



Political Science 2101B (570)
INTRODUCTION TO LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: E. Nicolaidis

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Course Information

Calendar Description:

This course is designed to address a series of overarching questions about law, governance and public policy. Students will learn a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to study law and public policy, with a focus on the application of these debates to contemporary social and political issues.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: POLISCI

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College

POLISCI 2101B: Intro to Law and Public Policy

Winter 2026

Course information:

Course Name, Number, Section: POLISCI 2101B, Number 9120, Section 570

Instructor: Eleni Nicolaidis, Ph.D. (she/her)

Contact Information: enicolai@uwo.ca

Office hours information can be found on OWL Brightspace

Course description:

This course is designed to address a series of overarching questions about law, governance and public policy. Students will learn a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to study law and public policy, with a focus on the application of these debates to contemporary social and political issues.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe different types and areas of law
2. Understand key policies and judicial decisions in different areas of law
3. Critically analyze policies, judicial decisions, and scholarly debates
4. Evaluate the policy impacts of judicial decisions and interpretation of the law
5. Conduct research concerning judicial decisions, legislation, legislative debates, and academic literature

Mode of Instruction:

- 2-hour lectures
- In-person lectures

Course textbooks/materials:

- Required Textbook: Neil Boyd, Helene Love, and Tamara O'Doherty, "Canadian

Law: An Introduction,” 8th edition (Emond Publishing, 2024)

- Bookstore link to Textbook: <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=KC&term=W2025B&courses%5B0%5D=570> KC/POL2101B
- Additional required readings are indicated below (at no additional cost)

Methods of evaluation:

Method	Weight	Due Date
Quizzes	25%	Weekly (see schedule)
Legal Research Assignment	15%	February 2 at 11:59pm
Case Brief	25%	March 2 at 11:59pm
Research Paper	35%	March 30 at 11:59pm

- **Quizzes:** Quizzes are designed to ensure students understand the unit content. The quizzes will run weekly beginning on the week of January 19-23, for a total of 10 quizzes. The quizzes will each consist of approximately 5 questions (true or false, multiple choice, multi-select, or matching) and will be based on the lectures. Each quiz will be open from Monday at 12:30pm (following the delivery of that week's content) until Friday at 11:59pm. Quizzes will be accessed through the Quizzes function on OWL Brightspace. Time limit: 30 minutes per quiz (plus accessibility accommodations in place)
- **Legal Research Assignment:** Students will be expected to demonstrate ability to conduct legal and policy research. In this assignment, students will use QuickLaw to identify cases that cite precedent from a family law case, will research a statute in the labour law context, will navigate the Supreme Court of Canada's website, the Parliament of Canada's LEGISinfo website, and CriminalSource's Sentencing Digest (through WestLaw Canada). Detailed instructions are provided under 'Assignments' on OWL Brightspace. Around 25 questions are asked through the Quizzes function on OWL Brightspace.
- **Case Brief:** Students will be expected to write a brief summarizing key parts of a judicial decision and provide a brief analysis of its significance. Students will have a choice of 1 out of 4 cases (in the areas of family law, torts, administrative law, or criminal law). No sources other than the judicial decision should be used in identifying elements of the case, though students may cite outside sources in the summary/analysis section. All direct quotes and paraphrasing from the case should be properly cited. If outside sources are used in the summary/analysis section, they must be properly cited. The case briefs should be approximately 1,250-1,500 words. For further information about this assignment (including the choice of cases, format, what information to include, and the rubric), see Assignments on OWL Brightspace.
- **Research Paper:** Students will be expected to write a research paper on one unit in the course (constitutional law, family law, torts, labour law, administrative law, or criminal law). Students should use at least 5 academic sources to critically analyze the policies and judicial decisions discussed in the unit. All sources should be properly cited. Papers should be approximately 1,500-2,000 words. For further information about this assignment (including the rubric), please see OWL Brightspace.
- **No student collaboration is allowed on evaluations.**
- **Students will be required to submit written assignments through plagiarism-detection software integrated in OWL Brightspace.**

Academic Considerations:

- The new **Policy on Academic Consideration** may be found here: https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep_24.pdf
- **Submission windows: a 72-hour grace period** is available for all methods of evaluation. **Evaluations will not be accepted beyond the submission window.** There are two exceptions: 1) you have emailed the professor to request an extension prior to the due date (reasonable requests will be granted), or 2) you face extenuating circumstances and have submitted a request for academic consideration through the Student Absence Portal, generally with supporting documentation. Requests, either by email or through the Student Absence Portal, must include a clear proposed date for submission so that the professor may accurately assess the request. Please note that due to the flexibility in assessments, academic consideration requests may still be denied when they lack sufficient justification.

