

Course Outline

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| COURSE: | LAWS 1002 A – Introduction to Legal Studies II |
| TERM: | SUMMER 2025 |
| PREREQUISITES: | None |
| CLASS: | Day & Time: Lecture and other course materials are available through Brightspace. There are no scheduled lectures (the lectures are part of asynchronous modules). Room: Note: there is a weekly one hour Discussion Group/Tutorial at scheduled times on TUESDAYS . These are conducted over ZOOM (link on BS). Failure to regularly attend the scheduled group will impact your course grade. Please check Carleton Central for your scheduled tutorial time (A1 or A2). |
| INSTRUCTOR: | Stephen J. Tasson |
| CONTACT: | Office: Room D585 Loeb Building Office Hrs: By appointment over zoom (see Brightspace) Telephone: None Email: steve.tasson@carleton.ca |
| BRIGHTSPACE: | https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/339478 |

CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to legal rules and theoretical approaches for critically understanding the creation, interpretation and enforcement of those rules; the role of judges, juries, lawyers, and lay persons; adjudication and alternative dispute resolution; relationship of law with social change and justice; challenges of access to justice.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Understanding “the law” in contemporary societies requires that we understand the ways that it is enacted or “practiced” and by whom. This means understanding some core **processes** and **key players** within these processes, including “officials” such judges, lawyers, police officers; as well as “lay actors” like claimants, defendants, victims and jurors.

One process we explore in some depth early in the term is the trial process. We discuss the value of **the trial** as a process of legal fact-finding and conflict resolution. How does the structure of the court or the policy aims of civil and criminal law aid, or potentially undermine, satisfactory conflict resolution? What **alternatives** are there to the trial process and what advantages might they offer? What happens when legal processes “get it wrong”? How does the justice system acknowledge, for example, the overrepresented groups within its processes or the growing number of “wrongful convictions” it produces?

A central theme that also runs throughout the course is concern for the basic **accessibility** of the legal system.

This not only refers to the trial process and to the mechanisms of formal justice, but also to legal education, the police, the judiciary, and the legal profession.

Law's "distance", rituals and formality aim, in part, to insulate its various processes from everyday social inequalities and prejudices in the name of equality and formal justice. However, this "distance" may also effectively undermine its ability to adequately represent social aims or render **substantive justice** for many people seeking a just resolution to interpersonal and group conflicts. How do Canadian legal actors and legal processes seek to navigate this core **ambiguity**?

These are critical questions. They are fundamentally questions about what law is and does, at present, and (crucially) what it ought to do and be, going forward.

Course Objectives (or, 'what I want you to get out of the course')

1. Explore the trial process in Canadian courts. Evaluate the relative merits of the 'adversarial' trial process relative to alternative trial and pre-trial processes of legal fact-finding. Connect this debate to the issue of accessibility and "wrongful conviction" in Canada.
2. Evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes in Canada. Connect this discussion to debates surrounding "Restorative Justice" and reconciliation and Indigenous legal traditions in Canada.
3. Identify the basic components of criminal and civil law in Canada. Be able to understand the broader implications of seemingly minor "technical" changes on the roles and duties of individuals and social groups (e.g. duties owed by "social hosts" to "guests").
4. Identify and critically evaluate the legal system's key "actors", their motivations, and how their attitudes and actions affect our understanding of, and outcomes in, the present-day legal system.
5. Explore the values of "accessibility" and "representativeness" in the Canadian legal system. Assess these values relative to the "under" and "over-representation" of certain groups within the legal system.
6. Be able to read and identify key aspects and authorities within legal decisions (i.e. cases).
7. Understand the uses of criminal and civil law as means to produce and stabilize existing social order(s) and State power.
8. Develop your ability to evaluate competing written arguments (in particular, "theoretically oriented" arguments) and persuasively articulate your own positions relative to those arguments.
9. Examine the serious effects and persistence of racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice in key parts of the legal process (including within the legal profession). Discuss the systemic quality of these issues.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Tasson, S. *et al.* (eds.) (2019). *Introduction to Legal Studies: Processes and Power* (1th ed.). North York: Captus Press.

