

Course Outline

COURSE:	LAWS 3103 A – Law, Culture, and the Humanities
TERM:	Fall 2026
PREREQUISITES:	1.0 credit in LAWS at the 2000 level
CLASS:	Day & Time: Fridays, 11:35–2:25 Room: Please check Carleton Central for current Class Schedule
INSTRUCTOR:	Professor Philip Kaisary
CONTACT:	Office Hrs By appointment / Location: C574 Loeb TA: Bridget Rielly: BRIDGETRIELLY@cmail.carleton.ca Telephone: X. 4181 Email: Philip.Kaisary@carleton.ca
BRIGHTSPACE:	https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/450760

CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

Themes, approaches, and debates in the field of law, culture and the humanities. Primary materials considered may include theoretical writings, cultural criticism, literary texts, films, video, photography, and music. These texts present different modes and means of inquiring into the assumptions and aspirations that we ascribe to law.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the 1980s and 1990s the ‘Law and Literature movement’ was born and ‘Law and Literature’ courses first began to appear on the curriculums of Law Schools and university English departments. Two longstanding approaches within Law and Literature scholarship have predominated: (1) reading law as literature (bringing the tools of literary criticism and literary theory to bear on the work of interpreting legal texts) and (2) reading law in literature (the analysis of the representation of law, lawyers, legal processes, and legal structures in literary texts). The Law and Literature movement successfully stimulated the consideration of law in relation to the humanities more broadly and the field is now one of several humanistic approaches to the study of law that can be situated within the more expansive field of ‘Law, Culture, and the Humanities.’ In this course, we will draw on the insights that resulted from the emergence of ‘Law and Literature’ and ‘Law, Culture, and the Humanities.’ We will study a corpus of literary, filmic, and televisual primary materials that prompt us to reconsider law’s relationship to social justice and projects of social transformation. We will consider some recent

attempts to globalize or ‘world’ the field of Law and Literature. Consequently, as well as considering some stalwarts of the Law and Literature canon (e.g. Sophocles’ *Antigone* and Ridley Scott’s *Bladerunner*) we will also consider materials drawn from across the globe, including Haiti, Korea, and Mexico.

Note: this course is introductory and no previous knowledge of ‘Law and Literature’ or ‘Law, Culture, and the Humanities’ is expected or required. Students from other programs and disciplines including (but not only) African Studies, English, Film Studies, Global and International Studies, and Latin American Studies are welcome.

Course delivery:

One 2-hour 50-minute seminar per week. The schedule may be revised depending on the class pace.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The core objective of the course is the development of conversancy in the field of Law, Culture, and the Humanities. ‘Conversancy’ in this context will take the form of an ability to situate specific ideas, methods, traditions, and texts accurately within the wider field, and to discern what is at stake in specific debates.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All the readings for the course (“required” and “further”) are available via the library’s ARES course reserves system, the course Brightspace page, and/or the library’s physical reserves collection. However, to encourage a deeper engagement with the materials, you are required, wherever feasible, to read physical (printed) copies of the readings rather than reading from a screen. Please bring your printed copies of each week’s required readings with you to class.

There is one exception to the above policy: *Masters of the Dew* (Week 8, Friday 6 November 2026), which is 188 pages long and currently out of print, is exempt from the print requirement. The digitized version and the print copy of *Masters of the Dew* are available through the library’s electronic and physical reserves collections respectively. If you read French, you are encouraged to read the French-language original in addition to, or in place of, the translated edition; copies have been placed on the library’s physical reserves.

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

I recommend M.H. Abrams’s *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (ITP Nelson/ HarcourtBrace), available in the reference section of the library (PN44.5.A2 1999).

I also recommend the chapter on exam writing in Sanford Kaye’s *Writing under Pressure: The Quick Writing Process*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024), available as an e-book through

the Carleton Library: https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/151vu8f/alma991022675863105153

EVALUATION

1. Attendance and participation: 20%

2. One-hour mid-term: 20%

The mid-term will take place in class in week 6. It will be an essay exam on the materials covered in the first half of the course. You will be required to write an essay in response to a choice of questions to be provided. The mid-term is open book insofar as you will be permitted to bring handwritten revision notes into the mid-term.

