

Course Outline

COURSE:	LAWS 3908.A – Methodological Approaches in Legal Studies 2
TERM:	Fall 2026
PREREQUISITES:	LAWS 2908 and third year Honours standing
CLASS:	Day & Time: Thursdays, 2:35pm to 5:25pm Room: Please check Carleton Central
INSTRUCTOR:	Professor Christiane Wilke
CONTACT:	Office Hours: Office hours are by appointment (on campus or on Zoom). Office location: D 499 Loeb Email: christiane.wilke@carleton.ca [Please include the course number in the email subject line.]
BRIGHTSPACE:	https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/450772

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

This course focuses on qualitative socio-legal research. Students will learn about sources, ethical issues, interviewing, document analysis, and related research techniques. Since the course focuses on research skills, assessment focuses on eight short research skills assignments in which students apply knowledge from the readings as well as the skills practiced in class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course introduces students to qualitative socio-legal research methods. Students will be able to distinguish different types of methods (qualitative vs quantitative, socio-legal vs doctrinal). Students will

- Learn about and reflect on ethical issues involving research.
- Complete the Tri-Council Research Ethics training.
- Learn about key qualitative methods (interviewing, document analysis) and practice them in class and in assignments.
- Learn about qualitative coding/data analysis techniques required for interpretation and practice them in class and in assignments.
- Reflect on different positions on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in qualitative research and be able to articulate ethical and practical stances on the use of these tools.
- Learn how to plan and execute a qualitative research project that relies on primary sources or requires data collection.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings assigned are available free of charge (through the Carleton University Library or open access).

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

While you are not required to purchase any materials for this course, you might want to consider getting your own copy of two books we rely on a lot in this course. Both books are also useful for many methods-related and writing-related questions you might have in other courses.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition) (Sage, 2017), available for purchase or rent:

<https://collegepublishing.sagepub.com/products/the-practice-of-qualitative-research-3-240120>.

Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research* (5th edition) (University of Chicago Press, 2024).

EVALUATION

1. Research Skills Assignments: 8 x 8% (64%)

The research skills assignments allow you to apply your knowledge from the readings and the skills we have practiced in class in a short assignment. The assignments are introduced in class (Thursday afternoon), are due the following Monday evening (with two exceptions due to Thanksgiving and reading week), and will be graded by the next Thursday class.

Research Skills Assignments (RSA) due dates:

RSA #1: Monday, September 21st

RSA #2: Monday, September 28th

RSA #3: Monday, October 5th

RSA #4: Friday, October 16th

RSA #5: Monday, November 2nd (bonus week due to Reading Week)

RSA #6: Monday, November 9th

RSA #7: Monday, November 16th

RSA #8: Monday, November 23rd

Research Skills Assignments are submitted on Brightspace. Email submissions will not be accepted. In order to pass the course, you must obtain a passing grade on at least 5 of the Research Skills Assignments.

Late penalty: If you submit your Research Skills Assignment late, you will be deducted 2 points out of 20 per day late. Since the Brightspace submission box for Research Skills Assignments closes two days after the due date, RSAs cannot be submitted more than two days late without a previously approved extension. These deadlines enable the team to grade your assignments before the next class.

Extensions for Research Skills Assignments: Extensions are at the discretion of the instructor. This course follows the Carleton University Academic Consideration Policy. To obtain an extension, you must request it in writing (to the professor) before the deadline has passed. You will normally be required to complete the Academic Consideration Form. Due to the pacing of the course, extensions of more than two days will generally not be granted. Full details and instructions can be found here:

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-policy/>.

2. Meet the Team: 2%

Research requires problem solving skills, and we're here to help you. ***Meet one of the TAs or the professor and ask them two or more questions that are related to the course, to research, and/or to research beyond the Honours degree.*** This could include questions about upcoming or past assignments, about course content, about how to approach research more generally, or about applying for graduate programs.

Please make an appointment by email. In your email, please offer at least 2-3 time slots

when you are available to meet (Zoom or in person) that are at least 48 hours (two days) away. If your meeting is on Zoom, please make sure to turn your camera on.

Meet the Team is a pass/fail component. The last possible day for a Meet the Team appointment is the day before the final exam is due (TBD).

3. CORE-2022 (Course on Research Ethics) Certificate: 4%

The Canadian research funding agencies have assembled a self-paced online course on research ethics that takes about four hours to complete. University research ethics boards require this course for anyone who wants to undertake research with human subjects, including research assistants. This means that the certificate of completion will be useful for you if you want to conduct Honours Research Essay research involving interviews or observations, or if you want to be hired as a research assistant.

