

Philosophy of Law

COURSE OUTLINE

Objectives We know what the law is in Canada, but what is “law” in general? What are we hoping for when we give government the power to make laws, and ask the justice system to enforce those laws? To discover what Canada’s laws are, you can look up the federal or provincial statutes. To discover what “law” is, you have to explore the concept through discussion. Do some laws make more sense than others? The principle aim of this course is to explore why there are so many different concepts of “law”, and see how the different concepts shape our expectations, our legal system, and our courts’ decisions. For example, should laws protect our personal freedoms or protect society from our worst impulses, or should it balance both freedom and limits? Should laws apply to everyone in exactly the same way, or just apply “equally fairly” to all, or should they make allowances for individual differences? In this course, you will see why these questions are so important to ask, and why they cannot be answered just by looking at the laws we actually have now.

Text: **Required text:** Susan Dimock, ed. *Classic Readings and Canadian Cases in the Philosophy of Law* (Prentice Hall, Toronto, 2002)
Assigned readings: Additional readings will be provided in class

Assignments: All assignments can be adapted to suit individual needs and goals.

Participation (short activities before or in class)	5%
Take-home quiz, due Wed. February 4	15%
Individual project proposal and research, due Wed. Feb. 25	20%
Short essay, due March 18	20%
Individual project, final version due in exam period	40%

Grading and expectations. A+ 87% and over. A 84-86%. A- 80-83%. B+ 77-79%. B 74-76%. B- 70-73%. C+ 67-69%. C 64-66%. C- 60-64%. P given only in exceptional circumstances.

Expectations: I expect you to be responsible and realistic in balancing your obligations. If you can’t attend class or hand a paper in on time, please contact me promptly - preferably in advance - and find a solution that will work for us both. If you take the responsibility to stay in touch, I will do everything I can to make the course work for you.

Office hours and contact: Office: D3091. Office hours will be announced in class. I am also available by phone and e-mail. Phone numbers and e-mail address will be provided in class.