This core course text (or "text" as it is referenced on the weekly reading schedule) is available for purchase through [the campus bookstore](#) (Approx. \$68 for a hardcopy)

The text is also available directly from the publisher, *Captus Press*, as an *ebook*. [Follow this link](#) for more information on purchasing access to the text online. (Approx. \$46 for an electronic non-printable copy)

The text may also be available "used" (if you want to save a few \$\$\$) from multiple booksellers in Ottawa. **There are no other books or materials required to purchase for THIS course!**

NOTE: In addition to this main course text there are **additional readings/media** for which you will be also be responsible. These are available to you through our course Brightspace page and detailed in the **Required Reading Schedule (on Brightspace)**.

EVALUATION

(All core components must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in this course)

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Department and of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. **No grades are final until they have been approved by the Department and the Dean.**

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| Weekly Response (top 4 of 6) | 28% | (Weekly, see Brightspace) |
| Weekly Quiz (top 5 of 6) | 30% | (Weekly, see Brightspace) |
| Course Participation (TA/tutorial group) | 12% | (Continuous, every Tuesday) |
| Final Exam | 30% | (During Exam Period – June 20-26) |

COURSE COMPONENTS

Weekly Reading Response (top 4 of 6) (28%)

Each week throughout the term there is a question or short set of questions (posted to Brightspace) that ask you to respond/reflect on the materials or one of the core themes for the week's sessions (usually this covers the materials from one to two lecture topics). This will include some summarizing work, but you may be asked to consider the implications of a text, or even to connect issues to your own experience.

Normally these Response submissions should minimally demonstrate that you:

- have read/viewed the required reading/source (summary elements)
- have considered the arguments/topic **critically or in some depth** (analysis elements)
- have taken care in preparing and presenting the work (structure, grammar, citation, formatting)

The Response is not strictly about providing an accurate summary or getting the “right” answer to the prompt question(s). Rather, a core element of your work should be to **demonstrate to the reader your engagement with course materials** (readings, discussions, core themes). Again, the aim is to show you are working through the material in a purposeful and thoughtful way. More details and a rubric appear on Brightspace.

Unless otherwise specified your submissions should be **approx. 3 pages (double-spaced)**. These must be submitted before the deadlines indicated on Brightspace.

A total of 6 are available but only 4 (highest grades) are counted toward the final course grade. Each Response must include a **“Statement on AI Use”** to receive a grade (see Policies section below)

Weekly Quiz (top 5 of 6) (30%)

Each week there is a “quiz” available to assess your comprehension of the course materials for the week (ie usually from two lectures). These must be completed before the deadlines listed on Brightspace. **There are no extensions or “lates” available.** The questions are primarily multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and short answer,

but may include other association-type questions (eg. matching). Normally these are approx. 15-20 questions.

A total of 6 are available but only 5 (highest grades) are counted toward the final course grade.

Course Participation (12%) (Note: TA Groups are once per week on TUESDAY)

While the course is based mainly on asynchronous lecture modules, there are **weekly groups** that require participation and engagement. These are core components of the course and are your main opportunity to clarify and discuss materials. You will have registered in one of these groups when you registered for the course (A1 or A2). You are expected to **come prepared to participate and contribute to your group**. Your “course participation” mark is based not only on your basic attendance to these groups, but on the quality of your actual participation in the discussions and any planned exercises.

Final Exam (30%)

There is a final exam covering **all course materials** that will take place during the scheduled exam period in June. **The exam will likely consist of short-answer and/or essay-style questions.**

The exact format and number of questions will be **clarified before June 1**. Closer to the end of term I will also highlight some specific tips/topics in order to assist you in preparing and finalizing your exam answers.

