

Course Outline

COURSE:	LAWS 3908 section C [Approaches in Legal Studies II]
TERM:	Winter 2026
PREREQUISITES:	LAWS 2908 and third-year Honours standing. Honours students are strongly encouraged to take this course in the third year of their program.
CLASS:	Day & Time: Weekly modules released Tuesday at 11:35am Room: Online Modules asynchronous (one week to complete) Midterm, <u>synchronous</u> (Feb 24, 11:35am -2:25 pm)
INSTRUCTOR:	Ummni Khan
TA:	Madison Hannon
CONTACT:	Office Hrs: Email your TA or prof to set up an appointment over Zoom. Allow 48 hours during the work week for a response. Email: Ummni.Khan@carleton.ca TA: MadisonHannon@cmail.carleton.ca
BRIGHTSPACE:	https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/366344

CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

Advanced approaches to interdisciplinary research and analysis in law and legal studies. Emphasis on the important role of theory. Approaches considered will vary by section, and may include theoretical, quantitative, qualitative, literary, or historical approaches.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to 3908! This online course engages with a variety of texts and mediums that address key issues in legal theory. We will consider several major approaches to law and justice, ranging from Indigenous to “Western,” from theoretical to fictional, and from canonical to critical. With an emphasis on rights, justice and decolonization, the material engages with both theory and its application. The course will further grapple with politics, ontological assumptions, epistemological methods, aesthetic and rhetorical choices.

This is a rigorous class that demands full participation through challenging material and interactive weekly lessons, a mid-term and a final exam.

This class requires you to engage with the modules on a weekly basis, just as you would with an in-person lecture. Each week, a module on Brightspace will be released. Students will have one week to complete the module, which means engaging with the content and answering all the questions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Comprehend and define key Indigenous, mainstream and critical legal theories
- Apply different legal theories to analyze a situation, case or story
- Analyze a diverse set of texts through a theoretical lens, including creative works, oral storytelling, scholarship, statutes and cases

REQUIRED TEXTS

Course readings and videos will be accessible through ARES and/or available at Library Reserves.

Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course.

CONTENT INFORMATION

Please note that class material has been carefully curated to advance the learning outcomes by expanding your knowledge and engagement with diverse legal theories. You should be aware, however, that the theories and the content can be potentially distressing and invoke strong opinions and visceral reactions. The course will challenge you to articulate your arguments while tolerating opposing perspectives.

The law is implicated by such issues as imperialism, state violence, interpersonal violence, anti-Indigenous and racist violence, sexual violence, socio-economic violence and more. If you require support at any time because you are triggered or upset by this challenging material, please note that there are counselling services available

(<https://students.carleton.ca/services/counselling-services/>). Always feel free to reach out to your professor or TA if you are experiencing difficulties. We are here to support your learning journey.

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 Professor Khan may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Department and the Dean.

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

Evaluation	Notes	Weight of Final Grade
Weekly Module/Knowledge-Check Completion <u>Begins January 6.</u>	Module Completion Requirements Each online module uses the “quiz” function in Brightspace to make the lesson interactive. To complete the module, you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch lecture videos and engage all assigned content • Answer all Poll, Knowledge Check, and Reflection Questions as directed <p>These questions are graded, but you may retake the multiple-choice portion of the quiz once during that week. Your highest grade from the two attempts will be recorded.</p> <p>Deadline: Except for module 1, each module is due on Tuesday at 11:35 AM, one week after it is released. Both your first attempt and the optional second take of the multiple-choice questions must be completed by this deadline.</p>	25%
Midterm <u>February 24, 11:35-2:35</u> Note that the midterm is scheduled at a fixed time. You must be available at this time to write the midterm on your own computer.	3 hours, covers the first 6 weeks of content (see below). E-proctored using CoMas	35%
Final Exam Scheduled during the final exam period in April	3 hours, covers all 12 weeks of content, (see below). E-proctored using CoMas	40%

All assignments and exams will be done remotely, using your own computer. To ensure Academic Integrity and fairness to all students, **this course uses CoMas, an e-proctoring software** developed in-house at Carleton and provided by Scheduling and Examination Services for the midterm and final exam. You can find more information at <https://carleton.ca/ses/e-proctoring>. The minimum computing requirements for this service are listed on the SES website <https://carleton.ca/ses/online-exams/e-proctoring/e-proctoring-course-outline-template>

Students are required to ensure they have the necessary computer capabilities and have installed the software one week prior to the midterm and final exam.