3. Group podcast project: 25%

In week 2, the class will be divided into podcasting groups. Each group will create, record, and produce a 7–10-minute audio documentary addressed to one of the course topics or themes of your choosing. To record your podcast, you should book a time slot in one of the recording studios in Carleton's Creation Suites. The instructions for how to do this are as follows:

Go to: <https://carleton.ca/tls/creation-suites/> and scroll down to BOOK A SUITE

If the booking form does not load, please try the following steps in this order:

- Clear your browser's cache and cookies
- Restart your browser
- Use a different browser (like Chrome, Firefox, or Edge)
- Try using incognito/private mode

4. Two-hour final exam: 35%

The final exam will be an essay exam. You will be required to write two essays in response to a choice of essay questions. The final exam covers material from the entire course and is closed book.

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 LATE PENALTIES AND REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

The granting of extensions is at the discretion of the instructor, who will confirm whether an extension is approved and its duration. For information about requesting short-term or long-term extensions, deferrals for final exams, or academic consideration due to illness, injury, or other extraordinary circumstances, please visit the Academic Consideration Policy page. 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/>.

EMAILING ME

Please email me only from your Carleton email account. Emails from personal accounts often end up in my junk or spam folders. I try to respond to email within two business days (Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays are not business days). **Please include a clear subject line, the course code, your first and last name, and your student number. Please keep your email to the matter at hand and offer a courteous salutation (“Dear Philip” is perfectly fine).**

****NEW** POLICY ON GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

The use of AI tools to produce any part of an assignment or test is strictly forbidden. Any use of AI for content creation, even for small edits, will result in an academic integrity violation, and the student will be referred to the academic integrity office for disciplinary action.

Furthermore, this course does not employ AI resources or tools in class, and I strongly recommend that you do not rely on AI resources or tools in your independent studying. Tempting as it might be, do not use AI to produce summaries of the course readings and then read those summaries instead of doing the readings yourself. The course readings are supposed to be challenging: the process of reading and rereading them to make sense of them can be a struggle, but this process of struggle is fundamental to developing a mastery of the course materials. Or, to put it another way, you can hire someone to lift weights for you, but that defeats the point. The value lies in the struggle itself. By completing the assigned readings without the assistance of AI tools, you will be improving your capacity to concentrate, to reason, and to absorb complex materials, thereby enriching your learning and skill development in the course.

The potentially detrimental cognitive impacts of AI-use is currently a major focus of research globally. A central concern is that “offloading” reading and writing and other research and knowledge production activities to AI tools will result in [learning loss, the inhibition of critical thinking, and the diminishment of problem-solving capabilities](#). The preprint of a [recent study](#) titled, “Your Brain on ChatGPT,” led by a researcher at the [MIT Media Lab](#), found that, in a four-month study, participants who used LLM (large language model) AI resources when essay-writing, exhibited weaker neural network connectivity during the task in comparison to study participants who did not use LLM resources. LLM users also self-reported less “ownership” over their essays and struggled to accurately quote their own work. This and other studies highlight that while LLMs offer immediate convenience, that convenience may come with significant cognitive costs.

ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY ON TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

This course is taught through in-person lectures, seminars, and a discussion-based scholarly reading group. Your full and active presence in class is therefore required. In keeping with this requirement, a zero-tolerance policy on personal electronic devices is in effect: laptops, tablets, e-readers, phones, and any other internet-capable devices are prohibited in class without

exception. All notes must be taken by hand. I strongly recommend maintaining a dedicated physical notebook or ring-binder throughout the term, which will serve as an essential resource both for tracking the material covered and for preparing for the end-of-course exam.

****NEW** POLICY ON CLASSROOM RECORDING**

Students are prohibited from recording class sessions.

SCHEDULE

Week 1, Friday September 11: Introduction

Discussion of syllabus, outline, and evaluations.

