

Politics, Policy and Law of Minority Rights

AP/PPAS 3000 3.0
Winter 2026

Course Information

Course Instructor: Asare Kester-Akrofi

E-mail: asar3@yorku.ca

Office Hours & Location: By
Appointment

Course Time & Days: Thursdays:
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Location: DB 1016

Course eClass site:
<https://eclass.yorku.ca/>

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.

Course Overview

Course Description

Provides students with an overview of the legal and political issues and public policy concerns pertaining to minority rights. Legal Definitions of "a minority" and "discrimination", as well as how claims are made to counter discrimination in different policy areas, will be critically examined. The minority rights jurisprudence to be covered in this course is comprehensive and policy relevant.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand why minority rights are important to a strong democracy.

- Explore contemporary examples of how systemic “isms” shape modern-day laws and policies.
- Be provided with an overview of anti-discrimination legislation works, or doesn’t work, to protect equity-deserving groups.
- Explore the political power of protest as it relates to minority activism and shifts in public policy.
- Understand theoretical frameworks in the philosophical and legal studies of rights.
- Learn about the role of bureaucracy and government institutions in protecting and promoting individual rights, as applied to members of racial, ethnic, class, religious, linguistic, or gender and sexual minorities; as well as the collective rights accorded to minority groups.
- Conduct policy analysis of Canadian public-sector anti-discriminatory legislation at the national, provincial and local government level (including policing) in Canada.

Course Evaluation

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %
Book Review Choose one of the four approved books.	February 12	20%
Mid-term Exam In-class	February 26	25%
Final Exam In-class	April 2	20%
Final Project Choice of essay or podcast	April 13	20%
Attendance & Active Participation You must regularly attend in-person classes and meaningfully participate in class discussions and activities.	Throughout term	15%
		100%

Assessment Descriptions

Book Review 20% (February 12): The purpose of the book review is to take one of the books provided - summarize the main points of the text and to provide an analysis of the work, considering the role politics and policy play in context of the work and. The goal is for students to consider real life events and provide an analysis of how politics and policy played a role in the event or could have resulted in a different outcome. Additional instructions will be posted to eClass. The book review should be 10-12 pages.

Mid-term Exam 25% (February 26): The in-class concepts test will evaluate your knowledge of the introduction chapter of the course text, plus chapters 1, 2, 3 & 7 and the lectures. The test will consist of multiple-choice questions based on the key terms and concepts addressed in the readings and in-class.

Final Exam 20% (April 2): You will have 3 hours to answer a short series multiple choice questions and 3 essay questions. The questions will be based on the course material from the entire term.

Final Project 20% (April 13): You will be required to either write a position paper of 12-15 pages (topics to be posted to eClass) or you may choose an alternative method of knowledge demonstration, including the production of a podcast or social media series. Should you choose the podcast or social media option, you will be required to submit a short proposal to your Course Director before proceeding. Expectations will be discussed in class and posted to eClass.

Attendance and Participation 15% (Throughout term): Participation is not just about attendance. In order to receive full participation marks, you must meaningfully engage with the course material and demonstrate your understanding of the readings and topics being discussed. Participation may be demonstrated in a number of ways as participation looks different for everyone. Please ensure you are connecting with your Course Director to discuss any participation challenges you might have.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments should be submitted via eClass and will not be accepted via email or in hard copy, unless otherwise specified. Academic performance depends on student quality of work and punctuality. It is the expectation at this level of study that students can manage their time appropriately. Any concerns about the research process or assignments should be addressed with the instructor well in advance of any deadlines.

The York University library system also has a research support service, which is available [here](#). Students requiring support writing assignments are encouraged to

consult with [York's Writing Centre](#). Citations for all assignments should conform to APA format. The York library has a guide available for students [here](#).

All accommodations, as directed by the Accessibility Office, will be met.

Late Work Policy

Students are encouraged to proactively speak to the Professor early in the term about how to meet assignment deadlines. The lateness penalty is **10%** per calendar day, including weekends.

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	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	0	(below 50%)	Failing

How to Use Citations

Students are expected to use APA 7th Edition to cite and reference all work. Citing and referencing is critical to avoiding academic integrity violations and is good practice as it is required in most policy work environments. Failing to properly cite and reference may result in an academic integrity violation. Please be aware that academic integrity

violations, while they may not appear on transcripts, will be made available as part of your academic record in the event an employer or other agency runs a background check on you. Please find below a list of available resources to support research and citation:

- [SPARK Student Papers & Academic Research Kit](#)
- [Drop-in Research Support](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)
- [ESL Open Learning Centre](#)

Course Schedule: Weekly Readings and Activities

Required Course Materials

Textbook: Evelyn Kallen, *Ethnicity and Human Rights in Canada*. Third Edition. Oxford University Press, 2010.

- A hard copy and eBook version of the text are available through the York University bookstore.
- The textbook is older and some of the terms contained within it are outdated. We will discuss this in class as part of conversations on education and awareness.

Course Learning Materials	Cost	Availability
Required readings: Evelyn Kallen, <i>Ethnicity and Human Rights in Canada</i> . Third Edition. Oxford University Press, 2010.	\$34.99	YorkU Library and Bookstore
	Total \$34.99	

Optional Materials

Any additional readings will be posted on eClass.

