

PPAS 2200 3.0 M
Winter 2025
Communities and Public Law
Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Class will be in person, Stedman Lecture Hall C
(You will also use eClass.)

Course Outline

Course Director:

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Website: <https://profiles.laps.yorku.ca/profiles/istedman/>

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1. Land Acknowledgment

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region ([LA&PS Land Acknowledgement](#)).

2. Course description

This course will introduce students to the major public law components of the Canadian legal system. We will examine the ways in which the fundamental principles of constitutional law, administrative law and criminal law interact with and have an impact upon individuals and communities. We will focus particular attention on those individuals and communities that have historically been both vulnerable and under-represented in our legal traditions.

Students will learn about major contemporary issues in Canadian public law, including federalism and the division of powers, the role of the Courts, the criminal law and its often unequal application to different communities, the importance of administrative tribunals and some recent decisions from the Supreme Court of Canada. We will also discuss the nature of the legal profession and the role it plays (and doesn't) in helping address access to justice issues in society.

3. Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students will:

1. Have a foundational understanding of the basic principles and components of public law, their historical and theoretical origins and their purpose and significance in the Canadian context;
2. Have the knowledge and skills needed to critically analyze the ways in which public law affects the life of individuals, groups, and communities in Canada;
3. Be able to identify and explain notions of justice and fairness from a Canadian legal perspective;
4. Be able to identify problem areas in the interactions of public law and communities in Canada and try to come up with solutions to improve rights and justice for disadvantaged communities and groups;
5. Understand the basics of how to read legislation and caselaw, including knowing how to explain what precedent and *stare decisis* are; and,
6. Have an invaluable background in public law that will be an asset if seeking to undertake further studies in law and/or public policy.

4. Evaluation (further details at end of Course Outline)

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------------|------|
| Midterm Exam | February 25, 3 hours, during class time. No computers. One page, 2-sided "cheat sheet" allowed. | Value (%): | 25 |
| Critical Reflection | You are expected to submit your critical reflection via eClass before class on March 18. | Value (%): | 15 |
| Letter to the Editor | You are expected to submit your Letter to the Editor before class on April 1. | Value (%): | 20 |
| Final Exam | Will take place during the exam period: April 8-25 | Value (%): | 30 |
| Attendance & Participation | You must regularly attend lectures, participate in discussions and complete any eClass participation assignments. | Value (%): | 10 |
| TOTAL: | | | 100% |

5. Technical Requirements for Taking the Course

This course will take place in person. We will not be broadcasting over Zoom or recording our sessions (unless the world shuts down again, of course). That being said, we will continue to use eClass for this course. If you need technical assistance throughout the term, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) web page. For more specific assistance, please write to askit@yorku.ca. Your instructor is not your IT support person, but is certainly available to assist if you have other course-related issues.

6. Participation

Attendance during weekly sessions will be mandatory because lectures will not be recorded and posted. You will be expected to engage and ask questions. Inappropriate or disrespectful language will not be tolerated, and you may be removed from class until your behaviour has been addressed.

7. Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

| GRADE | GRADE POINT | PERCENT RANGE | DESCRIPTION |
|-------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|
| A+ | 9 | 90-100 | Exceptional |
| A | 8 | 80-89 | Excellent |
| B+ | 7 | 75-79 | Very Good |
| B | 6 | 70-74 | Good |
| C+ | 5 | 65-69 | Competent |
| C | 4 | 60-64 | Fairly Competent |
| D+ | 3 | 55-59 | Passing |
| D | 2 | 50-54 | Marginally Passing |
| E | 1 | 40-49 | Marginally Failing |
| F | 0 | 0-39 | Failing |

8. Student Conduct in the Learning Environment

York University is committed to fostering teaching and learning environments that are free of disruptive and/or harassing behaviour, are physically safe, and conducive to effective teaching and learning. Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy, civility, and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Individuals who fail to adhere to such standards and who violate University or public law may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

For more information, see the policies on [Disruptive and/or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations](#), the [Student Conduct and Responsibilities](#), and the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#).

Netiquette for eClass and Online Learning

Students and instructors have a joint responsibility to create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). If we do move online for some reason, you will be expected to review and familiarize yourself with behaviours that support “netiquette” in virtual classrooms by consulting the [Guide to Netiquette](#) and [Student Guide to eLearning](#).

Student Notice of Recording for Online Teaching and Learning

Although the course is set to be in person, circumstances may arise that force us to move our lectures online.

Activities for this course may involve recording, in partial fulfillment of the course learning outcomes. Images, audio, text/chat messaging that have been recorded may be used and/or made available by the University to students enrolled in the course and those supporting the course for the purpose of materials review, for assessment, etc. Recordings will be managed according to the University’s Common Record Schedule and will be securely destroyed when no longer needed by the University. Your personal information is protected in accordance with York University’s [Guidelines on Access of Information and Protection of Privacy](#) and the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#). Access to online materials, including recordings or live meetings, is subject to York University’s [Senate Policy on Computing and Information Technology Facilities](#).

