



Lakehead University  
*Criminal Law*  
*POLI 2311 SDE*  
*Spring 2022*

Instructor: Dr. Patrick Cain,  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES**

This course examines various approaches to criminal law, with a special focus on the Canadian criminal legal system, and some of the key principles and theories that inform it.

The primary aim of this course is not to simply to cover specific information or to provide students with pre-arranged sets of learned material. Rather, this course is meant to develop and enhance students' ability to: (a) freely partake in the art of thoughtful and reasoned written discussion about the most important human questions involved in the study and practice of criminal law.

Of special concern to this course will be: the history of criminal law, criminal law's place within our legal system, the defining of criminality, the basic organization of criminal law, theories and practices of criminal punishment, and the rights of individuals within our criminal law system.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Grade Distribution**

Perusal Assignments (Reading, Annotation and Discussion): 85%

Course Participation: 15%

## Readings and Texts

All class materials (videos and readings) can be found on the [perusall.com](https://perusall.com) course website. The primary class text is: *Canadian Cases in the Philosophy of Law*, Fifth Edition, Culver (ed), Giudice (ed) & Bickenbach (ed). It MUST be purchased through the Perusall website.

## Perusall Assignments

### *Perusall Account Set-up*

Students are required to create a Perusall account on [perusall.com](https://perusall.com) and enter the course code **CAIN-KTZ7C** upon registration.

### *Assignments*

All assignments will be posted to Perusall, and will require students to read, annotate and comment on the readings while also engaging in written discussion about the readings with classmates. The instructor has designed these assignments to encourage, develop and measure students' engagement of the major themes and questions of this course.

### *Assignment Deadlines*

Each assignment has a deadline, but students are allowed to submit comments for partial credit past the deadline day until 11:59 pm on the last day of the course (June 14). However, credit declines linearly from each due date; comments earn full credit at the initial deadline and declining credit for each day late.

The readings and videos assigned in this course often involve complicated ideas and difficult arguments. Moreover, the presentation of these ideas and arguments sometimes takes forms that may not be familiar to students. Students should therefore be prepared to complete their readings slowly and should be aware that needing to read the texts at least several times to grasp their content is to be expected.

### *Assignment Marking*

Each Perusall assignment is equally weighted. All assignments are required and should be reviewed in the order they are posted.

To achieve high marks, students need to demonstrate a careful and thorough reading of the assigned texts. In doing so, they should

1. Engage one another and the readings through thoughtful, charitable, and reasoned discussion
2. Read and analyze important texts and ideas with care and insight, considering the questions they raise and how their arguments shed light their own lives and the political order in which they live
3. Do the above in a way that primarily responds to the readings, while keeping in mind the instructor's reading questions found at the introduction to each assignment. You should not be limited by the reading questions or attempt to answer them directly—they are merely some general question meant to help you organize the particular parts of the readings in your own mind

### ***Perusall Mark Display***

To give students some initial feedback on how they are doing on the assignments I have enabled the Perusall feature which displays students' preliminary marks in real time based on the work already completed. These preliminary marks come from the basic course settings that I have designed and that Perusall employs when providing the preliminary mark.

There are ways of tricking the system into thinking that your comments are more relevant and/or thoughtful than they really are (for instance: that you are thoughtfully responding to specific parts of the text, when you really are only offering general comments that are abstracted from any specific part of the text's argument).

I therefore review each set of initial and preliminary Perusall marks and comments, making adjustments as necessary. Therefore, displayed marks are only preliminary until I complete any needed adjustments. Students who attempt to "game the system" will likely see a reduction in their assignment marks. Adjustments will be made by 11:59 on each Saturday of the course. After that time marks for that week should be considered finalized.

### **Course Participation**

Because Perusall's scores sometimes lack complete nuance, at the end of the course the instructor will review each student's overall contribution to the course, and provide a mark based on the level of participation and overall qualities of their interactions with the readings and one another.

### **Other Policies and Guidelines**

#### ***Academic Honesty***

Academic honesty is expected of all Lakehead University students. Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are expected to make themselves fully familiar with Lakehead's policies in this area. Although all these policies will be enforced in full, for this course it is worth emphasizing the following:

1. Plagiarism involves presenting another's work, ideas, theories, or interpretation as one's own.
2. It is academically dishonest to share one's own work in order that someone else may commit plagiarism.
3. Therefore, all online tests and exams must be completed individually without any assistance from other persons; giving or receiving assistance during a test or exam is a serious breach of academic honesty.

#### ***Communication***

Updates will be provided via email using student's lakeheadu email accounts, so students should check those regularly.