

Course Outline

RSM225H1 L5101

Legal Environment of Business I

Winter 2025

Course Meets: Monday 19:00 — 21:00 / WO

Instructor Details

Name	Email	Phone	Office Hours
Dan Poliwoda	dpoliwoda@mccarthy.ca	647-838-3267	After class or by appointment

Course Description

Introduces students to the Canadian legal system as it relates to business entities. The course focuses on general legal concepts, including sources of law and the court structure; business entity law (including corporate law), commercial law (contract) as well as the law of torts. Not eligible for CR/NCR option. Contact Rotman Commerce for details

The course is designed to provide students with a basic working understanding of various elements of Canadian "business law". The course will commence with an overview of the structure of the Canadian legal system, the nature of business entities and then will focus on the law of torts and the law of contract.

The course is designed to be "general" in nature and is intended to provide a relevant legal background that will enable students to function in a commercial environment (e.g. accounting, banking, marketing, not-for-profit etc.).

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes include the ability to 1) identify relevant legal issues; 2) cite current and relevant legal principles and precedents that related to the legal issues; 3) discuss/analyze the legal issue from various perspectives, including identifying additional relevant information that may need to be obtained; 4) provide a preliminary conclusion regarding the issue and relevant practical advice on how to proceed.

Course Prerequisites

Completion of the Rotman Commerce Guaranteed Admission requirements.

Course Materials

Required Readings

- Smyth, Soberman Easson & McGill, **The Law and Business Administration in Canada**, 15th. Edition (©2020) – Pearson Education. [SSEM]
- Students should also refer to relevant statutory references available on the Internet. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws#tabcontent2>

Electronic Course Materials

This course will be using the following electronic course materials:

None

Evaluation and Grades

Grades are a measure of the knowledge and skills developed by a student within individual courses. Each student will receive a grade on the basis of how well they have command of the course materials, skills and learning objectives of the course.

Work	Percentage of grade	Due Date
Mid-Term Test	35%	Feb 12, 2025 ----- 7 to 8:30 pm – COMMON TIME FOR ALL SECTIONS (please note)
Assignment	15%	Class Eleven (subject to change)
Final Term Examination	50%	TBA – 2 hours

*** The midterm test will be “closed book” and be written in the traditional paper and pen format. Further details will be provided in class. The final term examination will be “closed book” and will be conducted under the supervision and in accordance with the requirements of Rotman Commerce and the Faculty of Arts & Science.**

Course Format and Expectations

The course is taught primarily through lectures of core and fundamental legal topics. Stories, examples and questions are integrated within the class to help improve the understanding of the law and its application. The midterm, assignment and examination are all case fact simulations which provide the opportunity to identify and integrate course materials into real life situations.

Students are expected to prepare thoroughly and make every effort to attend every class. Although there is no formal participation grade, students are encouraged to be engaged and to demonstrate the following:

- Thoughtful responses
- Understanding and analysis of topic

- Idea generation
- Promoting further discussion

Writing Assignments or Presentations

The term assignment is intended to help you develop your communication skills. How well you communicate your ideas in writing will be considered in the evaluation of the assignment. In your written assignment, you should aim for clarity, strong organization, concision, professionalism, and correct grammar. Sources should always be correctly attributed.

Support is available through the RC Centre for Professional Skills (CPS) for students who would like help or feedback on their writing. CPS offers both individual and group appointments with trained writing instructors and presentation coaches who are familiar with the RC program and common types of business assignments. You can also access your college Writing Centres for help with written assignments.

You can book an appointment with a writing or presentation coach through the RC Centre for Professional Skills Writing Centre. For more information about writing centres, student supports, and study resources, see the [Writing and Presentation Coaching academic support page](#).

Team or Group Assignments

The term assignment requires students to work in teams of two (2). Learning to work together in teams is a crucial transferrable skill you will use not only in your coursework, but also in your future careers. Support is available if you encounter common teamwork challenges such as:

- Team members feeling left out of the team.
- Team members not responding in a timely manner to communication.
- Division or quality of work among team members being unequal or unfair.

Consult the [Centre for Professional Skills Teamwork Resources page](#) for tips, strategies, and best practices. You can also [book an appointment with a teamwork mentor](#) through the RC Centre for Professional Skills Writing Centre. Teamwork mentors can help you resolve or mitigate conflict, strategize on planning, or improve team communication.

If you are a student registered with Accessibility Services, and extensions are one of your academic accommodations, consult with your Accessibility Advisor about the teamwork in this course.

