



FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

AP/HRM3420

EMPLOYMENT LAW

Fall 2026

COURSE OUTLINE

SECTION INFORMATION

Course Director:	Indira Somwaru
Email:	isomwaru@schulich.yorku.ca
Course Meeting:	Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Room:	Available on your student course timetable
Office / Virtual Office Hours:	By appointment (email professor)
Course Website:	eclass.yorku.ca (Moodle)

This section of the course is offered in an **on-campus, in-class format**. Live lectures, case discussions, and applied exercises will be delivered weekly as listed in the course schedule. Students are expected to progress through the course materials weekly and attend all scheduled sessions.

Internet access is required to use eClass and submit coursework. Some submissions will be made through eClass and Turnitin. **All examinations will be on campus** unless York University formally directs otherwise. Students must be available to write assessments as scheduled. **Have a great term!**

IMPORTANT NOTES

- ▶ **Take care of yourself:** Student Counselling, Health & Well-being resources are available through York University. <https://students.yorku.ca/counselling>
- ▶ **Communication with the Course Director:** Include your full name, student number, and course/section in every email. Professional and respectful communication is expected.
- ▶ **Course registration:** Direct registration and enrolment questions to the School of Human Resource Management (Atkinson 150; lapsshrm@yorku.ca). Course Directors cannot enrol students or approve enrolment in a full section.
- ▶ **Course updates:** Check eClass and your York email regularly. Announcements posted on eClass form part of the course communications.

1 This outline is subject to change as deemed necessary by the Course Director. Any changes will be communicated through eClass and York email.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE RESOURCES

Several digital platforms may be used in this course, including eClass (Moodle), Turnitin, York email, and links to online legal materials. These platforms allow students to access course materials, announcements, assessment instructions, and feedback.

Although lectures are held in person, slides, cases, supplementary readings, and course announcements will be posted on eClass. Students are responsible for checking eClass regularly and ensuring that online submissions are completed successfully before the deadline.

Students must have access to a reliable internet connection and a computer capable of opening Word and PDF files, accessing eClass, and completing online submissions. Technology difficulties should be reported promptly; they do not automatically extend a deadline.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & SUPPORT

It is the student's responsibility to maintain access to a stable internet connection and an appropriate computer or device. Smartphone and tablet applications may have reduced functionality compared with a laptop or desktop computer. A webcam and microphone may be needed for scheduled virtual office hours or accommodation-related meetings.

Useful York resources:

- **LA&PS Student Resources:** <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/student-resources/>
- **Student Guide to eClass:** <https://lthelp.yorku.ca/student-guide-to-eclass>
- **Computing for Students:** <https://student.computing.yorku.ca/>
- **York University Libraries:** <https://www.library.yorku.ca/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION & PREREQUISITES

The course explores how law governs the employment relationship. It focuses on two of work law's three regimes: (1) the common law of employment and (2) regulatory standards law. The third regime, collective bargaining law, is examined in AP/HRM 3422 Industrial Relations.

The course begins with the common law model of the employment contract and the judge-made rules that govern recruitment, contract formation, contract terms, and termination. The second half considers how governments intervene in the employment relationship through employment standards and human rights legislation. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on the relationship between law, public policy, workplace power, and sound human resource management.

Prerequisite: AP/HRM 2600 3.00 (hard prerequisite). Students are responsible for ensuring that they meet the prerequisite. A student who does not meet the prerequisite may be de-enrolled from the course in accordance with School and Faculty procedures.

This course provides general academic instruction about employment law and is not legal advice. Legal rules can change through legislation and court decisions; students must use the current materials provided in class and on eClass.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the fundamental concepts that guide the law of work and to develop the ability to identify, explain, and analyze common employment-law issues faced by human resource professionals. A central theme is that employment law evolves in response to social, economic, and political forces and to the imbalance of power that often characterizes the employment relationship.

Lectures, assigned cases, applied problems, and class discussion are designed to help students connect legal doctrine to workplace decision-making. Students will practise organizing legal issues, applying legal rules to facts, and communicating a clear, reasoned conclusion.

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the three regimes of Canadian work law and distinguish the common law and regulatory regimes examined in this course.
- Assess whether a worker is likely to be classified as an employee or an independent contractor and explain the legal significance of that classification.
- Analyze legal issues arising during recruitment, hiring, creation and modification of employment contracts, and interpretation of express, ancillary, and implied terms.
- Apply common law principles governing reasonable notice, summary dismissal, wrongful dismissal damages, resignation, and constructive dismissal.
- Explain the purpose and operation of employment standards legislation, including wage regulation, hours of work, overtime, time off, and termination standards.
- Apply the two-step human rights model to workplace discrimination issues, including prohibited grounds, bona fide occupational requirements, and the duty to accommodate.
- Read and summarize cases and tribunal decisions, identify the governing rule, and apply legal reasoning to new workplace facts.

