



Lakehead University
POLI 1301 YDE - Introduction to Law
Online Course

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I'm happy to meet with you to discuss the course at any mutually agreeable time to discuss the course throughout the semester. Please email me to arrange an appointment time.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Introduction to Law. Over the course of the year we will be exploring introductory legal concepts and a sampling of legal decisions from some of the major legal areas within Canadian law. While many of these major legal areas comprise entire courses all by themselves in Canadian law schools, over the course of this semester you will be able to develop at least a rudimentary understanding of some of these major topics and begin to develop an ability to read and comprehend Canadian legal decisions. We will also work together to develop basic legal research skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Required Readings

There is no textbook for this course as required readings are edited versions of Canadian legal decisions that are available in the 'Content' section of our course D2L website (our "course site") which are provided free of any charge.

Grading

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|-----------------------------------|-----|
| - Participation - Fall: | 5% |
| - Participation – Winter: | 10% |
| - Exam 1: | 10% |
| - *Exam 2: (or extra case study): | 15% |
| - Exam 3: | 30% |
| - Case Study: | 30% |

*You have the option to either complete an additional case study assignment OR write Exam 2 for credit. You cannot receive credit for both. If you submit a case study prior to Exam 2 you are welcome to complete Exam 2 simply for practice, but only the grade for your additional case study will entered as your mark.

Course Delivery

Every week I will provide a link to a recorded lecture, which will be available for approximately two weeks after it has been posted. Lectures will be posted no later than Friday each week. Be sure to read the assigned readings before viewing the lecture. Links to the recorded lecture will be available under the associated topic in the 'Discussion' area of our course site.

Each lecture will be accompanied by several discussion questions related to the topic and readings for the week. Each discussion topic will be available for at least two weeks. *Please take careful note of when the access period for posted lectures and discussion topics will close and make sure you access the lecture and participate in discussion before they are no longer accessible.*

Participation

Participation marks are earned by meaningfully contributing to our online group discussion throughout the semester by answering questions that are posed or providing comments or observations pertaining to our class topics and readings in our class discussion forums. Both the quality and quantity of participation is considered in your participation grade. You may engage with the posted question or topic with your own originating response or by providing meaningful responses or counterpoints to someone else's response. What I hope will develop in our discussion forums is interesting, useful dialogue that furthers our insights and understanding on various elements of the law. I may occasionally pose a question in response to your posting in the discussion forum as well.

As a very rough guideline, engaging with several discussion questions or topics almost every week with a fair degree of insight and articulateness would earn a grade somewhere in the 'B' range (70-79%).

Exams

Each exam will have some combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true or false type questions. In order to prepare for these exams, you are expected to meaningfully read the assigned readings and take appropriate notes during lectures.

Exam 1 will cover all lectures and assigned readings covered through the week of November 4 (inclusive). Exam 1 will begin **on November 15, 2024. The exam will be available beginning at 10:00 a.m. and will remain available for 24 hours.**

Exam 2 will cover only lectures and assigned readings covered between the weeks of November 11 through January 20 (inclusive). Exam 2 will begin on **on February 3, 2025. The exam will be available beginning at 1:00 p.m. and will remain available for 24 hours.**

Your final exam will take place during the winter semester exam period and is assigned at a specific date and time by the university. Consult the university's exam dates and times for the date for your final exam once this information becomes available.

Specific details regarding accessing all exams will be provided closer to the exam dates.

Case Study Assignment

Your written assignment for this semester is a case study.

The first step for this assignment is identifying the case that you would like analyze. Your case must be 1) a decision of a Canadian court (not a tribunal or a decision from another jurisdiction) and 2) be a judgment from the year 2000 or later. You cannot pick any of the cases that are assigned readings as your focus case. In order to find a case, you will have to utilize the free Canadian online legal database, CanLII (www.canlii.org). Instructions on how to utilize this resource will be provided in one of our video lectures. In choosing the case you wish to analyze, consider the length of the case, its complexity, the clarity of its writing, and of course your own thoughts and interests.