Rules for both Midterm and the Final exam will be provided in the first class.

FINAL GRADE APPROVAL

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.

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

LATE PENALTIES AND REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

Your weekly modules are accessed through the Quiz tool in Brightspace. Each module has a due date (one week after it opens). Submissions made after the due date will be marked as late. The quiz will remain open for one additional week, after which it will close.

Submissions made during the one-week grace period will be accepted with a 10% late penalty.

If you encounter extenuating circumstances that temporarily hinder your capacity to fulfil academic requirements or to write the midterm you may request a short-term extension.

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.

For requests for short-term extensions due to extenuating circumstances for module completions or the midterm, you must complete the Academic Consideration form at the following link **prior to the due date**: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academicconsideration-coursework-form/>. Please do not email your professor with a direct request before submitting this form.

After you have completed the form, you are welcome to contact Professor Khan to provide any additional context, clarify your situation, or propose a reasonable plan for meeting the course requirements (for example, an alternative deadline). Please note that requests are not automatically approved.

For more information regarding academic consideration for short-term incapacitation (illness, injury, or extraordinary circumstances beyond a student's control), please visit the following link: <https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/#academic-consideration-for-short-termincapacitation>

SCHEDULE

Changes to the assigned material may occur. If this happens you will be notified 2 weeks ahead of time.

Module 1 (January 6): Introduction

Before you begin Module 1, please complete the following required tasks:

READ:

- The Syllabus

Once you've carefully reviewed the syllabus, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question. This lesson will cover the syllabus, academic integrity, and a general overview of the course. As with all Module lessons, you access the module through the quiz function.

Please note that Module One is the only module with an extended deadline (January 17), as this coincides with one day after the final day for course changes.

Module 2 (January 13): INDIGENOUS LEARNING BUNDLE + INDIGENOUS LAW

Module 2 is a bit different from the other modules, as you are assigned to work through the Indigenous Learning Bundle on Law and Human Rights. More information about this learning resource can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/tls/teaching-learning-and-pedagogy/collaborative-indigenous-learning-bundles/>. After you complete this task, engage the short module lesson that connects the Bundle to the assigned material.

Note: You may already be familiar with this Indigenous Learning Bundle, as it is used across multiple courses. If you have encountered this material in a previous class, you can treat it as a review. If you are taking LAWS 3308D online this term, this Learning Bundle is also assigned for week 2, so please consider this a lighter week in terms of new video content. That said, note that the *accompanying readings and assignments differ* between Punishment and the Law (3308D) and this course, Approaches to Legal Studies II (3908 C), so be sure to complete the materials specific to each course if you are enrolled in both.

Before you begin the Indigenous Learning Bundle and the Module 2 lesson, please complete the following tasks:

READ:

1. Borrows, John. "Sources and Scope of Indigenous Legal Traditions" in Canada's Indigenous Constitution (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2012) pp 23-58.

LISTEN:

2. S1E6: "The River Knows Where to Go" *Entitled*, University of Chicago Podcast Network October 7, 2021 <https://podcasts.apple.com/kg/podcast/s1e6-the-river-knows-where-to-go/id1577996421?i=1000537837001>

Don't forget: Once you've completed the Indigenous Learning Bundle, work through the short module lesson, which includes a poll, a set of knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

Module 3 (January 21): Legal Theory Overview and Legal Storytelling
--

Required Material Before You Begin the Module:

1. Devlin, Richard F. **"Mapping Legal Theory."** *Alberta law review* 32.3 (1994): 602–621.
2. **"Moldy Head: The Boy who Stayed with Fish"** by Elder Angela Sidney from Cruikshank, Julie. [Life Lived like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders](#). University of Nebraska Press, 1990.
3. Napoleon, Val, and Hadley Friedland. **"An Inside Job: Engaging with Indigenous Legal Traditions through Stories."** *McGill Law Journal*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2016, pp. 725–54.

