibliography.
- Use Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation (McGill Guide) at <https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/guides/mcgillguide> https://library.carleton.ca/sites/default/files/help/writing-citing/Using_uniform_legal_citation_2018.pdf
- **USE CANADIAN SPELLING ONLY. This is a requirement and not to be ignored.** If you are going to use spell-checking applications to review your text, you should first ensure that the language settings on your computer are set to Canadian English. A helpful guide to Canadian spellings can be found at <https://www.alloprof.qc.ca/fr/eleves/bv/anglais/canadian-spelling-a2860>
- Late penalties: the penalty for late submission of the paper will be 1 point/mark per day. This is based on fairness to the class members who turned in the assignment on time.

3. Formally-scheduled, open book final examination - 40% of final grade

- The goal of the timed final exam is to apply the course content to 1) solve a fictitious client's legal problem and to 2) thoroughly discuss a thematic issue.
- To be scheduled during final exam period: 11-23 April 2026
 - **The final exam will be written ONLINE, remotely, on your own device. NOTE THAT THE DEVICE ON WHICH YOU WRITE YOUR EXAM MUST HAVE A WORKING WEBCAM.**
- **Any student who does not write the final exam on the day it is scheduled, for whatever reason, must apply for a deferral.** Note that there is no guarantee that your application will be granted. See the conditions for deferring an exam: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/deferral/>
- **The final exam will be E-proctored.** *e-Proctoring: please note that examinations in this course will use a remote proctoring service provided by Scheduling and Examination Services. You can find more information at <https://carleton.ca/ses/e-proctoring/#sect1>*
- **E-proctoring:**
 - PLEASE NOTE THAT EXAMINATIONS IN THIS COURSE WILL USE A REMOTE

PROCTORING SERVICE PROVIDED BY SCHEDULING AND EXAMINATION SERVICES. YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION AT <https://carleton.ca/ses/e-proctoring/#sect1>

- PRIOR TO THE FINAL EXAM, YOU WILL BE SENT EMAIL FROM SCHEDULING AND EXAM SERVICES (SES) REGARDING INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOWNLOADING AND TESTING THE E-PROCTORING APP.
- YOU MUST DOWNLOAD AND TEST THE SYSTEM BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EXAM SO THAT, IF YOU ENCOUNTER ISSUES, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO CONTACT THE ONLINE EXAMS TEAM FOR HELP.
- IT IS HIGHLY ADVISABLE TO LOG IN WELL BEFORE THE EXAM START TIME ON EXAM DAY TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING WORKS.
- IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO CLAIM THAT YOU WERE DELAYED IN STARTING THE EXAM DUE TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE E-PROCTORING SYSTEM OR THAT YOU WERE WAITING ON THE PHONE/CHAT/EMAIL WITH TECH SUPPORT. NO EXTRA TIME WILL BE ACCORDED ON THIS BASIS.
- **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH E-PROCTORING OBLIGATIONS – INCLUDING THE OBLIGATION FOR YOUR DEVICE TO HAVE A FUNCTIONING WEBCAM - WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION.**

LECTURE TOPIC SCHEDULE * assigned readings may change, depending upon their relevance to current events happening at the time of each lecture. Therefore, the most accurate and updated list of readings to be done in this course will always be found on the 1st page of the pre-lecture slides, that will be posted ahead of every class, on Brightspace.

THE NATURE OF RISK AND UNCERTAINTY

5 Jan INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

12 Jan SITUATIONS OF RISK

- Vern Krishna, “Crime Pays More If You’ve Got Class”
- Anna Sharratt, “Risk Renewal”
- Nicole Baer, “Thinking Outside The Courtroom”
- Jennifer Couzia-Frankel, “As gene-testing surges, lawsuits aren’t far behind” :
- WFP Press Release, “World’s first humanitarian insurance policy issued”
- Dostmohammed and Long, ‘Regulating the Sharing Economy’
- BBC News online, 'Laser scam' gamblers to keep £1m , 5 December
- Dan M. Kahan, ‘A Risky Science Communication Environment for Vaccines’

19 Jan ONGOING DEBATES IN RISK MANAGEMENT

- M. Megalli & A. Friedman, “Fronting for Business”
- A. Wildavsky, “No Risk Is the Highest Risk of All”
- Alexandria S. Palazzo, ”No-fault insurance...”
- C. Hubbard, “Culpability and Compensation in Canadian Health Care: Much Ado About No-Fault?”
- F. van Waarden, “Institutions and Innovation - the legal environment of innovating firms”

- D. Macdonald, “Coerciveness and the selection of environmental Policy instruments,”
- Allan J. Kam, “NHTSA Safety Defect Investigations”
- Dunsmuir v. New Brunswick
- Ernst v Alberta (Energy Resources Conservation Board)