Week 2, Friday September 18: Theoretical Introduction: “Law and Literature” and “Law and Film”

Required readings:

Philip Kaisary, “‘The lost unity of social life’: Law and Literature in the World-System,” forthcoming with *Law & Critique*, [first half of essay only].

Julie Stone Peters, “Law, Literature, and the Vanishing Real: On the Future of an Interdisciplinary Illusion,” *PMLA*, Vol. 120, No. 2, (2005): 442–453.

Steve Greenfield et al. “Film and the Law: An Orientation” *Film and the Law: The Cinema of Justice*. 2nd ed., Oxford & Portland, Oregon: Hart, 2010: 1–12.

Week 3, Friday September 25: Using Cultural Materials to Think About Law: Sovereignty and Extrajudicial Action in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

In class screening:

Marti Noxon (writer), Michael Gershman (dir.), Joss Whedon (creator and showrunner), “Consequences” (Season 3, Episode 15), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 20th Century Fox, 1999.

Required reading:

Carl Schmitt, “Definition of Sovereignty,” *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. New York: University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 39–46.

Sally Engle Merry, “Legal Pluralism,” *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (1988), pp. 869–96.

Week 4, Friday October 2: Legal Crisis and Ethical Conflict: Sophocles' *Antigone*

Required reading:

Sophocles, *Antigone*, translated by Reginald Gibbons and Charles Segal, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 94–133. (40pp.)

Helen Shaw, “The 2,500-Year-Old Greek Heroine Whose Story Never Gets Old,” *New York Times*, March 22, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/22/theater/antigone-theater-art-sophocles-adaptations.html>

Further reading:

Moirra Fradinger, “Sophocles’ *Antigone* or The Invention of Politics: We the City,” *Binding Violence: Literary Visions of Political Origins*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Moirra Fradinger, *Antígonas: Writing from Latin America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

Theodore Ziolkowski, *The Mirror of Justice: Literary Reflections of Legal Crises*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 144–162.

Week 5, Friday October 9: Reading a Constitution as Literature I: The Haitian Constitution of 1805

Required readings:

“The 1805 Imperial Constitution of Haiti.” In: *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789–1804: A Brief History with Documents* edited by Laurent Dubois & John D. Garrigus, (Boston & New York: Bedford-St. Martin’s, 2006), pp. 191–96.

Philip Kaisary, “‘To break our chains and form a free people’: Race, Nation, and Haiti’s Imperial Constitution of 1805” in: *Race and Nation in the Age of Emancipations*, eds. Whitney Stewart and John Garrison Marks, University of Georgia Press, 2018, pp. 71–88.

Further reading:

Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 227–244 & 260–271.

In class viewing:

Sujewa Ekanayake (dir.) *Egalité for All: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution* (PBS, 2009)

Week 6, Friday October 16: Reading a Constitution as Literature II: The Mexican Constitution of 1917

Required readings:

Selected articles of the Mexican Constitution of 1917: Articles 1 (equality), 2 (sovereignty), 3 (secular education), 27 (national ownership of land and waters – the full article, read closely), 123 (labour rights), and 130 (church-state separation). We will use the H. N. Branch translation: *The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with the Constitution of 1857* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1917). (approx. 12pp.)

Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs* (1915; rev. 1920): chapters 14 to 21 of Part One (approx. 25 pages): Sergio Waisman translation (Penguin, 2008), pp. 43–69.

Adolfo Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution: A People's History*, (New York: New Press, 2005), pp. 232–239.

Further reading:

Lois Parkinson Zamora, “The Mexican Constitution Celebrates Its Centennial – and Mexico Celebrates Its Revolution,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, August 26, 2017.

John Womack Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (Knopf, 1968), pp. 393–404. [Plan de Ayala, in the appendix.]

Week 7, Friday October 23: Mid-term (One-hour)

The mid-term will be an essay exam on the materials covered in the first half of the course. You will be required to write one essay in response to a choice of questions to be provided. The mid-term is open book insofar as you will be permitted to bring handwritten revision notes into the mid-term.