For the purpose of LAWS 3908, please complete CORE-2022 and upload the pdf certificate to Brightspace by December 11th, 2026. This is a pass/fail assignment. The course is available here: <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>.

4. Final Exam: 30%

The final exam will allow you to apply knowledge gained from the readings as well as skills developed in the classroom and the research skills assignments to new contexts. This will be a take home exam in which you have multiple options to answer two or more questions in short essays. due date TBD.

Final exams will be submitted on Brightspace (no email submissions accepted). Extensions will only be granted for students who have obtained a formal deferral. For more information on deferrals, consult the Registrar's website: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/deferral/>.

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 THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN LAWS 3908

This course focuses on teaching research and writing skills. While some research projects (not in this course) use AI, it is important that students learn the logic of the research process and the different research techniques. These skills will allow more advanced researchers to make competent decisions on incorporating AI use and to double-check the results provided by an AI.

In addition, this course provides space for students to develop their own unique writing voice. The use of AI to assist writing contravenes this purpose. For this reason, you are not allowed to use any applications that generate text or change your own wording for stylistic reasons. You may use spell check and grammar check. But please turn off any functions that promise to make your text appear more “professional.” I want to hear from you, not an AI that makes you sound like a generic average robot.

In short: In this course, we will discuss the ethics of AI use. But you are not allowed to use any AI to generate ideas, summarize readings, generate text, modify text, or aid your research output in any way.

The only exception to this rule is that you may use an AI service to transcribe interviews conducted as part of this course. You will have to declare which service you used and reflect on the benefits and limits of it.

Any unauthorized use of AI in this course will be treated as an academic integrity violation.

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

POLICY ON CLASSROOM RECORDING

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact the [Paul Menton Centre](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University’s [Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as lectures slides, lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials or otherwise circulate these materials without the instructor’s written permission. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

SCHEDULE**Week 1 – September 10th****Introduction**

We will talk about our research experiences, come to an understanding of what research is all about, and have a preview of the course.

Week 2 – September 17th**Socio-Legal Research****Research Skills Assignment 1: Socio-Legal Research (due September 21st)**

The readings introduce different research approaches. The assignment allows you to demonstrate your knowledge of the logics of qualitative and socio-legal research.

Siddarth Peter de Souza & Lisa Hahn, *The Socio-Legal Lab: An Experiential Approach to Research on Law in Action* (Tilburg University Open Press, 2022), DOI:

10.26116/2ckw-gd47, chapters 2, 3. Available online:

<https://openpresstiu.pubpub.org/socio-legal-lab>

Reza Banakar, “On Socio-Legal Design” (2019), Lund University Repository. Available online:

https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/65005127/10_aaaSocio_legal_methodology_v_10.pdf (accessed 2 December 2021).

Week 3 – September 24th**Data and Sources****Research Skills Assignment 2: Sources (due September 28th)**

We dive deeper into socio-legal research and talk about primary research sources. The assignment will allow you to show your understanding of the role of different sources in socio-legal research.

Siddarth Peter de Souza & Lisa Hahn, *The Socio-Legal Lab: An Experiential Approach to Research on Law in Action* (Tilburg University Open Press, 2022), DOI: 10.26116/2ckw-gd47, chapter 6. Available online: <https://openpresstiu.pubpub.org/socio-legal-lab>

Joshua D.M. Shaw and Daniel Konikoff, “When Prisoners’ ‘Right to Die’ Goes Online: A Case-Study of Legal and Penal Sensibilities,” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 37:3 (2022): 451–471. doi:10.1017/cls.2022.8

Week 4 – October 1st

Ethics

Research Skills Assignment 3: Ethics and Positionality (due October 5th)

Research has not always been a force for good. The readings discuss ethical issues with research, including its connection to colonialism and the exploitation of vulnerable research subjects. The assignment will ask you to reflect on ethical challenges with research.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd edition) (Zed Books, 2012), 1—20.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition) (Sage, 2017), 66-103 (chapter 4).

Week 5 – October 8th

Interviewing

Research Skills Assignment 4: Interviewing (due October 16th)

What are the promises and limits of using interviews as a research method? How do you conduct research interviews? We will practice interviewing in class, and your research skills assignment will ask you to show the results of this work.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition) (Sage, 2017), 104—147 (chapter 5).

Cormac McGrath, Per J. Palmgren & Matilda Liljedahl, “Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews,” *Medical Teacher* 41:9 (2019): 1002—1006, DOI: 10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149.

Umar Daraz et al, “Silence as Data: A Qualitative Methodological Framework for Analyzing Non-responses in Sociological Interviews,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 25 (2026): 1-14.