- Communicate legal analysis clearly and professionally in written and examination formats while observing academic integrity requirements.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT

David J. Doorey, *The Law of Work*, 3rd ed. (Emond, 2024).

ISBN: 978-1-77462-517-0. The text may be available in print or digital format through the publisher, the York University Bookstore, or other authorized sellers. The exact chapter and page assignments for the third edition will be identified on eClass and in the weekly schedule.

Supplementary cases, legislation, government guidance, blog posts, podcasts, and news items may be posted on eClass. Students are responsible for all assigned materials, including materials added to clarify a legal development or replace an outdated link.

COURSE PREPARATION & PARTICIPATION

Students are responsible for all assigned readings and all material discussed in class. Employment law requires close reading of cases, statutes, and factual scenarios. Students should complete the assigned reading before class and come prepared to discuss the legal issues and apply the rules to practical HR problems.

Students are strongly encouraged to maintain a case summary log. For each assigned decision, record the material facts, legal issue, rule or test, outcome, and practical significance. This log will be useful when studying for the midterm and final examinations.

Lecture slides are an aid to learning and are not a substitute for attending class or completing the readings. The Course Director may use examples, questions, and case discussions that do not appear on the slides.

COURSE EVALUATION

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings, participate actively in class discussions and case exercises, and submit all assessments by the stated deadlines. The evaluation components and their contribution to the final course grade are listed below.

Written Employment Law Assignment	25%	Due Tuesday, November 24, 2026, by 11:59 p.m.	Submit through eClass / Turnitin
Midterm Examination	35%	Tuesday, November 3, 2026, during class (2 hours)	Timed, on-campus, in-class exam
Final Examination	40%	Scheduled by the Registrar during the Fall examination period: December 10-23, 2026	Timed, on-campus exam; date/time TBA
TOTAL	100%		

Written Employment Law Assignment (25% of the course grade)

Purpose: The individual written assignment requires students to apply course concepts to a workplace fact scenario or legal problem. The assignment is designed to assess issue identification, use of legal rules, application of law to facts, organization, and professional written communication.

Format: Students will prepare an individual legal analysis or HR advisory memorandum. Detailed instructions, the fact scenario, length requirements, permitted sources, and the grading rubric will be posted on eClass. Unless the instructions state otherwise, the work must be completed independently and submitted as a Word or PDF file through eClass and Turnitin.

Due date: Tuesday, November 24, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. Students are responsible for verifying that the correct and complete file has been uploaded. A submission is not complete until eClass shows a successful submission receipt.

Late submissions: Unless an approved accommodation or academic consideration applies, late work may be subject to a deduction of 5% of the assignment grade per calendar day, including weekends, to a maximum of seven calendar days. Work more than seven days late may receive a grade of zero. The Course Director may specify a different late policy in the assignment instructions if required by the nature of the assessment.

Midterm Examination (35% of the course grade)

Date: Tuesday, November 3, 2026, during the scheduled class. Duration: 2 hours. Location: On campus in the assigned classroom or another room announced on eClass.

Coverage and format: The midterm will assess material from the beginning of the course through the October 27 class, including lectures, assigned readings, cases, and class discussions. It is expected to contain applied fact scenarios and short-answer questions. The examination is closed book and no aids are permitted unless the Course Director announces otherwise in writing.

Feedback: The Course Director will aim to release grades and general feedback by November 10, 2026, so that students receive meaningful graded feedback by the Fall drop deadline.

MISSED MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Students are expected to write the midterm examination at the scheduled date and time. Known conflicts, including approved religious observances, varsity sport commitments, or a conflict with another York examination, must be reported to the Course Director as early as possible and normally no later than 14 days before the examination. The request must include sufficient details and supporting information.

The School of Human Resource Management does not normally provide a routine make-up midterm. A student who misses the midterm for an approved and documented reason may have the midterm weight transferred to the final examination or may receive another accommodation determined by the Course Director and the School. If the weight is transferred, the final examination will be more comprehensive for that student.

Requests relating to illness or another unexpected circumstance must be submitted promptly, normally within seven calendar days of the missed examination, and must follow York University and School procedures. An unsupported, late, or unapproved request may result in a grade of zero. Submitting a request does not guarantee approval.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE MIDTERM

Students registered with Student Accessibility Services who require alternate examination accommodation, including extra time or a separate room, should inform the Course Director as soon as possible and follow the Alternate Exams Office deadlines. Students should provide their Letter of Accommodation and submit the required request through the appropriate York system.

Alternate Exams Office: <https://altexams.students.yorku.ca/>

FINAL EXAMINATION (40% OF THE COURSE GRADE)

Date: To be scheduled by the Registrar during the Fall 2026 examination period, December 10-23, 2026. Students must remain available for the entire examination period and should not make travel or work commitments that conflict with a possible examination date.