Course Learning Materials	Cost	Availability
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Required readings: Evelyn Kallen, <i>Ethnicity and Human Rights in Canada</i>. Third Edition. Oxford University Press, 2010.	N/A	YorkU Library and Bookstore
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Course Schedule

Week/Dates	Readings and Activities	Module/Unit Learning Outcomes
Week 1 January 8	• Course Introduction • Book Review discussion • Understanding Human Rights	• Course syllabus • Textbook: Introduction
Week 2 January 15	• Culture, Identity, & Politics	• Chapter 1
Week 3 January 22	• Uncovering Stereotypes & Discrimination	• Chapter 2

Week 4 January 29	• “Power”-isms & Intersectionality	• Chapter 3
Week 5 February 5	• Protest, Policy, and Minority Rights	• Chapter 7
Week 6 February 12	• Policing and Minority Rights in Canada	BOOK REVIEW DUE • Azmi, S., Foster, L., Jacobs, L. A., Siu, B., & Vlex. (2018). Racial profiling and human rights in Canada: The new legal landscape. Irwin Law. (pgs. 13-57) Available online from the York University library. • Leila Gaiand. (2020). A Rose by Any Other Name: Well-

		Being Checks, a New Manifestation of Discriminatory Policing? Appeal, Review of Current Law and Law Reform, 25, • 3-. Available online from the York University Library
February 16-20	READING WEEK	
Week 7 February 26	MID-TERM EXAM	7:00pm – 9:00pm 25% of Final Grade
Week 8 March 5	• Collective Rights and Multiculturalism Policy in Canada	• Chapters 5 & 6
Week 9 March 12	• Canada's Settler Colonialism	• Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (pgs. 37-44) https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf • Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Calls to Action https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf • National Inquiry Into • Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), Executive Summary of the Final Report:

		https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Executive_Summary.pdf
Week10 March 19	• Legal Frameworks for the Protection on Minority Rights cont'd	• Chapters 8 & 9
Week 11 March 26	• Final Exam Preparation - No Class	
Week 12 April 2	FINAL EXAM	7:00pm – 9:00pm 20% of Final Grade
April 13	FINAL PROJECT DUE	Last day for final submission 20% of Final Grade

Course Policies

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Please also review the following course policies:

Academic Integrity

As a student at York University, you have a responsibility to both understand and uphold the integrity of the academic experience. The Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies supports the International Center for Academic

Integrity's [definition of academic integrity](#). That is, you will be committed to acting in all academic matters, even in the face of adversity, with honesty, trust, fairness, courage, respect and responsibility. Here is how you can demonstrate academic integrity in the completion of this course:

- **Respect the ideas of others:** Your course work should represent your own knowledge and ideas. [You should not falsely claim credit for ideas that are not your own, by presenting another's work as yours](#). If you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing another person's work in order to support your own ideas, identify the work and the author through proper citation practices. For more information about how to cite properly, use the [Student Papers and Academic Research Kit](#) (SPARK). You can improve your writing, research, and personal learning abilities through the [Learning Commons](#), or by visiting the [Writing Centre](#) or [ESL Open Learning Centre](#).
- **Respect your peers:** [Know when you are allowed to collaborate](#). Ask your instructor about what group work entails when it comes to the [sharing of work](#). In test situations and assignments, don't steal or give answers to your peers, whether in-person or online (e.g., in group chats and/or on [third-party content-sharing websites](#), such as Chegg, Course Hero, etc.). Both cheating and aiding in a breach of academic honesty are violations of York University's academic honesty policy.
- **Respect your course instructor(s):** Understand what your instructors are asking of you in class, as well as on assignments, tests and/or exams. If you are unsure, ask your professor or teaching assistant. They are committed to making you feel supported and want to assess you fairly and with integrity. Please do not submit the same piece of work for more than one course without your instructor's permission. That can be considered an act of cheating.
- **Respect yourself:** When you act with integrity, you know that your work is yours and yours alone. You do not allow others to take tests for you. [You do not buy or otherwise obtain term papers or assignments](#). You do the work. As a result, you know that you *earned* the grades that you receive, so you can be proud of your York degree. By acting with integrity in your course work, you are also practicing a valuable professional skill that is important in all workplaces.
- **Take responsibility:** If you have acted in an academically dishonest way, you can demonstrate courage and take responsibility for your mistake. You can admit your mistake to your course instructor as soon as possible.

Students who engage in academic dishonesty can be subject to disciplinary action under the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). Your lack of familiarity with the Senate Policy does not constitute a defense against its application. Some academic offences can also constitute offences under the [Criminal Code of Canada](#), which means that you may also be subject to criminal charges.

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.

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.

Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music,

videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

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](#) and [Student Conduct and Responsibilities](#), as well as 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](#). Please review and familiarize yourself with behaviours that support "netiquette" in virtual classrooms by consulting the [Student Guide to eLearning](#).

Student Notice of Recording for Online Teaching and Learning

Activities for this course 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 to Student Records 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.

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](#).