

Course Outline

COURSE:	LAWS 3908 D – Methodological 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: Wednesday, 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. Wednesday, 4:30 – 5:30pm; Loeb D581 Telephone: NA 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: Mohammed Islam (JahirulIslam3@cunet.carleton.ca)
BRIGHTSPACE:	https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/366350 .

CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

Advanced approaches to interdisciplinary research and analysis in law and legal studies. Methodological approaches considered will vary by section and may include theoretical, quantitative, qualitative, literary or historical approaches.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In LAWS 3908D, we will take your knowledge base gained from 2908 [i.e., familiarity with citation and integration of jurisprudence, legislation and secondary sources] and build on it. We will spend several weeks discussing theoretical approaches. Special attention in this part of the course will be on the application and incorporation of theory into your work. We will spend the remainder of the term on legal research by conceptualizing the following approaches: ethics, annotated bibliographies, literature reviews, abstracts, theses, conducting on-campus research, qualitative methodology, quantitative methodology and analysis.

PRECLUSIONS

No preclusions

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should demonstrate capacity and familiarity with the following:

1. Understanding non-doctrinal approaches to legal research
2. Understanding and distinguishing the steps and components of legal research
3. Understanding and identifying ethical issues in research
4. Describing and comparing various legal studies methodologies
5. Assessing various legal research methods and their use by others
6. Applying research methods to a legal topic and justifying research choices
7. Synthesizing and analyzing important issues related to research and its use in society
8. Analyzing the various ways of conceptualizing research and knowledge production
9. Navigating interdisciplinary research

REQUIRED TEXTS

You do not need to purchase any texts for this course. All required readings and materials will be uploaded to Brightspace or available online. Failure to complete ANY of the evaluation elements will be considered an administrative failure and will result in a grade of 'F'. This also includes attendance. For information on Carleton's weighting scale, please see this link: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/grading/>.

All assignments must be Times New Roman 12-point or Arial 11-point font. **Assignments must be meticulously cited and submitted using McGill Citation.** Please see the Library's Guide on McGill Citation here: <https://library.carleton.ca/guides/help/uniform-legal-citation-style-mcgill-guide>

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

ASSIGNMENT 1: PARTICIPATION

- **Due Date:** Ongoing
- **Worth:** 15%
- **Explanation:** Students are expected to come to class prepared and critically engage with the readings. This course will run as both lecture and seminar. As an upper-year undergraduate student, you possess a level of critical thinking that will support classroom engagement.

ASSIGNMENT 2: THEORY ASSIGNMENT

- **Due Date:** February 11 at 11:59pm
- **Worth:** 35%
- **Explanation:** This assignment asks you to write a critical analysis of Foucauldian legal theory applying the readings from *Discipline and Punish*. More information will be on the Brightspace course page.

ASSIGNMENT 3: ETHICS QUIZ

- **Due Date:** February 27 at 11:59pm
- **Worth:** 7%
- **Explanation:** There will be a short multiple-choice quiz. There will **one** attempt. It will demonstrate capacity from information delivered in the Ethics presentation from CUREB.

ASSIGNMENT 4: TRI-COUNCIL ETHICS SUBMISSION

- **Due Date:** March 4 at 11:59pm
- **Worth:** 3%
- **Explanation:** This assignment (pass/fail) requires students to complete the Tri-Council Training. The training is found here: <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>. You will upload the certificate after completion.

ASSIGNMENT 5: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

- **Due Date:** April 8 at 11:59pm
- **Worth:** 40%
- **Explanation:** This assignment will be in two parts:
 - **Part 1:** Critically analyze a document posted on the Brightspace course page from the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD)
 - **Part 2:** Propose a research design based on the findings from the report of IFSD.
 - This research design will include an abstract, a literature review, theoretical consideration, methodology, and a discussion on anticipated research findings.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

There are five ways you are evaluated in LAWS 3908D:

Participation	Value: 15%	Due: Ongoing
Theory Assignment	Value: 35%	Due: February 11, 2026, at 11:59pm
Midterm Quiz on Ethics	Value: 7%	Due: February 27, 2026, at 11:59pm
Tri-Council Ethics Submission	Value: 3%	Due: March 4, 2026, at 11:59pm
Discourse Analysis & Research Design	Value: 40%	Due: April 8, 2026 at 11:59pm

LATE PENALTIES AND REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS**Penalties for Late Submissions:**

It is expected that students will plan accordingly and endeavor to meet the 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.