Missed Tests and Assignments and Final Term Examination

Students who miss a term test or assignment for reasons entirely beyond their control (e.g. illness) may request special consideration **within 2 business days** of the missed midterm/test/assignment due date.

In such cases, students must:

1. Complete the Request for Special Consideration form: <https://uoft.me/RSMConsideration>
2. Provide documentation to support the request, e.g. Absence Declaration from [ACORN](#), medical note etc.

Please note: As of September 2023, students may use the Absence Declaration on ACORN ***one time per term*** to report an absence and request consideration. **Any subsequent absence will require a [Verification of Illness form](#) or other similar relevant documentation.**

Students who do not provide appropriate or sufficient supporting documentation will be given a grade of 0 (zero) in the case of a missed test and will be penalized a deduction of 25% for each day the assignment is late (including the day required for submission).

Important specific criteria for this course are:

1. Midterms Test:

- A missed mid term test must be made up by writing the mid term test **and** submitting same as an assignment (**10% of the course grade**) and writing a minimum 2000-word paper (essay) on a legal topic agreeable with the instructor (**10% of the course grade**). The essay must be submitted by the date specified by the instructor, unless some alternative timing is agreed to with the instructor before that date. If this timing requirement is not met, a grade of 0% will be given for this essay.
- The value of the final term test will also be increased by **15%**.
- The mid term test assignment must be submitted to the instructor within five (5) days of the mid term test date unless some alternative timing is agreed to with the instructor before the end of the five (5) days. If this timing requirement is not met, a grade of 0% will be given for this mid term test assignment.
- **Students are responsible** to contact the instructor on the day following the mid term test date in order to review logistics and to obtain a copy of the mid term test that will need to be submitted as an assignment.

2. Assignment:

- Assignments must be submitted via Quercus prior to the due date and time (EST) provided by the instructor. **Late submissions will be penalized a deduction of 25% for each day the assignment is late, including the day required for submission.**
- The assignments will be posted on the section's Quercus Learning Portal. Assignments must be completed in groups of two from their registered section only.
- Students who, for reasons beyond their control, are unable to submit an assignment by its due date must obtain approval from the instructor for an extension. The request for an extension must be made before the end of the due date (EST). Supporting documentation will be required as per the policy on missed tests and assignments (see above).

Final Exams: If you miss the final exam in this course for a legitimate reason (illness, etc.) you will need to contact your College Registrar to file a petition for a deferred exam. This deferred exam will be written at a later date as established by the Faculty of Arts & Science. Instructions can be found here: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/faculty-registrar/petitions-appeals/preparing-petition>

Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Commitment to Accessibility

The University is committed to inclusivity and accessibility, and strives to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of, individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities and activities offered at the University.

If you require accommodations for a temporary or ongoing disability or health concern, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please [email Accessibility Services](#) or visit the [Accessibility Services website](#) for more information as soon as possible. Obtaining your accommodation letter may take up to several weeks, so get in touch with them as soon as possible. If you have general questions or concerns about the accessibility of this course, you are encouraged to reach out to your instructor, course coordinator, or Accessibility Services.

Plagiarism Detection

Normally, students will be required to submit their course assignments to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their assignments (and make up essays) to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the [University's Plagiarism Detection Tool FAQ](#) page from Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation.

Generative AI / ChatGPT

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for assignments (or any course deliverable) in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and other AI writing or coding assistants, is prohibited. The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, may be considered an academic offense in this course.

For greater certainty, representing as one's own an idea, or expression of an idea, that was AI-generated may be considered an academic offense in this course. Students may not copy or paraphrase from any generative artificial intelligence applications, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the purpose of completing assignments in this course.

This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach course learning outcomes.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is a fundamental value essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will continue to be valued and respected as a true signifier of a student's individual work and academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously.

[The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the process for addressing academic offences and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.

- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes collaborating with others on assignments that are supposed to be completed individually).

On test and exams

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) medical notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated by the procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in the course, please do not hesitate to contact the course instructor. If you have any questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from the instructor or other U of T or RC resources such as the RC Centre for Professional Skills, the College Writing Centres or the Academic Success Centre.

Email

At times, the course instructor may decide to communicate important course information by email. As such, all U of T students are required to have a valid UTmail+ email address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UTmail+ email address is set up and properly entered on ACORN. For more information visit the [Information Commons Help Desk](#).