Academic Integrity:

- Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read **Western's Scholastic Discipline Policy**, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf
- **Within this course**, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.
- **All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software** under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Schedule of Classes, Readings, Assessments:

Week	Date	Event
January 5-9	January 5, 2026	Unit 1 Lecture: Introduction to the Course Classes resume
January 12-16	January 12, 2026	Unit 2 Lectures: Introduction to the Law Readings: Textbook, Chapter 1: "The Role of Law" Textbook, Chapter 2: "The Sources of Canadian Law" Textbook, Chapter 3: "How Do Judges Interpret Ambiguous Statutes?" Textbook, Chapter 5: "Canada's Courts"
	January 13, 2026	Last day to add or drop a Winter 12-week course. Courses dropped by this date will not appear on a transcript. Courses dropped after this date will appear on a transcript with a grade of 'WDN' (withdrawn, without academic penalty).
	January 16, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm
January 19-23 and January 26-30	January 19, 2026 and January 26, 2026	Unit 3 Lectures: Constitutional Law Readings: Textbook, Chapter 4: "Canada's Constitution" Ian Binnie, "Interpreting the Constitution: The Living Tree vs. Original Meaning," <i>Policy Options</i> , October 2007, https://policyoptions.irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/assets/po/free-trade-20/binnie.pdf Benjamin Oliphant, "Originalism in Canadian Constitutional Law," <i>Policy Options</i> , June 25, 2015, https://policyoptions.irpp.org/2015/06/originalism-in-canadian-constitutional-law/ Government of Canada, "Examples of Charter-related cases," 2022, https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccd1/cases.html
	January 23, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm
	January 30, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm

Week	Date	Event
February 2-6 and February 9-13	February 2, 2026	Legal Research Assignment due at 11:59pm
	February 2, 2026 and February 9, 2026	Unit 4 Lectures: Family Law Readings: Textbook, Chapter 8, "The Changing Family and Family Law" Grace Shin, "Departing from the 'Natural Parent Presumption' in <i>BJT v JD</i> ," theCourt.ca, January 18, 2022, http://www.thecourt.ca/departing-from-the-natural-parent-presumption-in-bjt-v-jd/ Braelyn Rumble, " <i>Association de médiation familiale du Québec v. Bouvier</i> : SCC Finds the Exception to Settlement Privilege Applies in the Family Mediation Context," theCourt.ca, March 2, 2022, http://www.thecourt.ca/association-de-mediation-familiale-du-quebec-v-bouvier-scc-finds-the-exception-to-settlement-privilege-applies-in-the-family-mediation-context/ Kai Tanveer, " <i>F v N</i> : 'Best Interests of the Child' in Parental Abduction cases," theCourt.ca, February 6, 2023, http://www.thecourt.ca/f-v-n-best-interests-of-the-child-in-parental-abduction-cases/
	February 6, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm
	February 13, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm
February 16-20		Spring Reading Week
February 23-27 and March 2-6	February 23, 2026	Unit 5 Lecture: Torts Readings: Textbook, Chapter 7, "Torts of Intention and Negligence" West Coast LEAF, " <i>Hansman v Neufeld</i> [2022]," June 24, 2022, https://westcoastleaf.org/work/hansman-v-neufeld-2022/
	February 26, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm
	March 2, 2026	Case Brief due at 11:59pm
	March 6, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm

Week	Date	Event
March 9-13	March 9, 2026	Unit 6 Lecture: Labour Law Readings: Mary Thibodeau, "Solidarity Forever! A Right to Strike is Recognized in Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v Saskatchewan," theCourt.ca, February 4, 2015, http://www.thecourt.ca/solidarity-forever-a-right-to-strike-is-recognized-in-saskatchewan-federation-of-labour-v-saskatchewan/ Rhonda B. Levy and Barry Kuretzky, "Ontario, Canada Superior Court Deems Employee's Pregnancy an Important Factor in Assessing Reasonable Notice Period for Dismissal," Littler, March 25, 2021, https://www.littler.com/publication-press/publication/ontario-canada-superior-court-deems-employees-pregnancy-important
	March 13, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm
March 16-20	March 16, 2026	Unit 7 Lecture: Administrative Law Readings: Textbook, Chapter 9, "Administrative Law" Rebecca Rossi, " <i>Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) v Vavilov</i> : The Supreme Court of Canada Gifts Administrative Law a New Standard of Review Analysis," theCourt.ca, December 26, 2019, http://www.thecourt.ca/canada-minister-of-citizenship-and-immigration-v-vavilov-the-supreme-court-of-canada-gifts-administrative-law-a-new-standard-of-review/
	March 20, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm

Week	Date	Event
March 23-27 and March 30-April 3	March 16, 2026 and March 23, 2026	Unit 8 Lectures: Criminal Law Readings: Textbook, Chapter 10, "Criminal Law" Shirin Monga, " <i>R v Hilbach</i> : SCC Holds Mandatory Minimum Sentence for Firearm Offence is Constitutional," theCourt.ca, February 22, 2023, http://www.thecourt.ca/r-v-hilbach-scc-holds-mandatory-minimum-sentence-for-firearm-offence-is-constitutional/ Kai Tanveer, " <i>R v Metzger</i> : The Supreme Court of Canada overrules the Trial Judge on Findings of Fact," theCourt.ca, April 3, 2023, http://www.thecourt.ca/in-r-v-metzger-the-supreme-court-overruled-a-trial-judges-findings-of-fact-and-refused-to-hold-the-accused-s-silence-against-them/ Supreme Court of Canada, "Case in Brief: <i>R. v. Hanan</i> ," May 5, 2023, https://www.scc-csc.ca/case-dossier/cb/2023/40097-eng.pdf
	March 27, 2026	Quiz due at 11:59pm
	March 30, 2026	Research Paper due at 11:59pm Last day to withdraw from a Winter 12-week course resulting in a grade of 'WDN' (withdrawn, without academic penalty). Course withdrawals after this date will appear on a transcript with a grade of 'F.'
	April 3, 2026	Good Friday. Quiz due date moved
April 6-9	April 6, 2026	Overflow class if needed. Last week's Quiz due at 11:59pm

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams and tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under Special Examinations).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University

College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-supportservices/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safecampus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammarchecking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.