The University will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of the recorded information, but cannot provide a guarantee of such due to factors beyond the University’s control, such as recordings being forwarded, copied, intercepted, circulated, disclosed, or stored without the University’s knowledge or permission, or the introduction of malware into computer system which could potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings. The University is not responsible for connectivity/technical difficulties or loss of data associated with your hardware, software, or Internet connection.

By engaging in course activities that involve recording, you are consenting to the use of your appearance, image, text/chat messaging, and voice and/or likeness in the manner and under the conditions specified herein. In the case of a live stream recording, if you choose not to have your

image or audio recorded, you may disable the audio and video functionality. If you choose to participate using a pseudonym instead of your real name, you must disclose the pseudonym to your instructor in advance to facilitate class participation.

You are not permitted to disclose the link to/URL of an event or an event session recording or copies of recording to anyone, for any reason. Recordings are available only to authorized individuals who have been directly provided the above instructions/link for their use. Recordings for personal use, required to facilitate your learning and preparation of personal course/lecture notes, may not be shared with others without the permission of the instructor or event coordinator, and may not be published, posted, linked to, or otherwise made available online, including on social media feeds, even if those feeds are private.

9. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a fundamental and important value of York University. To maintain a fair and honest learning environment, you are responsible for understanding and upholding academic integrity in all courses and academic activities. You are encouraged to connect with reliable on-campus resources that support your coursework and academic honesty. To better understand the serious consequences of breaching academic honesty policies, familiarize yourself with the Senate Policy on Academic Conduct. You can learn more about upholding academic integrity in your courses by exploring [Guiding Principles for LA&PS](#) and [Academic Integrity for Students](#).

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created (in whole or part) through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#). Using AI apps such as ChatGPT, GPT-3, DALL-E, translation software among others to complete academic work without your instructor's knowledge or permission, is considered to be a breach of academic honesty. For more information, please [review AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

If you're not sure whether using an AI app for your academic work is acceptable, it is recommended that you:

- Carefully review the guidelines for your assessments
- Check for any messages from your instructor on eClass
- Ask your instructor or TA if they are permitting the use of these tools

Turnitin

To promote academic integrity in this course, students will normally be required to submit their written assignments to Turnitin (via the course's eClass site) for a review of textual similarities and the detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin

service are described on the Turnitin.com website. York students may opt out of using Turnitin. If you wish to opt out, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible.

10. Accessibility

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to achieve excellence, the University recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform at their best. The University encourages students with disabilities to register with [Student Accessibility Services](#) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors through their Letter of Accommodation (LOA).

Please let your instructor know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. Sufficient notice is needed so that reasonable steps for accommodation can be discussed. Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of special significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course examinations, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor within the first three (3) weeks of class. If the date falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation for Examination Form](#) at least three (3) weeks before the start of the exam period.

11. Required Readings

Textbook (available for purchase from the York University Bookstore)

- **John Fairlie, “Introduction to Law in Canada, Third Edition” (2021) Emond Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-77462-338-1**
 - **COST:**
 - **Hard copy [through publisher](#): \$98 (non-returnable) or \$109 (returnable)**
 - **Digital copy [through publisher](#): \$88 (lifetime access) or \$74 (one-year rental)**
 - **Hard copy available online (e.g., [Amazon.ca](#)): \$119**
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In addition to the Fairlie text, I may make other materials available through the internet free of charge. In such case, I will either provide a link on eClass or upload a file for you to access.

12. Weekly Topics and Readings

| Date & Subjects | Readings / Preparation |
|---|--|
| <p><u>WEEK 1</u></p> <p>January 7: Introduction to The Law in Canada</p> | <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course syllabus • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 1, “What is Law?” |
| <p><u>WEEK 2</u></p> <p>January 14:</p> <p>Introduction to Different Legal Systems</p> | <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 2, “Common Law, Civil Law, and Other Legal Systems” |
| <p><u>WEEK 3</u></p> <p>January 21:</p> <p>The Three Branches of Government</p> | <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 5, “The Legislature: The First Branch of Government” • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 6, “The Executive: The Second Branch of Government” • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 7, “The Judiciary: Third Branch of Government” |
| <p><u>WEEK 4</u></p> <p>January 28:</p> <p>Thinking about Communities & Intersectionality (e.g. Race, Class, Ethnicity, Sexual Identity and Disability)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about what it means to you to be a member of a community. What communities are you part of? How do those different communities intersect with one another to help form and inform your identity? <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kimberlee Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics”, for download: https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=uclf • Other videos & readings about intersectionality, gender identity, disability will be posted on eClass |
| <p><u>WEEK 5</u></p> <p>February 4:</p> <p>The Charter of Rights and</p> | <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 8, “Civil Liberties” • Other readings will be posted on eClass |