Week 6 – October 15th

Media Analysis

How can we analyze large bodies of materials? In class we practice using the Nexis database for media research. The readings introduce techniques for finding, selecting, and analyzing media and other texts.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition) (Sage, 2017), 246—271 (chapter 9).

Lesley J. Wood and Dyllan Goldstein, “Cataloging Protest: Newspapers, Nexis Uni, or Twitter?” *Mobilization* 28(3) (2023): 343—358.

Week 7 – October 22nd

Qualitative Coding

Research Skills Assignment 5: Coding and Interpretation (due November 2nd)

How do we go from data (interview transcripts, documents, ...) to analysis? The readings cover different approaches to systematic analysis and interpretation, also known as coding. The assignment asks you to apply these skills.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition) (Sage, 2017), 306-339 (chapter 11, data analysis and interpretation).

Ashley T. Rubin, *Rocking Qualitative Social Science: An Irreverent Guide to Rigorous Research* (Stanford University Press, 2021), 179—207.

Week 8 – November 5th**Artificial Intelligence in Research****Research Skills Assignment 6: AI and Research (due November 9th)**

What is the role of AI in qualitative research? The texts offer different positions on the usefulness of using AI for different steps of the research process. The assignment asks you to apply the knowledge from these debates.

Ihor Rudko and Aysan Bashirpour Bonab, “ChatGPT is incredible (at being average),” *Ethics and Information Technology* (2025) 27:36.

Tanisha Jowsey et al, “We Reject the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Reflexive Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* (2025): 1-2.

Trisha Greenhalgh, “Reflexive Qualitative Research and Generative AI: A Call to go Beyond the Binary,” *Qualitative Inquiry* (2026): 1-2.

Kyle M.L. Jones, “Generative AI in Qualitative Research and Related Transparency Problems: A Novel Heuristic for Disclosing Uses of AI,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 24 (2025):1—14.

Week 9 – November 12th**Analyzing Legal Documents****Research Practice 7: Analyzing Legal Materials (due November 16th)**

Many legal proceedings leave records that can be accessed and analyzed by researchers. What are some ethical and practical challenges with using legal documents? How can researchers navigate these issues?

Marina Velickovic, “Ethical challenges of using trials transcripts for research purposes: A case study of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia,” *London Review of International Law* 11 (2023): 381—404.

Anya Degensheim and Camilo Arturo Leslie, “Using court documents as data: opportunities and challenges for sociolegal scholarship,” *Law & Society Review* 59 (2025): 619—647.

Week 10 – November 19th**Citing and Literature Reviews****Research Skills Assignment 8: Citing: How, Why, What (due November 23rd)**

How do we turn our analyses into research papers? These readings cover topics such as writing literature reviews, why and how people cite, and how we can understand citations as a social practice.

Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research* (5th edition) (University of Chicago Press, 2024), chapter 12 (incorporating sources).

Andrew S. Denney and Richard Tewksbury, “How to Write a Literature Review,” *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 24 (2013): 218—234.

Fei Shu and Kaijie Jia, “Nature of citations: A review of literature,” *Data Science and Infometrics* 6 (2026): 1000034.

Week 11 – November 26th**Research horizons: graduate program and scholarship applications**

What if you want to do more research? In this class we talk about Honours Research Essays, graduate programs, scholarships, and graduate program admissions.

Carleton University Department of Law and Legal Studies, *Information for Applicants to Legal Studies MA and PhD Programs*, <https://carleton.ca/law/wp-content/uploads/sites/110/2025/11/Information-for-Applicants-Graduate-Programs-NOV-2025.pdf>

Jessica McCrory Calarco, *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 1—54.

Week 12 – December 3rd**Writing Research Papers**

*Almost done! Let’s talk a bit more about writing research papers.
We’ll also get going with the final exam (take home).*

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition) (Sage, 2017), 340-365 (chapter 12).

Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research* (5th edition) (University of Chicago Press, 2024), chapter 5 (making good arguments).

STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Collaboration and Group Work: With one exception (see next paragraph), all assignments in this course are to be prepared and submitted individually. This means that the assignment needs to be the work of the student submitting it and not contain collaboration and contributions from others.

Research Skills Assignment #4 will consist in conducting interviews. The interview transcript represents contributions by the interviewer and the respondents. Any reflections on the interview process and content that are submitted as part of the assignment are to be the sole work of the student who is submitting the assignment.

Submitting Substantially the Same Piece of Work: In this course, you are not allowed to submit any works that you have submitted in this class for other classes without the written permission of the instructor.

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](#).