26 Jan TOOLS FOR THE PREVENTION AND/OR MITIGATION OF RISK

- Flyvbjerg et al, “Dealing with Risk”
- J. Morris, “Defining the Precautionary Principle”
- Comité d’environnement de la Baie Inc. v. Société d’électrolyse et de chimie Alcan
- Triantis, “Contractual Allocations of Unknown Risks: A Critique of the Doctrine of Commercial Impracticability”
- Selina-Lee Anderson, “Impacts of climate change – foreseeable or unforeseeable? Drafting force majeure clauses in the era of climate uncertainty”

2 Feb RISK IN THE LEGAL PROCESS (RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN THE COURTROOM)

- Kelliher (Village of) v. Smith,
- R. v. Mohan,
- R. v. Bingley
- Moravian Church v Newfoundland and Labrador
- R v Chapple
- R. v. N.S.
- R v BK
- Frederic L. Lederer, “The Road to the Virtual Courtroom?”
- Tamara A. Small & Kate Puddister, “Tweeting Criminal Trials in the Digital Age”
- “Canadian courts turning an eye to how artificial intelligence is used in the legal system”

DEALING WITH RISK IN VARIOUS TYPES OF LAW

9 Feb DISASTERS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations (18 June 1998) International Telecommunications Union
- Convention on Assistance in case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, (18 March 2015) UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- “Victoria Bannon & David Fisher: Legal Lessons in Disaster Relief from the Tsunami, the Pakistan Earthquake and Hurricane Katrina”
- Gerry R. Thornton, “Hurricane Katrina - The Legal Saga Begins”
- Emergency Management Act, RSC 2007 c. 15
- Emergencies Act. RSC 1985 c. 22 (4th Supp.)

16 Feb Reading week, no class

23 Feb RISK AND PUBLIC HEALTH

- Reference re Genetic Non-Discrimination Act
- Reference re Anti-Inflation Act
- Schneider v. The Queen
- The Attorney-General of Ontario and others (Appeal No. 2) v The Canada Temperance Federation (Ontario)
- Emergencies Act RSC 1985 c. 22 (4th Supp.)
- Canada (Health) v The Winning Combination, Inc.
- “Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System” Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario.

2 Mar RISK ISSUES IN CRIMINAL LAW

- Criminal Code of Canada RSC 1985 cC-46 s. 718
- R v Lloyd
- Criminal Code of Canada RSC 1985 cC-46 s. 735
- R. v. Boutilier
- “Offender Risk Assessment”, (2000) John Howard Society of Alberta
- Ewert v Canada
- R v Ndhlovu
- Ilvy Goossens et al, “Examining the High-Risk Accused Designation for Individuals Found Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Disorder”

9 Mar VOLUNTARY ASSUMPTION OF RISK : THE CASE OF SPORT

- Criminal Code of Canada RSC 1985 cC-46 , s. 265
- A. Husa & S. Thiele, “In the Name of the Game: Hockey Violence and the Criminal Justice System.”
- R v Jobidon
- R. v. Cey
- R. v. Leclerc
- R v Ciccarelli
- Citron, Jeffrey A. & Ableman, Mark, “Civil liability in the arena of professional sports”.
- Dunn v University of Ottawa
- Bruce v Cohon
- Dent et al v NFL (2018)

16 Mar VOLUNTARY ASSUMPTION OF RISK: THE CASE OF TORT

- Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER O.1, s. 43(2)
- R v Port Colborne (City)
- Douglas v Canadian Corps of Commissionaires

- Dube v. Labar
- Crocker v. Sundance Northwestern Resorts Ltd.
- Childs v. Desormeaux
- Horsley v. MacLaren
- Coopersmith v. Air Canada
- Taylor v BC (Privacy Commissioner)
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23 Mar RISK, EXPRESSION AND THE MEDIA

- Irwin Toy Ltd. v. Quebec (Attorney General)
- Rocket v Royal College of Dentists and Surgeons of Ontario
- CCLA v Attorney General of Ontario
- Harper v Canada (Attorney General)
- R. v. Butler
- Ward c Quebec
- Guistra v Twitter, Inc.
- R v Skelly 2021
- A.B. v Bragg Communications Inc.
- Dagenais v. Canadian Broadcasting Corp.
- R. v. Mentuck
- Sierra Club of Canada v Canada (Minister of Finance)
- R v Vice Media

30 Mar CORPORATE LEGAL RISKS

- R v SNC-Lavalin
- Criminal Code of Canada RSC 1985 cC-46
- TD Waterhouse Private Investment Counsel et al
- Buckerfield's Limited et al. v. M.N.R.
- Orphan Well Association v Grant Thornton
- Trinity Church v Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Resubmissions and Group Collaboration:

The same work cannot be submitted more than once for multiple academic credits.

There are no group assignments in the course.

Generative AI:

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools to create course evaluation work is **prohibited**.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS:

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 unauthorised use of generative AI tools (eg 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://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

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 Obligation 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](#).

End of Course Outline.