SCHEDULE

The complete **Required Reading and Lecture Topics schedule** is available on **Brightspace (our online portal)**. If you have any questions or concerns about these topics or readings, please let me know via email. Please also note these other important term dates:

| <i>Summer 2025 Sessional Dates and University Closures</i> | |
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| <i>Please find a full list of important academic dates on the calendar website:</i> https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/ | |
| May 5, 2025 | Summer term begins. |
| May 16, 2025 | Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in full summer courses. |
| May 31, 2025 | Last day to withdraw from full summer courses with a full fee adjustment. |
| June 1, 2025 | Last day to withdraw from early summer courses. |
| June 17, 2025 | Last day of early summer classes. |
| June 18-19, 2025 | No classes or examinations take place. |
| June 20-26, 2025 | Final examinations in early summer courses will be held. |
| June 26, 2025 | All final take-home examinations are due on this day. |

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN THIS (& OTHER) COURSES

1. Make a personal schedule and stick to it (ie Don't get behind!).

The class structure forces you to “stay on top of” the weekly work. I know that this can be annoying but the aim is to keep you engaged but still allows for some flexibility in when you complete the work. You can't learn and do well unless you engage with the course materials and attend the tutorial groups regularly. This also guards against falling too far behind and becoming overwhelmed.

2. Get it in!!!

Aside from the final exam, the stakes on any individual component are relatively “low”. **Perfection is the enemy of “the good”!** Get written work in and get feedback on how to improve. (I know this is FAR easier than it sounds for many folks, but it is a valuable lesson in a first-year course!)

3. Ask for help if you need help or any course requirements are unclear

Your TA and I are here to help you succeed in the course. While especially in an online course it may feel sometimes that you are “on your own”, **you are not!** Again, your TA and I want you to succeed and so you should contact us if you are struggling. Early communication is key **especially given the compressed summer schedule.**

4. Be open to new ideas and new ways of thinking (and communicating)

Good courses ought to challenge us to think differently about what we think we already know and/or force us to find new ways to articulate our positions or experience. Consequently, they may prompt us to reflect on ourselves, our relationships with others, and the structures of the world around us. This can sometimes be an unsettling and uncomfortable process and different people react to these challenges differently. In this class the source of these challenges may be the course materials (my lectures or the readings) but they may also come through interactions with your peers in tutorials. **Not everyone is equally skilled at expressing their positions or posing questions.** Be attentive to this fact, to the diversity of other student's experiences, and be “generous” in attributing motives to your peers in the class. **That said, any personal attacks or obvious “trolling” behavior in the groups will NOT be tolerated.**

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Please review the following webpage to ensure that your practices meet our Department's expectations, particularly regarding standard departmental protocols and academic integrity requirements:

<https://carleton.ca/law/student-experience-resources/>

PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer

code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

As a University student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you.

For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

- <https://wellness.carleton.ca/get-help-now/>

Carleton Resources:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are

outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows.

Pregnancy 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 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/>.

ASSIGNMENT FORMATTING and SUBMISSION

Unless otherwise specified, any written work submitted in this course must be: double-spaced, formatted to 12pt

Times New Roman or Arial font with standard margins. Assignments normally must include your name and student number and the course code in the document's header or a title page. Title pages, bibliographies and extensive footnotes are NOT usually counted in determining an assignment's word count or page length.

Assignments are always submitted using the links provided for this specific purpose in Brightspace. **It is your responsibility to ensure that assignments are submitted in a readable file format (.doc or .pdf formats) *before the deadline*.** If an assignment is unreadable it will not be considered submitted. If you are confused or anticipate any issues (technological or otherwise) submitting written course work you should discuss this with your TA or with me ASAP in ***advance of the deadline***.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS & EXTENSIONS POLICY

I **fully understand** you have competing commitments and responsibilities (e.g. child care, family commitments, sports, work, etc.)! Some of these priorities may supersede this course and necessitate that miss a deadline or compromise your ability to submit “your best work”. While not ideal, this is **why there is a “best of X” policy for the Quizzes and Responses!**

*****LATE assignments or quizzes will NOT be accepted*****

If you are unable to complete one (or more) of the components in one week of the course then this grade will serve as a “dropped” grade(s) and you move on to the next week. The summer term is simply too short to extend deadlines as they quickly pile into one another and in term completion is untenable.

