

Course Outline

RSM225H1 L5201

Legal Environment of Business I

Fall 2025

Wednesday 17:00 — 19:00 / WO

Instructor Details

Name	Email	Office Hours
Manfred Schneider	manfred.schneider@utoronto.ca	Before and after class on Wednesday or by appointment. Further details to be provided in class.

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

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Identify relevant legal issues** by carefully examining factual scenarios, recognizing key points of contention, and determining which aspects may give rise to legal considerations.
- **Accurately cite current and authoritative legal principles, rules, and precedents** that directly relate to the identified issues, demonstrating familiarity with applicable Canadian/Ontario statutes, regulations, and case law.

- **Analyze and discuss legal issues from multiple perspectives**, considering the positions of various stakeholders, exploring alternative interpretations, and pinpointing additional facts or evidence that would be necessary for a more complete assessment.
- **Identify and evaluate risks** associated with the legal issues, assessing potential legal, financial, operational, and reputational impacts as part of an overall risk management strategy.
- **Formulate a preliminary conclusion** on the legal issue based on available information, articulating a reasoned basis for the opinion and offering clear, practical recommendations on potential next steps or courses of action.

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%	Wednesday, October 8, 2025 ----- 7 to 8:30 pm – COMMON TIME FOR ALL SECTIONS (please note**)
Term Assignment	15%	Class Eleven (subject to change)
Final Term Examination	50%	TBA – 2 hours
** test may be scheduled for class time until 7 pm. TBA.		

* 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 delivered primarily through lectures covering core and fundamental legal topics. Stories, real-world examples, and guided questions are integrated into the sessions to enhance understanding of the law and its practical application. The midterm, assignment, and final examination are all case-based simulations designed to provide students with the opportunity to identify legal issues and apply course concepts to realistic scenarios.

Class attendance is a course requirement. While attendance is not assigned a numerical grade, students are expected to make every effort to be present for all classes, as lectures, discussions, and in-class examples form an essential part of the learning process. Missing classes will place students at a significant disadvantage in understanding and applying course material.

Students are expected to come prepared, actively engage in class activities, and demonstrate:

- **Thoughtful responses** that reflect preparation and critical thinking.
- **Understanding and analysis** of the topic under discussion.
- **Idea generation** that contributes meaningfully to problem-solving.
- **Promotion of further discussion** through relevant questions or perspectives.

Writing Assignments or Presentations

The Term Assignment is intended to help you develop your communication skills. How well you communicate your ideas, in writing or orally, will be considered in the evaluation of the assignment. In your written assignments, you should aim for clarity, strong organization, concision, professionalism, and correct grammar. Your presentations should reflect strong planning and organization, clarity of speech, and an engaging demeanour. Sources, whether in written or presentation assignments, 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 or speaking (presentations). 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 or by emailing rotmancommerce.teamworkhelp@utoronto.ca.

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

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, eg. Absence Declaration from [ACORN](#), [Verification of Illness Form](#) 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 submit their requests and documentation within 2 days may receive a grade of 0 (zero) on the missed course deliverable.

Important specific criteria in relation to a missed or late deliverable for this course are:

Late Assessment Submissions Policy

Assignment Policy

- Assignments must be submitted via Quercus by the posted deadline (Eastern Standard Time). Late submissions will be penalized **25% per day**, including the due date.
- Work must be completed in groups. Individual submissions will receive a **grade of zero (0%)**. *Form your group well before the assignment is released.* Once the assignment has been issued, the instructor will be unable to facilitate the forming of groups, if required.
- Assignments will be posted and must be uploaded on your section's Quercus portal.
- If you cannot submit by the deadline due to circumstances beyond your control, you must request an extension from the instructor **before the due date ends** and provide supporting documentation.

Missed Term Test Policy

If you miss a term test, you must:

- **Complete the term test** as an assignment (10% of course grade) within **5 days** of the original date, unless an alternative arrangement is made. **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.
- **Write a 2,000-word Canadian legal issue research essay** on an approved and/or assigned topic (10% of course grade), supported by cited sources and research materials

(also submitted). Essays must meet academic standards and use credible sources; AI-generated content will receive **0%** and may trigger an academic integrity review.

- The **final exam weight will increase by 15%**.

Failure to meet any deadlines will result in a grade of **0%** for that component. Contact the instructor on the day of or the day after the missed test to arrange logistics and receive the test.

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>

Late Assignments

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 essays 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 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 to a website or sell them in any other form without formal permission.

Personal Electronic Devices

Audio or video recording of lectures is strictly prohibited without the instructor's explicit written consent. This includes the use of apps, software, or AI tools that record, transcribe, or analyze lectures. The instructor may also limit or restrict the use of laptops, tablets, and similar devices during class.

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

Week	Description
Week 1 September 3, 2025	<i>Overview of the Canadian Legal System</i> The role of law in society; risk management; 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: SSE - Chapter 1 and 2 (please read but will not be responsible for pages 14 - 18)
Week 2 September 10, 2025	<i>Unincorporated entities -- Sole Proprietorships and Partnerships</i> Choosing the appropriate business organization. Overview of proprietorships, partnerships, limited partnerships and limited liability partnerships (LLP). Readings: SSEM - Chapter 24
Week 3 September 17, 2025	<i>The Nature of a Corporation and its Formation - Part I</i> 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
Week 4 September 24, 2025	<i>The Nature of a Corporation and its Formation - Part II</i> 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
Week 5 October 1, 2025	<i>The Law of Torts - negligence</i> Basic concepts of negligence (note that the chapter covers several topics but focus solely on negligence) Readings: SSEM - Chapter 4
Week 6 October 8, 2025	Midterm Test (common all sections)
Week 7 October 15,	<i>The Law of Torts - other torts</i> Tort law extended to intentional and unintentional interference Application to

2025	manufacturers and professionals Readings: SSEM - Chapter 4 continued and Chapter 5
Week 8 October 22, 2025	<i>The Law of Contracts</i> Basic elements of a contractual relationship - offer and acceptance Readings: SSEM - Chapter 6
Week 9 November 5, 2025	<i>The Law of Contracts</i> Legal capacity, intention, consideration and legality of object. Ways to impeach - mistake. Readings: SSEM - Chapter 7 and 8 (and perhaps Chapter 9 to begin)
Week 10 November 12, 2025	<i>The Law of Contracts</i> Misrepresentation, undue influence, duress and the requirement of writing. Readings: SSEM - Chapters 9 and 10
Week 11 November 19, 2025	<i>The Law of Contracts</i> 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 Chapter 13 - Note - remedies will only be covered in a very general manner)
Week 12 November 26, 2025	<i>Sale of Goods Act Other/Wrap up</i> The Sale of Goods Act RSO - application to contracts; implied conditions and warranties. Readings: Chapter 14 (focus on Class Handout for key elements)

Please note that the last day you can drop this course without academic penalty is Nov 11, 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>