Once you've completed the readings, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

Module 4 (January 28): Natural law

Required material before you begin the module:

1. Hutchison, Abigail. **"The Whanganui river as a legal person."** *Alternative Law Journal* 39.3 (2014): 179-182.
2. Wacks, Raymond. **"Natural Law"** Chapter 1 in [Philosophy Of Law: A Very Short Introduction](#), (Oxford University Press, 2006).
3. Murray, Anthony. ["When Judges Believe in 'Natural Law'"](#) (2014) *The Atlantic*

Once you've completed the readings, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

Module 5 (February 4): Legal Positivism
--

Required Material Before You Begin the Module:

1. Wacks, Raymond. **"Legal positivism"** Chapter 2 in *Philosophy Of Law: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford University Press, 2006).
2. Chambers, Stuart. **"Pierre Elliott Trudeau and bill C-150: a rational approach to homosexual acts, 1968-69"** *Journal of Homosexuality* 57, no. 2 (2010): 249–66.

Once you've gone through the material, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

Module 6 (February 11): Legal Consciousness
--

Required material before you begin the module:

1. Jacobs, Lesley A. "**Legal Consciousness and Its Significance for Law and Society Teaching outside Canadian Law Schools.**" Can. JL & Soc. 18 (2003): 61 - 65.
2. Smith, Adrian A. "**Legal Consciousness and Resistance in Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers.**" Canadian Journal of Law & Society/La Revue Canadienne Droit et Société 20.2 (2005): 95-122.

Once you've gone through the material, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

No Module (February 18): Winter break. No lessons.

Module 7 (February 24): Midterm

Timed midterm consisting of 3 parts: multiple choice questions; short answer questions; and one short essay. The midterm will take place on **February 24 11:35am-2:25pm EST using CoMas.**

Module 8 (March 3th) Poverty and Legal Geography

Required material before you begin the module:

1. Greene, Sara S. "**A Theory of Poverty: Legal Immobility**" Washington University Law Review 96.4 (2019): 753–799.
2. Blomley, Nicholas, Alexandra Flynn, and Marie-Eve Sylvestre. "**Governing the Belongings of the Precariously Housed: A Critical Legal Geography.**" Annual review of law and social science 16.1 (2020): 165–181.

Once you've gone through the material, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

Module 9 (March 10th) Critical Race Theory Law

Required material before you begin the module:

Read:

1. "**Chapter 1, Critical Race Theory**" in Aylward, Carol A. Canadian Critical Race Theory Racism and the Law. Halifax, N.S: Fernwood, (1999) 19-50.
2. Wing, Adrien Katherine. "**Critical Race Feminism: Legal Reform for the Twenty-first Century.**" A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies. Blackwell Publishers Ltd (2008) 160–169.

3. Joshua Sealy-Harrington, “**Access to (in)justice: A critical race reflection**” The Lawyer's Daily. (n.d.). Retrieved December 13, 2022, from <https://www.thelawyersdaily.ca/articles/25551/access-to-in-justice-a-critical-race-reflection-joshua-sealy-harrington>

Watch:

4. “**Lessons Injustice**” <https://youtu.be/jCzCvF-E2MM>

Once you’ve gone through the material, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

Module 10 (March 17th) Law & Film Feminist legal Theory

Required material before you begin the module:

Content Note (and spoilers!): *Rashomon* (1950)

In this week, you are asked to watch *Rashomon*, a film that depicts a violent incident involving the murder of a man and a sexual encounter between his wife and another man. The events are recounted through conflicting testimonies, including sharply divergent accounts of consent, coercion, agency, and responsibility. Viewers should be aware that the film does not resolve these contradictions, and that what occurred between the characters remains contested.