October 26–30, 2026: Fall break. No classes.

Week 8, Friday November 6, 2026: Law, Jurisprudence, and Jacques Roumain's *Masters of the Dew*

Required readings:

Jacques Roumain, *Masters of the Dew* (1944), trans. Langston Hughes and Mercer Cook, Oxford: Heinemann, 1978. (188pp.)

Philip Kaisary, “Law, Jurisprudence, and Jacques Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la Rosée*,” [second half of: “‘The lost unity of social life’: Law and Literature in the World-System,” forthcoming with *Law & Critique*.]

Week 9, Friday November 13: Law, Film, and the US-Mexico Borderlands: *Sleep Dealer*

Required viewing:

Alex Rivera (dir.), *Sleep Dealer*, Mexico / United States, 2008.

Required readings:

Nicholas De Genova, "The Legal Production of Mexican/Migrant 'Illegality'," *Latino Studies*, No. 2 (2004): 160–185.

Jireh Deng, "Why the 2008 Latino cyberpunk film *Sleep Dealer* is more relevant than ever," *Los Angeles Times*, April 9, 2025 <https://www.latimes.com/delos/story/2025-04-09/sleep-dealer-2008-film-alex-rivera-immigration-tech-dystopia>

Further reading:

Gilbert G. González and Raúl Fernández, "Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States," in: *The Border Reader* edited by Gilberto Rosas and Mireya Loza, (Duke University Press, 2023): 13–44.

Week 10, Friday November 20: Class and the Legal Geography of the City: Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite*

Required viewing:

Bong Joon-ho, *Parasite*, South Korea, 2019.

Required reading:

David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review*, No. 53, 2008: 23–40.

Week 11, Friday November 27: Cyber-Noir and Law: The Juridified, Brutal world of *Blade Runner*

Required viewing:

Ridley Scott (dir.), *Blade Runner: The Final Cut*, United States, 2007.

AND:

Denis Villeneuve(dir.), *Blade Runner 2046* United States, 2017.

Further reading:

Peter J. Hutchings, "From Offworld Colonies to Migration Zones: *Blade Runner* and the Fractured Subject of Jurisprudence," *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2007), pp. 381–397.

Flisfeder, Matthew, and Matthew Flisfeder. "Blade Runner 2049 (Case Study)." In *The Routledge Companion to Cyberpunk Culture*, 1st ed., edited by Lars Schmeink, Anna McFarlane, and Graham J. Murphy, pp. 144–50.

Week 12, Friday December 4: Conclusion / Revision Lecture

No assigned reading this week.

Fall 2026 Sessional Dates and University Closures

Please find a full list of important academic dates on the calendar website:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

September 9, 2026	Fall term begins.
September 22, 2026	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in full fall, late fall, and fall/winter courses.
September 30, 2026	Last day to withdraw from full fall courses and the fall portion of fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment.
October 12, 2026	Statutory holiday. University closed.
October 26-30, 2026	Fall break. No classes.
November 15, 2026	Last day for academic withdrawal from full and late fall courses.
	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for December full fall, late fall, and fall/winter midterm 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.
November 27, 2026	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in full fall term or fall/winter undergraduate courses, before the official December final examination period.
December 11, 2026	Fall term ends.
	Last day of fall classes.
	Classes follow a Monday schedule.
	Last day for take home examinations to be assigned.
December 9-10, 2026	No classes or examinations take place.
December 12-23, 2026	Final examinations in fall term courses and mid-term examinations in fall/winter courses will be held.
December 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.

STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is not permitted to submit [substantially the same piece of work](#) more than once for academic credit.

Group work is permitted – indeed it is encouraged. I encourage you to form independent study groups and to meet outside class time to discuss the assigned readings and to view the assigned films in groups. However, aside from the group podcast project, all assignments must be completed individually and represent your own unique work, voice, and perspective.

STATEMENT ON 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 with 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 follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of “F” for the course.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

As a 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](#))

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30)
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

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: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>

REQUESTS FOR 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](#).