COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys the legal framework surrounding familial relationships and family breakdown in Canadian society. Topics include cohabitation, marriage, adoption, child protection, separation, divorce, child custody and access, property division, spousal and child support. Themes include state regulation of families through law; the relationship of law to social change such as shifts in familial forms; the use of social context in legal argument; socio-economic and cultural implications of family law; and the relevance of factors such as gender, sexual orientation, culture, class and race to family law. Particular attention is paid to the impact of family law on Indigenous families in British Columbia and the course is designed to be responsive to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Family law is a wide and rapidly evolving area of law. Therefore, the course is designed to provide an overview of key legal issues in each topic, many of which may be explored in advanced course offerings.

METHODOLOGY

In order to invigorate the ethical imaginations of students, this course will be taught through a combination of lectures, class discussion, small group work and take-home exercises. The goal is to have an active and engaged class room environment. In this regard, it is my expectation that students will have read and thought about the assigned materials before they come to each class. Each class will be taught on the assumption that students are prepared to discuss the assigned materials.

EXPECTED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

1. **Essay – 50%**
   Students will be required to write an essay not to exceed 12 pages. Students will be expected to write on a topic of their choice that critically examines an issue raised in the materials. Students may do independent research, depending on their topic, in order to explore an aspect of family law that is engaged by our discussion of the legal regulation of the family in Canadian law.

2. **Examination – 50%**
   The second component of the evaluation for this course will be an open-book examination during the Fall exam period. The exam will enable students to draw on materials assigned for the year, with particular emphasis on those taught in the second half of the course.

May 2018