

Course Outline

COURSE: LAWS 2908 D – Methodological Approaches in Legal Studies I

TERM: Winter 2026

PREREQUISITES: [LAWS 1001 and LAWS 1002](#)

CLASS: **Day & Time:** Monday, 6:05 – 8:55pm.
In-person weekly lecture
 Room: Please check Carleton Central for current Class Schedule

INSTRUCTOR: Sylva Sheridan, Doctoral (PhD) Candidate, MA, BA (Hon).

CONTACT: **Office Hrs:** Monday, 4:30 – 5:30pm, Loeb D581
 Email sylvasheridan@cunet.carleton.ca – Emails are responded to within 48 hours. If after 48 hours, you have not received a response from me, please re-send your email. Emails are responded to Monday – Friday between 8am – 4pm. If you email me on the weekend, you can expect a response by Monday or Tuesday the following week.

TA Aditya Joshi, ADIJOSHI@cmail.carleton.ca
TA Isabella Miller, ISABELLAMILLER@cmail.carleton.ca

BRIGHTSPACE: <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/366335>

CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to the legal research process and analysis of legal methodology; finding and analyzing primary and secondary legal sources. Students are strongly encouraged to take this course in the second year of their program.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Department offers two research courses (LAWS 2908 + LAWS 3908) to help students master their law discipline. This course, LAWS 2908, introduces students to legal materials in the context of legal studies research. Legal materials reviewed in this course include judicial decisions (cases), legislative instruments (statutes and regulations), government documents (including Parliamentary materials and policy), and secondary sources published in academic journals. It also addresses the 'legal method' in comprehending and working with these materials. This course is segmented into two parts.

In the first part, students will demonstrate capacity with the McGill guide include citation rules pertaining to footnoting, bibliographies, jurisprudence, legislation, government documents, grey literature, international materials and secondary sources. The second part will introduce students to key research skills including annotated bibliographies, research proposals, library resources, theories, and qualitative + quantitative methodologies. This course is compulsory for all students majoring in a Law or Law Honours program.

PRECLUSIONS

There are no Preclusions for LAWS 2908.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Following the course, students will be confident in the following areas:

- Demonstrating the significance of compliance with proper citation in academic writing
- Knowledge base in *Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation* [*The McGill Guide*].
- Locate relevant legal materials, governmental documents, relevant jurisprudence and academic writing.
- Integration of theories/methods in academic writing

REQUIRED TEXTS

You do not need to purchase any texts for this course. Though **not required**, I highly recommend that students purchase *The McGill Guide*. This text outlines the fundamental principles of legal citation. It is an essential reference text for anyone conducting research concerning legal issues. You will use it as a guide for other courses in the Department of Law and Legal Studies. As part of the course, we will be going through *The McGill Guide* on a step-by-step basis. It is available for purchase for approximately \$115.00 through the bookstore and online. **You must purchase the 10th edition.** There are significant differences between the 9th and 10th. All assignments will be evaluated per the 10th edition of the textbook.

The library has offered an overview of the guidelines, which can be found here: <https://library.carleton.ca/guides/help/uniform-legal-citation-style-mcgill-guide>.

EVALUATION

Evaluation	Value	Due Date	Explanation
Attendance	10%	Ongoing	Attendance will be recorded each week.
Quizzes	40%	Quiz 1: January 22 (10%) Quiz 2: February 5 (10%) Quiz 3: March 5 (10%) Quiz 4: April 2 (10%) *Quizzes will be on Brightspace	There will be four multiple-choice quizzes throughout the term. Each quiz will demonstrate capacity pertaining to a specific research skill [jurisprudence, legislation, theory, and methodology]. You will have one hour and one attempt for each quiz. Quizzes are closed book. There is a document on Brightspace that explains the quizzes, how to access them, deadlines, and general topics. We will discuss the quizzes further in class.
In-Class Case Assignment	20%	February 9 during class (6:05 – 8:55pm)	I will post the assigned case on February 6, and you will have the weekend to review it. You may bring in a one-page set of notes pertaining to elements of the case that must be submitted. You must attend this class to complete the assignment. I recommend treating it like a Midterm. Pay careful attention to the lecture on January 19 as well as the document on Brightspace that explains the 'cheat-sheet'.
Take-Home Exam	30%	April 23 at 11:59pm	The Take-Home Final Exam will involve a series of questions pertaining to a journal article assigned by the instructor. The journal article is an assigned reading for this class. Further information, along with a template will be available on the Brightspace course page.

EVALUATION NOTES

This course is demanding and intensive. It will require considerable ongoing attention each week. However, this course is foundational to your Law program. It is designed to provide you with the opportunity to develop research skills and understanding that will serve you well in other law courses. Failure to complete **ANY** of the evaluation elements **(including attendance)** will be considered an administrative failure and will result in a grade of 'F'. I have included further information on **each** assignment on Brightspace. Please review Carleton's weighting scale: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/grading/>.

LATE PENALTIES AND REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

Penalties for Late Submissions:

It is expected that students will plan accordingly and endeavor to meet those deadlines. 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/>.

Students may submit the paper late, and their grade will be reduced by a late penalty that will accrue at a rate of 2 marks for each day punctuating the deadline and their submission of the paper via Brightspace. The granting of extensions is at the discretion of the instructor (not the TA), who will confirm whether an extension is approved and its duration.