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| <p>Freedoms and Human Rights Laws</p> | |
| <p><u>WEEK 6</u></p> <p>February 11: The Law & Social Movements: Equality, Discrimination & LGBTQ+ Rights</p> | <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings will be posted on eClass. |
| <p><u>WEEK 7</u></p> <p>February 18: Winter Reading Week</p> | <p>Winter reading week is February 15-21</p> |
| <p><u>WEEK 8</u></p> <p>February 25</p> | <p>In-Class Midterm</p> |
| <p><u>WEEK 9</u></p> <p>March 4: Indigenous Peoples and Canadian Public Law</p> | <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 3, “Indigenous Peoples and the Law” • Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: LINK (read at least pages 37-44) • Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Calls to Action: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf • National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, "Executive Summary of the Final Report", online: https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Executive_Summary.pdf • Other materials will be posted on eClass |
| <p><u>WEEK 10</u></p> <p>March 11:</p> | <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 12, “Administrative Law” |

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| Administrative Law | |
| <p><u>WEEK 11</u></p> <p>March 18:</p> <p>Policing, Criminal Law & the Charter</p> | <p>*Critical Reflection due before class.*</p> <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 13, “Criminal Law”. • Kathryn M. Campbell and Stephanie Wellman, “Addressing the Overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian Criminal Justice System: Is Reconciliation a Way Forward?” (Click here and download the "PDF ebook") • Other materials will be posted on eClass |
| <p><u>WEEK 12</u></p> <p>March 25:</p> <p>The Legal Profession and Access to Justice</p> | <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 16, “The Legal Profession” • <i>Fairlie</i>, Chapter 18, “Access to Justice and Law Reform” |
| <p><u>WEEK 13</u></p> <p>April 1:</p> <p>Technology, Automation & Bias (+ Exam Review)</p> | <p>*Letter to the Editor due before class*</p> <p><i>Required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoshana Zuboff, "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power", Introduction (only pages 3-17) (uploaded to eClass). • Deborah Raji, "How our Data Encodes Systemic Racism" in MIT Technology Review: https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/12/10/1013617/racism-data-science-artificial-intelligence-ai-opinion/ • Ruha Benjamin, "Race after Technology", Introduction (uploaded to eClass). |
| <p>April 8-25</p> <p>Final Exam Week</p> | <p>Information about the final exam will be provided when it is available.</p> |

13. Details of Evaluation

Midterm Exam: The midterm will take place during class hours and will evaluate your knowledge of the first part of the course, including concepts, readings and class discussions. The test will include short and long answer questions about key terms and ideas. It is a tough test and you will need to know your stuff in order to do well. It will be in person, on paper (not on your computer) and you will be permitted a single page, double-sided “cheat sheet”. We will discuss this in class.

Critical Reflection: You will be expected to submit a critical reflection before class starts on March 18. Your critical reflection can be written (in which case it must be between 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12-pt font, WORD format) or it can be submitted using another medium (video diary, podcast, etc). I will post the assignment criteria on eClass and we will discuss what a “traditional” critical reflection is in class and anyone wishing to do something different/creative should contact me to discuss their idea(s) so we can establish parameters.

Letter to the Editor of a National Newspaper

You must describe a current social issue(s) (whether in Canada or with an international focus) and provide a link or direct reference to information about that issue. Explain to the editor why you think Canada can do better than we are doing with respect to the issue OR issues of the nature you have described. Your letter must therefore include a description of the issue in Canada, specific reference to laws and policies that can be used to tackle that issue, and a proposal for a way forward here in Canada. Make sure you draw from course concepts because the purpose of an assessment is for me to assess your understanding of what you have been learning!

Your letter should be no longer than two pages single-spaced and no shorter than 1.5 pages, single-spaced; 12-pt, in a WORD document. I will post the assignment criteria on eClass and we can discuss in class.

Final Exam (during exam period: April 8-25): The final exam will consist of short answer and essay questions. The exam will test your foundational knowledge and understanding of the impact of the laws, policies and theories you have been learning about throughout the full course. You will be asked to think critically and you will be

Participation (including on eClass): We will use eClass for some of the participation components. That being said, attendance in class is expected and some group work will take place. Students should come prepared to make *serious contributions to in-class discussions* during the course. A serious contribution is one that advances the discussion on a given point/thread, regardless of length. Only those of you who stand out because you are prepared and eagerly engaging will earn the highest marks for participation.

14. Student Support and Resources

To help you succeed academically, York University offers a wide range of resources and services. Everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance

is available to fulfill our LA&PS students' needs. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) provides student study sessions for students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in certain courses.
- [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) supports students in courses involving math, stats, and Excel.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- [Learning Commons](#) provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.
- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident support.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).