

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Navigating Freedom of Religion

Course Number and Section

RELSTUD

5134A 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

The religious diversity of Canada continues to grow, and with it evolves the nature and complexity of the issues that arise.

This course will introduce students to the relationship between religion, the Canadian Constitution and human rights. Students will explore the origins and constitutional basis for freedom of religion in Canada as well as the legal and social discourse around state religious neutrality and secularism. Students will then move on to an examination of how religious practices or “creed” are protected under the human rights framework in Ontario. Students will examine the various statutory duties expected of service providers and employers to accommodate religious beliefs and practices to the point of undue hardship. Judicial and political responses to competing rights will also be explored.

As these issues continue to arise and evolve, class discussions and analysis will necessarily draw from both past and current cases and social debates.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

What are the dimensions and limits of the concept of Freedom of Religion as enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

An understanding of the landmark Supreme Court of Canada decisions that established the first principles of Freedom of Religion jurisprudence.

An understanding of the concept and application of state neutrality toward religion. Can there be a legal or social justification for any government support of religion?

How do statutory human rights frameworks protect against religious discrimination and what is the meaning of religion or creed under such frameworks?

What are the various rights and responsibilities of all parties (eg. Employee, employer and union) in finding a reasonable accommodation in religious accommodation requests.

How common religious accommodation cases involving dress codes, prayer space and religious leaves requests have been decided by Canadian courts and tribunals.

A deeper understanding of current social discourse and debate around policies and laws relating to religiosity and faith in the public sphere.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Freedom of Conscience and Religion
Richard Moon
Second Edition
University of Toronto Press, 2024

All other materials to be posted on Brightspace

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Attendance		10
Readings Journal		20
Written Assignment		20
Case Study presentation		25
Take Home Exam		25

Monday, August 31, 2026

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For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.