To request an extension, please **email the course instructor (not the teaching assistant (TA)) before the assignment's due date. Again, late assignments will automatically receive a grade of 0 unless an extension has been requested and granted before the deadline.** Extension requests sent by students **after an assignment's due date will not be granted unless justified by extraordinary circumstances (e.g., medical or familial emergency)**, in which case students are required to email the course instructor and, additionally, to complete the [Academic Consideration for Coursework form](#). Extensions for longer than 7 days will not be granted unless justified by extraordinary circumstances (e.g., medical or familial emergency). In those extraordinary cases for which extensions lasting longer than 7 days are granted, students may be required to fill a [Long Term Academic Considerations for Coursework Form](#) and email supporting documentation to academicconsideration@cunet.carleton.ca. 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-term-incapacitation>

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.

POLICY ON PERMISSIBILITY OF SUBMITTING SAME WORK MORE THAN ONCE, PERMISSIBILITY OF GROUP OR COLLABORATIVE WORK, AND PERMISSIBILITY OF USING GENERATIVE AI

Use of Previously Submitted Papers: Submitting previously evaluated work, in whole or in part, is not permitted, and you will receive a zero.

Generative AI Tools (e.g. ChatGPT): Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, either generally or for a specific assignment, any use of generative AI tools to produce assessed content is a violation of academic integrity standards.

Group Work: The use of group work is not permitted. Students must individually submit their own work.

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.
- 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 | January 5 | Course Overview

Readings:

- Course Outline

Week 2 | January 12 | Legal Citation I: General Rules

Readings:

- E-1

Tutorial

- Structuring a Bibliography

Week 3 | January 19 | Legal Citation II: Jurisprudence

Readings:

- E-3
- Debra Parkes, "Precedent Unbound? Contemporary Approaches to Precedent in Canada" (2007) 32 Man LJ 135.

Tutorial

- Practice Case Brief

Note: Quiz 1 opens on January 20 at 12:01am and closes on January 22 at 11:59pm.

Week 4 | January 26 | Legal Citation III: Legislation**Readings:**

- E-2
- *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* SC 2019, c. 24.

Tutorial

- Note-Up Legislation using LEGISInfo

Week 5 | February 2 | Legal Citation IV: Government Documents & Grey Literature**Readings:**

- E-4
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Volume One: Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling For the Future* (Toronto: Lorimer, 2015) [SKIM].

Tutorial

- Incorporating Grey Literature into Your Work

Note: Quiz 2 opens on February 3 at 12:01am and closes on February 5 at 11:59pm.

Week 6 | February 9 | MIDTERM: Case Brief

**Please review the case that I will have posted on Brightspace on February 6
The midterm will take place during class time. Attendance is mandatory.**

Winter Break || February 16-20

Week 7 | February 23 | Legal Citation Part VI: Secondary Sources**Readings:**

- E-6
- Cindy Blackstock, "The Complainant: The Canadian Human Rights Case on First Nations Child Welfare" (2016) 62:2 McGill LJ 285.

Tutorial

- Find and locate key sections of academic journals.

Week 8 | March 2 | Academic Writing Part I: Theory**Readings:**

- Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, “The historical trauma response among natives and its relationship with substance abuse: a Lakota illustration” (2003) 35:1 Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 7.
- Richard Devlin, “Mapping Legal Theory” (1994) 32:3 Alberta L Rev 602.

Tutorial

- Applying legal theory to a problem

Note: Quiz 3 opens on March 3 at 12:01am and closes on March 5 at 11:59pm.

Week 9 | March 9 | Guest Speaker Julie Lavigne

There are no readings nor tutorial assignment

Week 10 | March 16 | Academic Writing Part II: Research Proposal**Readings:**

- Collaborative Indigenous Learning Bundle
- Eilen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei & Richard Hugman, “‘Stop Stealing Our Stories’: The Ethics of Research with Vulnerable Groups” (2010) 2:2 Journal of Human Rights Practice 229.

Tutorial

- Practicing a Research Proposal

Week 11 | March 23 | Academic Writing Part III: Annotated Bibliographies**Readings:**

- Sherah L. Basham, Vivian P. Radcliff & Sara L. Bryson, “How to Write an Annotated Bibliography” (2022) 34:2 Journal of Criminal Justice Education 289.
- Neena Tiwana, Gary Bass & Graham Farrell, “Police performance measurement: an annotated bibliography” (2015) 4:1 Crime Science 2.

Tutorial

- Create an Annotated Bibliography from one of this week’s readings

Week 12 | March 30 | Academic Writing Part IV: Methodology**Readings:**

- Kimberly A Batterton & Kimberly N. Hale, "The Likert Scale: What It Is and How To Use It" (2017) 50:2 TESOL Quarterly 32.
- John Gerring, "Qualitative Methods" (2017) 20 Annual Review of Political Science 15.
- Paul W. Vogt (Ed.), "Conversations About Three Things" in *Sage Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc., 2011).

Tutorial

- Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methodology

Note: Quiz 4 opens on March 31 at 12:01am and closes on April 2 at 11:59pm.

Winter 2026 Sessional Dates and University Closures	
Please find a full list of important academic dates on the calendar website: https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/	
January 5, 2026	Fall term begins.
January 16, 2026	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) for fall, and fall/winter courses.
January 31, 2026	Last day to withdraw from fall term and fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment (financial withdrawal).
February 13, 2026	April Examination Available Online
February 16, 2026	Statutory Holiday. University Closed
February 16-20, 2026	Winter Break, No Class
March 15, 2026	Last day for academic withdrawal from full winter courses
April 3, 2026	Statutory holiday. University Closed
April 8, 2026	Last day of winter term 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	Final examinations in winter term courses will be held

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

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](#).