

## Course Outline

### Law and the Modern Workplace

#### **Professors:**

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#### **Course Description:**

The face of workplace law today has dramatically changed, as a result of the emergence of human rights, privacy and occupational health laws. These laws have opened the doors to employee claims of addictions and/or mental and physical disabilities; employee complaints regarding harassment, discrimination and bullying; and employee complaints regarding privacy violations and unsafe workplaces. With rising health care costs and other pressures on government and society, employers are increasingly required to focus on their employees' overall wellness. At the same time, technology and social media are blurring the boundaries between work life and private life, with a resulting expectation that the workplace reflect the goals and values of all of its participants.

This course is designed to give students a full appreciation of these various modern day workplace issues; how they arise, their legal and ethical implications for employers and employees, and their broader societal impact.

#### **Format:**

The class will be primarily a discussion format and will include presentations by outside speakers, including legal practitioners with expertise in the given area, representatives from major corporations and a medical expert to discuss medical/legal evidentiary challenges.

#### **Course Requirements:**

Reaction papers:	20% of final grade
Class participation	40% of final grade
Final paper:	40% of final grade

#### **Due Dates:**

Reaction papers:	Day before class by 5:00PM (two per term)
Final paper proposal:	Sixth week of class
Final paper:	End of exam period

**Required Readings:**

Selected readings will be provided in electronic format each week, with an index provided on the first day of class

**Course Topics:**

- Introduction to the Legal Framework in Canada and in BC regarding Human rights, Privacy and Occupational Health
- Sexual and other forms of Harassment and Discrimination claims, including Violence and Bullying
- Accommodation of Mental and Physical Disabilities
- The Use of Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace and Dealing with Addictions
- The Use of and Access to Social Media and other Technologies in the Workplace
- Privacy as a protected right and as a constraint on employer collection of workplace information and evidence
- Diversity: good business practice or legal imperative?
- Balancing competing interests and protections such as religious freedom and sexual orientation
- Workplace wellness: Its Impact within and beyond the Workplace

**Reaction Papers:**

Students will be required to write 2 short reaction papers during the course which will deal with the topic(s) raised for the particular week of class. These papers should be 1-2 pages in length (double-spaced). The papers can be written for any week of the student's choosing, as long as they are emailed to the professors the day before the class meetings. These papers should not be descriptive summaries of the readings, but rather, should offer critical analyses of the topics. The papers are worth 25% of the final grade.

**Discussion Questions:**

Each week, the students will be asked to generate at least two discussion questions based on the readings. The questions will help us to understand common points of interest, and should be probing, analytical, and thought-provoking. These questions should be emailed to the professors the day before class meets. The questions will be factored into the participation grade. Class participation will constitute 10% of the student's final grade.

**Final Paper:**

At the end of the course, each student is required to submit a term paper on a topic relevant to the readings and issues raised in class. The term paper should be 12 pages (double-spaced).

A one-paragraph final paper proposal is due during the sixth (6th) week of class. Once the proposals are submitted, the professors will meet with each student individually to discuss their topic.