Your case study must be between 1800-2200 words, not including your title page, footnotes, or bibliography. Given the large range, this word count is *non-flexible* and a word count over or under this range will result in a significant mark deduction.

What I am looking to see is original thought, opinion, and analysis of the case. The assignment is *not to simply summarize the case*. While a brief summary will be necessary to provide a basic overview of what is going on in the case for the reader, if the entirety of your assignment is a summary of the case you will be disappointed in the grade you receive.

While there is not a set limit for the number of sources other than your topic case that you must utilize, it is likely that you will want to utilize and refer to some other sources, such as other case law, legislation, or journal articles, to help develop your analysis. While I prefer formatting in the Turabian/Chicago style, you may also format your assignment in APA or MLA format so long as you ensure that you a) use footnotes indicating the source from which you are taking information, and where in this source one could find this information, rather than endnotes or in-text citations, b) provide a complete bibliography of all referenced sources, c) have a standalone title page at the beginning of your paper, and d) utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout your assignment.

Your mandatory case study is due on **Friday, March 21, 2025 by 11:59 p.m.**

As noted above, if you would like to complete an additional case study instead of Exam 2 you may choose to do so. The same parameters for the required case study will apply to the additional case study. If you would like to complete the additional case study instead of Exam 2, the additional case study is due on **Monday, January 27 by 11:59 p.m.** Note that the deadline for the additional case study is *slightly earlier than the date for Exam 2*.

Guidelines for Submission of All Written Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted to me via email (awschenk@lakeheadu.ca, not through our course site). All assignments must be in PDF form; submitting your paper in PDF form ensures that I see your paper exactly as you've submitted it, whereas assignments submitted as a Word document may have inadvertent formatting issues if you've written them in an older version of Word and I open it in a newer version. Submitting in a format other than PDF attracts an automatic 10% deduction on your assignment.

In regards to late submissions, unless you experience a sudden medical or personal emergency that prevents you from submitting an assignment or you have been explicitly given a prior extension from me, assignments that are submitted after the deadline receive a penalty to their grade. Assignments submitted within 24 hours after the deadline receive a 25% deduction; assignments submitted between 24-48 hours after the deadline receive a 50% deduction; assignments submitted more than 48 hours after the deadline do not receive any marks. Avoiding these penalties is extremely simple: manage your time properly and don't leave assignments until the last minute.

This does not, however, mean that extensions are not available in appropriate circumstances. If you have experienced a personal or medical issue that may prevent you from submitting your assignment on time please do contact me as soon as possible to discuss a potential extension. It is incumbent on you to be as proactive as possible. Do not request extensions because you have a number of other assignments in other courses due around the same time or you simply haven't given yourself enough time to complete the assignment; time management is your responsibility and a crucial skill to develop and hone as an undergraduate student. Do not request an extension because you have suffered some type of technological mishap; make sure you're regularly backing up documents in multiple places in case something goes wrong.

Marks and Feedback

All of your marks will be provided to you via myInfo. Feedback will be provided exclusively via our course site. Your individual feedback accompanying each of your marks will be viewable under the 'Assignments' tab.

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 policy in this area. Although all these policies will be enforced in full, it is worth emphasizing the following:

Plagiarism involves presenting another's work, ideas, theories, or interpretation as one's own.

To avoid plagiarism, writers should always:

1. Put quotation marks around any words from sources

2. Paraphrase material completely; changing (with the help of a thesaurus) or rearranging a few words or the tense of a verb is not paraphrasing.
3. Give accurate and complete citations for all material *including paraphrased material*.
4. Avoid borrowing entire arguments or approaches to a subject from another writer. Make it 'original' while staying faithful to the assignment parameters.