The film is highly stylized and reflects its historical and cultural context. Its portrayal of gender, sexuality, honor, and credibility may feel challenging or uncomfortable, particularly in light of feminist critiques of sexual violence, victim-blaming, slut-shaming, and gendered roles. These tensions are central to the film’s significance.

The film *Rashomon* introduced the concept of the “Rashomon effect,” which captures the idea that truth is shaped by perspective, power, and narrative rather than existing as an objective and fully accessible account. The film is especially relevant to the limits of fact-finding in law and to the ways cultural expression intersects with legal reasoning. Students may find it helpful to read the assigned article, David Simon Sokolow’s “From Kurosawa to (Duncan) Kennedy: The Lessons of *Rashomon* for Current Legal Education” (1991), before viewing, as it offers a useful framework for engaging the film within a legal studies context.

Please also note that the film’s pacing and aesthetic reflect its 1950s context and may feel slow or unfamiliar by contemporary standards.

WATCH:

1. *Rashomon* [electronic resource] / Kurosawa Akira. Janus Films 1950. Criterion-on-Demand [2013] in our library. Streaming video file (83 min.)

READ:

2. Suzanne Bouclin and Orit Kamir, **Chapter 3: Feminism, Law, Cinema** [excerpt] in K. Brooks and C. Mathen (Eds.) *Women, Law, and Equality: A Discussion Guide* (Irwin Law, 2010). Please read pages 119-126 (intro to chapter) and pages 140-147 (which is an excerpt from Orit Kamir's book, *Framed: Women in Law and Film* and discusses the film Rashomon)
3. Sokolow, David Simon. "From Kurosawa to (Duncan) Kennedy: The Lessons of Rashomon for Current Legal Education." *Wis. L. Rev.* (1991): 969 - 987.
4. **R. v. Ainscow**, 2008 ABPC 150 (CanLII)

Once you've gone through the material, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

Module 11 (March 24): Disability and the Law

Read:

1. Kanter, Arlene S. "The law: What's disability studies got to do with it or an introduction to disability legal studies." *Colum. Hum. Rts. L. Rev.* 42 (2010): 403 - 479.

Watch:

2. Barton, Sarah, and Liz Burke. *Defiant Lives*. New York, N.Y: Women Make Movies, 2017. Film. Available online through Carleton University's Library (Kanopy database) (1hr 24 minutes)

Once you've gone through the material, work through the module lesson, which includes a poll, knowledge check questions, and a reflection question.

Module 12 (March 31st): Review
--

This module provides a comprehensive review of **Modules 1–12** and offers tips for preparing for the final exam. Please note that the review module contains **unique content** that may also appear on the final exam.

Winter 2026 Sessional Dates and University Closures	
<i>Please find a full list of important academic dates on the calendar website:</i> https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/	
January 5, 2026	Winter term begins.
January 16, 2026	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) for Winter courses.
January 31, 2026	Last day to withdraw from full winter courses and the winter portion of fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment.
February 16, 2026	Statutory holiday. University closed.
February 16-20, 2026	Winter break. No classes.
March 15, 2026	Last day for academic withdrawal from Winter courses.
	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for April full winter, late winter, and fall/winter final examinations from the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
March 25, 2026	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in full winter term or fall/winter undergraduate courses, before the official April final examination period.
April 3, 2026	Statutory holiday. University closed.
April 8, 2026	Winter term ends.
	Last day of winter and fall/winter classes.
	Classes follow a Friday schedule.
	Last day for take home examinations to be assigned.
April 9-10, 2026	No classes or examinations take place.
April 11-23, 2026	Final examinations in fall term courses and mid-term examinations in fall/winter courses will be held.
April 23, 2026	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.

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

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](#).