Duration and location: Expected duration is 2 hours. The examination will be held on campus. The official date, time, and room will appear in the Registrar's examination schedule and may also be posted on eClass.

Coverage and format: The final examination will assess material from the full course, with particular emphasis on the regulatory and human rights topics covered after the midterm. It is expected to include applied legal scenarios and short-answer questions. The examination is closed book and no aids are permitted unless the Course Director announces otherwise in writing.

A student who does not write the final examination will receive a grade of zero unless deferred standing or another formal accommodation is approved.

Deferred Final Examinations

Students who are unable to write the final examination at the scheduled time must follow the School of Human Resource Management and York University deferred-standing procedures. Requests must be made within the applicable deadline and must include all required forms and supporting documentation. Questions should be directed to the School of Human Resource Management at lapsshrm@yorku.ca.

Approval of deferred standing is not automatic. Students are responsible for monitoring their York email and following all

instructions concerning the date and format of a deferred examination.

Final Examination Schedule Conflicts

Students should consult the Registrar's Office examination-conflict information and promptly follow the listed procedures:

<https://registrar.yorku.ca/courses/exams>

IMPORTANT SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES & INFORMATION

Academic Honesty & Integrity

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Common breaches include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, unauthorized collaboration, contract cheating, submitting another person's work, and helping another student engage in a breach. Suspected breaches will be investigated and significant penalties may apply.

Following these practices will help you avoid academic-integrity concerns:

- Begin assessments well in advance of the deadline and keep drafts, notes, and source records.
- Write the submitted work yourself and cite all words, ideas, cases, and sources that are not your own.
- Do not share assessment questions or answers and do not use unauthorized tutoring, editing, or answer services.
- Ask the Course Director before using any tool, source, or form of assistance when the instructions are unclear.

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Unless an assessment instruction expressly permits it, students may not use generative artificial intelligence tools to create, rewrite, summarize, translate, analyze, or answer any part of graded work. This includes tools embedded in search engines, writing software, and study platforms. Permitted uses, if any, will be identified in the assessment instructions and may require disclosure of the tool, prompts, and outputs.

Students remain responsible for the accuracy, originality, confidentiality, and academic integrity of all submitted work. Uploading course materials, cases, assessment questions, or personal information to an external AI service may also breach copyright, privacy, or course rules.

Turnitin

To promote academic integrity, students may be required to submit written work through Turnitin via eClass for textual-similarity review. Submitted material may be included in the Turnitin reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The Course Director will provide instructions for any approved alternative process where required by York policy.

Academic Integrity resources: <https://spark.library.yorku.ca/academic-integrity-what-is-academic-integrity/>

SUPPORT

Getting support when you need it: The following resources provide academic and non-academic assistance.

- **LA&PS Student Resources:** <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/student-resources/>
- **Learning Skills Services:** <https://www.yorku.ca/scld/learning-skills/>
- **Learning Commons:** <https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/learning-commons/>
- **Writing Centre:** <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/writing-centre/>
- **Student Accessibility Services:** <https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>
- **Student Counselling, Health & Well-being:** <https://students.yorku.ca/counselling>
- **Sexual Violence Response & Support:** <https://thecentre.yorku.ca/>
- **Community Safety:** <https://safety.yorku.ca/>
- **York International:** <https://yorkinternational.yorku.ca/>
- **Manage Your Academic Record:** <https://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/>

SESSIONAL DATES AND COURSE ADMINISTRATION

York University's Fall 2026 undergraduate session begins Wednesday, September 9, 2026. Because this course meets on Tuesdays, the first class is Tuesday, September 15, 2026. Fall Reading Week is October 10-16, 2026, so there is no class on Tuesday, October 13. Fall classes end Tuesday, December 8, followed by the December 9 study day and the December 10-23 final examination period.

Official sessional dates: <https://registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/2026-2027/fall-winter>

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodation and support for students with learning, mental-health, physical, sensory, or medical disabilities is arranged through Student Accessibility Services. Registered students receive a Letter of Accommodation describing approved accommodations. Students are responsible for providing the letter and arranging accommodations in advance and in accordance with applicable deadlines.

Accommodations must preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of the course. Students should contact the Course Director promptly when an accommodation affects attendance, participation, an assignment, or an examination.

Religious Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting religious beliefs and practices. Students seeking accommodation for an observance of special significance must make the request in a timely manner and follow York University procedures. Early notice is essential where an observance may conflict with an assessment.

Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work

Requests for academic consideration must comply with York University's Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work policy and any School procedures. Self-reported absence options do not apply to every assessment and generally do not apply to an in-term assessment worth more than 20% or to an examination held during the formal examination period. Students should review the policy and contact the Course Director promptly.