In the event that you experience a **serious illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstances beyond your control** that disrupts your ability to meet your academic obligations for **longer than 5 days** you may need to temporarily step away from your studies in order to take proper care of yourself.

In such extraordinary cases you must contact me **within 48 hours** of any missed deadline and make a request for academic consideration. Additional information/documentation to justify long-term considerations may need to be provided to me or you may need to deal directly with the Registrar's office.

GENERATIVE “AI”, CITATION STYLE & PLAGIARISM (Part II)

Assignments in the course must be properly referenced and include a bibliography of all sources used in their preparation (unless directed otherwise). I understand that, to this point, students have had varying degrees of experience with citation and referencing in their academic work. Regardless, the expectation is that you have a basic ability to reference and cite other's work used in preparing your own assignments.

The key to “good” citation is **transparency, clarity, and consistency**. Your citations/references should allow your reader to clearly identify the sources you are using and allow them to easily trace these sources, if required.

Carleton's library offers a number of resources on referencing and citation. In this class I prefer that you use an “in-text” citation style (either **APA** or **MLA** – see the links for the basics) though, the department does allow you to also use **McGill** (so this will be accepted). PLEASE INCLUDE PAGE NUMBERS IN YOUR CITATIONS.

As highlighted above, failure to reference properly, or using AI without attribution, or attempting to pass someone else's ideas or work off as your own, constitutes plagiarism and may violate the University's Academic Integrity

Policy. I take it very seriously and so should you! **Recklessly or purposefully engaging in it is incredibly misguided and can lead to very serious penalties.** If you are struggling or unsure about how best to use sources in preparing your work in the course, it is far better to contact me and talk to me about resources to help!

Documenting “Generative AI” use

As “AI” tools become more ubiquitous, students may wish to use these tools in the preparation of graded course work. In this course students *may* use AI tools like ChatGPT, but only in **specific, limited ways**. AI tools can be used to assist with tasks such as proofreading a final draft for grammar and style. However, students are *not* permitted to use AI to communicate core ideas or personal reflections. The focus of the course is on developing original thought and critical thinking skills, so AI should not be relied upon for creating the main content of any assignment. **Using AI to complete any exam or quiz questions is strictly prohibited.** Any use of AI must be clearly documented and cited, including the prompts used and how the tool assisted in the writing or planning process. This **“Statement re AI use” must be added after your bibliography.** (If you don’t use these tools to prepare your assignment then you must still declare this)

Any assignment without this statement will not be graded.

I reserve the right to request more detailed information re: the process students used to prepare their course work. This may include producing drafts or outlines, or answering questions about the work in a one-on-one meeting. Any failure to attend in a timely manner to such a request will negatively impact your course grade.

GRADE APPEALS & ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK REQUESTS

There may be instances where you feel an error has been made in assigning a grade to your submitted work in the course or where the reasons for the assigned grade are unclear or confusing. In such instances you may seek further feedback and/or **informally “appeal” the grade.**

Such requests **must first be directed toward the person who initially graded the work** (in most cases this will be your TA). In cases of appeal, you must establish “grounds” for the appeal (i.e. clearly indicate where you think a mistake was made). Vague allusions to “working hard” on an assignment or what you “normally get in other classes” are not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

If after discussing with your TA, the reasons for your grade remain unclear or you would like **additional feedback** on the submission, then you may contact/ appeal the mark to me (Steve). Normally I ask students to “stop by”/log on during office hours or create an appt. where we can discuss the work/grade.

If the reasons for the grade remain unclear after this meeting, you may formally appeal your grades as part of a formal **Appeal of Final Grade** ([this process is detailed by the RO](#)).