A Quick Word on Emails

I am very happy to answer questions over email, but there are parameters to the way in which these emails should be written and sent. I expect that your emails to me are written with proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. If I receive an email that has the appearance of a hastily typed text message, you should not expect an email in reply. I also expect that before you ask me a question you have consulted the syllabus to see if the answer is there.

Academic Supports

If you feel that you're in need of academic assistance in a particular area, I encourage you to utilize the resources of Lakehead's Academic Support Zone (<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/academic-success/student-success-centre/academic-support-zone>). The Academic Support Zone can provide assistance in a variety of different areas, including specific supports for writing papers.

Disability Accommodations

Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please contact Student Accessibility Services <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca> (SC0003, 343-8047 or sas@lakeheadu.ca).

Mental Health Resources

As a university student, you may sometimes experience mental health concerns or stressful events that interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily activities. All of us can benefit from support during times of struggle. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events or feelings of anxiety or depression, Student Health and Wellness is here to help. Their services are free for Lakehead Students and appointments are available. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on and off campus at lakeheadu.ca/shw.

Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do - for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

Dealing with Difficult Course Content

The study of law in some instances necessitates consideration of cases addressing violence or other types of distressing acts. While it is sometimes necessary to confront this unpleasant content to consider how the law can, or should, address these problems, these cases may inadvertently trigger unpleasant personal memories and emotions if the issues we are discussing relate in some way to troubling experiences you have had. If this is the case for you (or upon reviewing a particular assigned reading you believe this may be the case), you may certainly excuse yourself from class or asked to be excused from a particular class ahead of time. Please feel free to contact me about this issue and/or utilize Lakehead's mental health supports via Student Health and Wellness.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule and assigned readings are potentially subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Date (Week of)	Topic	Reading
Sept 2	Course Introduction and Syllabus Review; Introduction to Canadian Legal Structures	N/A
Sept 9	How to Read a Case	<i>Vancouver v Ward</i>
Sept 16	Basics of Legal Research	N/A
Sept 23	The Rule of Law	<i>Bacon v Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corp</i>
Sept 30	Organs of Government and Interpreting a Law	<i>Canadian Appliance Source LP v Ontario (AG)</i>
Oct 7	Constitutional Law – The Charter	<i>R v Oakes</i>
Oct 21	Medical Assistance in Dying	<i>Carter v Canada</i>
Oct 28	Constitutional Law – Division of Powers	<i>Reference re Firearms Act (Can)</i>
Nov 4	Aboriginal and Treaty Rights – Pt. 1	<i>R v Marshall No. 1</i>
Nov 11	Aboriginal and Treaty Rights – Pt. 2	<i>R v Marshall No. 2</i>
Nov 18	Criminal Law	<i>R v Boughton</i>
Nov 25	Criminal Law and Morality	<i>R v Jobidon</i>
Jan 6	Evidence in Criminal Law – Search and Seizure	<i>R v Tessling</i>
Jan 13	Administrative Law	<i>Toth v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)</i>
Jan 20	The Basics of Contract Law	<i>Andrews v Canada (Attorney General)</i>
Jan 27	Insurance Law	<i>Lewis v Economical Insurance Group</i>
Feb 3	Torts – Intrusion Upon Seclusion	<i>Jones v Tsige</i>
Feb 10	Torts – Negligence Pt. 1	<i>Mustapha v Culligan of Canada Ltd</i>
Feb 24	Torts – Negligence Pt. 2	<i>Crocker v Sundance Northwest Resorts Ltd</i>
March 3	Torts – Defamation, Pt. 1	<i>WIC Radio v Simpson</i>
March 10	Torts – Defamation, Pt. 2	<i>Rebel News v Al Jazeera Media</i>

March 17	Torts and Self-Defence	<i>MacDonald v Hees</i>
March 24	Expert Witnesses	<i>White Burgess Langille Inman v Abbott and Haliburton</i>
March 31	Legal Costs	<i>Net Connect v Mobile Zone</i>