Please note that all assignments must be in accordance with McGill Citation. The library has provided a general guide here: <https://library.carleton.ca/guides/help/uniform-legal-citation-style-mcgill-guide>. I have also posted this guide on Brightspace.

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.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 7 | Syllabus + Introduction to the Course + Assignment Overview

Course Syllabus and Assignment Overview

Week 3: January 21 | Theory I: Foucault

Required Reading:

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

- Part One, Chapter One; The Body of the Condemned
- Part Two, Chapter One: Docile Bodies
- Part Two, Chapter Three: Panopticism

Note: Your theory assignment is going to be based on *Discipline and Punish*

Week 2: January 14 | Theory II: Legal Positivism and Natural Law Philosophy

Required Reading:

- H.L.A. Hart, "Positivism and the Separation of Law and Morals" (1958) 71:4 Harvard Law Review 593.

- Lon Fuller, "Positivism and Fidelity to Law: A Reply to Professor Hart" (1958) 71:4 Harvard Law Review 630.

Week 4: January 28 | Theory III: Historical Trauma Theory & Necropolitics**Required Reading:**

- Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, "The return to the sacred path: Healing the historical trauma and historical trauma unresolved grief response among the Lakota through a psychoeducational group intervention" (1998) 68:3 Smith College Studies in Social Work 287.
- Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics" (2003) 15:1 Public Culture 11.

Week 5: February 4 | Legal Research I – Ethics (Presentation by CUREB)

***Please note this class will be via Zoom to accommodate the presentation by CUREB.**

Required Reading:

- Collaborative Indigenous Learning Bundle – Ethics of Research With Indigenous Peoples.
- Start reviewing the Tri-Council Course on Research Ethics. Completion of this training is necessary for your ethics assignment. <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>.

Week 6: February 11 | Legal Research II – Annotated Bibliographies / Literature Reviews**Required Reading:**

- Lawrence A. Machi & Brenda T. McEvoy, "The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success" in *Sage Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: Corwin, 2024).
- Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Research through Imperial Eyes" in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2021) at 49.

THEORY ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY (FEBRUARY 11) AT 11:59PM ON BRIGHTSPACE

February 16 – 20: Reading Week

Week 7: February 25 | Legal Research III – Abstracts + Thesis**Required Reading:**

There are five abstracts posted on Brightspace from Carleton Law and Legal Studies MA Theses + PhD Dissertations. Please review them and be prepared to discuss them in class.

ETHICS QUIZ COMPLETED BY FEBRUARY 27 AT 11:59PM ON BRIGHTSPACE

Week 8: March 4 | Legal Research IV – Conducting On-Campus Research (Guest Speaker: Julie Lavigne – Department of Law Librarian)

No Readings.

ETHICS SUBMISSION DUE ON MARCH 4 AT 11:59PM ON BRIGHTSPACE

Week 9: March 11 | Legal Research V – Methodology (Qualitative)

Required Reading:

- Janet Mills & Melanie Birks, Sage Research Methods, “Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide” *Sage Research Methods: Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide* by Janet Mills & Melanie Birks (eds.) (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2017).
- Marianne LeGrego, “Discourse Analysis” by Jane Mills & Melanie Birks (eds.) in *Sage Research Methods: Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2017).
- Alison Stewart, “Case Study” by Janet Mills, Melanie Birks & Allison Stewart (eds.) in *Sage Research Methods: Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2017).

Week 10: March 18 | Legal Research VI – Methodology (Quantitative)

Required Reading:

- Howard Wainer, “Conversations About Three Things” in *Sage Quantitative Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2011).
- Christopher Peterson, “Minimally Sufficient Research” in *Sage Quantitative Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2011).
- Hamed Taherdoost, “What Is the Best Response Scale for Survey and Questionnaire Design; Review of Different Lengths of Ratings Scale / Attitude Scale / Likert Scale” (2019) 8:1 International Journal of Academic Research in Management 1.

Week 12: March 25 | Legal Research VII – Analysis

Readings/Materials:

Lisa Given, “Codes and Coding”, “Debriefing”, “Findings”, & “Peer Review” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (Las Angeles, Washington & Toronto: SAGE Publications, 2008).

Week 13: April 1 | Open Office Hours

I will be holding open office in my office in Loeb D581 between 5-9pm to discuss the discourse analysis and research design

Week 14: April 8 | Discourse Analysis and Research Design Paper Due

Please submit your assignment by 11:59pm on Brightspace.

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 Schedule 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, 2026	Final examinations in winter term courses will be held

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

(This section will be copied in by the department during the review process.)

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 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 see <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](#).