<https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/academic-consideration-for-missed-course-work-policy-on/>

Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy

The grading scheme and assessment weights are announced in this outline. Under normal circumstances, students should receive graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final course grade before the Fall drop deadline. The midterm is scheduled and feedback is planned with this requirement in mind.

Final 14 Calendar Days / 20% Rule

York Senate policy restricts examinations and tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade during the final 14 calendar days of classes, subject to stated exceptions. The course midterm is scheduled outside that period. The written assignment due on the final class date is not an in-class examination or test.

Reappraisals

After final grades are released, a student may request reappraisal of a final course grade when sufficient academic grounds exist. A reappraisal may result in the grade being raised, lowered, or confirmed. Requests must follow the applicable School, Faculty, and Registrar procedures.

Recording and Course Materials

Students may not audio-record, video-record, photograph, distribute, upload, sell, or publicly post lectures, slides, cases, assessment materials, or class discussions without prior written permission and any required consent. Course materials are provided for the personal educational use of enrolled students and may be protected by copyright

COURSE SCHEDULE & DUE DATES

Date	Session / Topic	Readings & Preparation	Assessment / Notes
September 15	Session 1: Introduction to Employment Law and the Meaning of Employment	The three regimes of work law; legal institutions and sources; employee status and why classification matters. Text topics: Canadian Work Law in a Nutshell; What Is Employment?	
September 22	Session 2: Recruitment, Hiring, and Creation of the Employment Contract	Common law rules in recruitment and hiring; representations; offer, acceptance, consideration, and enforceability; modifying contracts. Supplement: Legal Oshidashi, Employment Status, and Gig Work; Hustled podcast excerpt (posted on eClass).	
September 29	Session 3: Express, Ancillary, and Implied Contract Terms	Interpreting employment contracts; ambiguity; restrictive covenants; non-compete restrictions; policies and handbooks; implied duties. Supplement: Ontario guidance on non-compete agreements; How to Amend an Employment Contract Lawfully.	
October 6	Session 4: Termination with Reasonable Notice	Termination by an employer without cause; contractual termination clauses; common law reasonable notice; factors affecting notice; damages overview. Supplement: Instructor-selected current case note on reasonable notice.	Midterm study guidance posted.
October 13	NO CLASS - FALL READING WEEK	York Fall Reading Week: October 10-16. Classes, examinations, and tests are not held.	Continue reading and case-summary log.
October 20	Session 5: Summary Dismissal and Wrongful Dismissal Damages	Termination for cause without notice; proportionality and contextual analysis; after-acquired cause; bad-faith manner of dismissal; damages and mitigation. Supplement: Would Rioting at Canada's Parliament Building Be Grounds for Termination Without Notice?	
October 27	Session 6: Resignation, Constructive Dismissal, and Midterm Review	Employee resignation; notice of resignation; constructive dismissal; unilateral changes; poisoned work environment; common law synthesis and exam preparation.	Midterm review.
November 3	MIDTERM EXAMINATION	Timed, closed-book, on-campus examination covering material through October 27.	35% - 2 hours during class.
November 10	Session 7: Introduction to the Regulatory Regime and Wage Regulation	Why governments regulate employment; minimum standards and enforcement; wages, minimum wage, deductions, equal pay, and overtime pay principles. Supplement: CIBC Liable in Unpaid Overtime Class Action.	
November 17	Session 8: Employment Standards - Working Time and Ending Employment	Hours of work; eating periods; overtime; vacation and public holidays; leaves; temporary layoffs; termination and severance under employment standards legislation.	
November 24	Session 9: Human Rights at Work - Discrimination and Prohibited Grounds	Human rights institutions; the two-step model; adverse treatment and adverse-effect discrimination; prohibited grounds; harassment and reprisal. Supplement: Job Boards Are Rampant with Illegal Ads. Should Anything Be Done About It?	Written assignment due by 11:59 p.m. (25%).

Date	Session / Topic	Readings & Preparation	Assessment / Notes
December 1	Session 10: Employer Defences, BFOR, and the Duty to Accommodate	Bona fide occupational requirements; undue hardship; accommodation process; disability, creed, family status, and other workplace applications; practical HR documentation.	
December 8	Session 11: Course Integration and Final Examination Review	Integrated common law, employment standards, and human rights case analysis; course wrap-up; final examination preparation.	
December 10-23	FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD	Official final examination date, time, and room to be scheduled by the Registrar.	Final exam 40% (expected 2 hours).

Important: The official Registrar examination schedule controls the final exam date and time. Students must remain available throughout December 10-23, 2026.

ASSESSMENT AND READING REMINDERS

- Complete assigned readings before the class for which they are listed and bring the relevant notes or text to class.
- The weekly eClass module is the authoritative source for exact third-edition chapter/page assignments and updated legal materials.
- The midterm covers material through October 27. The final exam covers the full course, with emphasis on post-midterm regulatory and human rights content.

HAVE A GREAT TERM!