Forwarding your utoronto.ca email to a Gmail or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Gmail accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that important messages from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

Recording Lectures

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record a lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask the instructor's explicit permission and may not do so unless permission is granted. Students who have been previously granted permission to record lectures as an accommodation for a disability are excepted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Quercus materials, etc.

If permission for recording is granted by the instructor (or via Accessibility Services), it is intended for the individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them in any way. It is forbidden for a student to publish an instructor's notes on a website or sell them in any other form without formal permission.

Weekly Schedule (contains info on session, dates, topics and readings)

OVERVIEW/FUNDAMENTALS

Class One (January 6, 2025)

The role of law in society: general overview of the sources of law, including common law and statutes. Overview of the court system and the process of proceeding with an action.

Readings: SSEM - Chapter 1 and 2 (please read but will not be responsible for pages 14 to 18)

BUSINESS ENTITIES

Class Two (January 13, 2025)

Sole Proprietorships and Partnerships

Choosing the appropriate business organization. Overview of proprietorships, partnerships, limited partnerships and limited liability partnerships (LLP).

Readings: SSEM - Chapter 24

Class Three & Four (Weeks of January 20, 2025 and January 27, 2025)

The Nature of a Corporation and its Formation

Overview of the nature of a corporation and related key elements of its operations, governance and relationships with other parties (e.g., minority shareholders)

Readings: SSEM - Chapters 25, 26 and 27

TORT LAW

Class Five (February 3, 2025)

The Law of Torts

Basic concepts of negligence

Readings: SSEM - Chapter 4 (page 84 +)

Class Six- MIDTERM – Wednesday, February 12, 2025 – 7 pm to 8:30 pm (no Monday class)

**Common Midterm – COMMON DATE/TIME FOR ALL RSM 225 SECTIONS.
Midterm coverage – as explained in class. Up to and including negligence (Class Five).
No class during week of Class Six**

Winter Reading Week – February 17, 2025 to February 21, 2025 - no classes

Class Seven (February 24, 2025)

The Law of Torts

Tort law extended to intentional and unintentional interference
Application to manufacturers and professionals

Readings: SSEM – Other parts of Chapter 4 continued and Chapter 5

CONTRACT LAW

Class Eight (March 3, 2025)

The Law of Contracts

Basic elements of a contractual relationship - offer and acceptance

Readings: SSEM - Chapter 6

Class Nine (March 10, 2025)

The Law of Contracts

Legal capacity, intention, consideration and legality of object.
Mistake

Readings: SSEM - Chapter 7 and 8 (and perhaps Chapter 9 begin)

Class Ten (March 17, 2025)

The Law of Contracts

Misrepresentation, undue influence, duress and the requirement of writing.

Readings: SSEM - Chapters 9 and 10

Class Eleven (March 24, 2025)

(tentative – assignment due date)

The Law of Contracts

Interpretation, privity and assignment

Readings: SSEM - Chapter 10 and 11

The Law of Contracts

Discharge of contracts and breach of contract

Readings: Chapter 12 and 13 (note remedies will only be covered in a very general manner)

Class Twelve (March 31, 2025)

Sales of Goods Act

The *Sales of Goods Act* - application to contracts; implied conditions and warranties.

Readings: Chapter 14

Review/other legal topics/Chapters – as per instructor

Please note that the last day you can drop this course without academic penalty is March 10, 2025.

Other Useful Links

- [Become a volunteer note taker](#)
- [Accessibility Services Note Taking Support](#)
- [Credit / No-Credit in RSM courses](#)
- [Rotman Commerce Academic Support](#)
- [Where to find teaching assistant opportunities](#)

URL links for print

- ACORN: <http://www.acorn.utoronto.ca/>
- Email Accessibility Services: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca
- Accessibility Services website: <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>
- University's Plagiarism Detection Tool FAQ: <https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>
- The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>
- Information Commons Help Desk: <http://help.ic.utoronto.ca/category/3/utmail.html>
- Become a volunteer note taker: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/program/volunteer-note-taking/>
- Accessibility Services Note Taking Support: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/note-taking-support/>
- Credit / No-Credit in RSM courses: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/degree-requirements/credit-no-credit-option/>
- Rotman Commerce Academic Support: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-support/>
- Book an appointment with a writing or presentation coach: <http://uoft.me/writingcentres>
- Writing and Presentation Coaching academic support page: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-support/writing-and-presentation-coaching/>
- Centre for Professional Skills Teamwork Resources page: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/teamwork-resources>
- Book an appointment with a Teamwork Mentor: <http://uoft.me/writingcentres>

