



Ontario eSecondary School Course Outline 2026-2027

Ministry of Education Course Title: Understanding Canadian Law	
Ministry Course Code: CLU3M	
Course Type: University/College Preparation	
Grade: 11	
Credit Value: 1.0	
Prerequisite(s): Canadian History since World War I, Grade 10, Academic or Applied	
Department: Canadian and World Studies	
Course developed by: Raven Allen	Date: April 8th, 2019 Revised: August 1, 2026
Length: One Semester	Hours: 110
This course has been developed based on the following Ministry documents: 1. <i>Canadian and World Studies, The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12, 2015, (revised)</i> 2. <i>Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010)</i> 3. <i>Learning for All (2013)</i>	

COURSE DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE

This course explores Canadian law, with a focus on legal issues that are relevant to the lives of people in Canada. Students will gain an understanding of laws relating to rights and freedoms in Canada; our legal system; and family, contract, employment, tort, and criminal law. Students will develop legal reasoning skills and will apply the concepts of legal thinking and the legal studies inquiry process when investigating a range of legal issues and formulating and communicating informed opinions about them.

OVERALL CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

The Inquiry Process and Skill Development in Legal Studies (ongoing throughout course)

By the end of this course, students will:

1. The Inquiry Process in Legal Studies: use the legal studies inquiry process and the concepts of legal thinking when investigating law and legal issues in Canada.
2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through the study of law, and identify careers in which a background in law might be an asset.

Legal Foundations:

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Legal Principles: explain the role and importance of law and the fundamental principles of justice in Canada.
2. Legal Heritage: demonstrate an understanding of early laws and legal systems and their relationship to the Canadian legal system.
3. Legal Roles and Responsibilities: analyse the role and function of individuals, groups, and governments in Canadian law.
4. Development of Law: analyse and describe how various social, scientific, and technological factors have influenced and continue to influence the development of Canadian law.

Rights and Freedoms:

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Human rights: explain the legal significance of the Canadian Bill of Rights, the Ontario Human Rights Code, The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the Charter), and the Canadian Human Rights Act.
2. Development of Human Rights Law: analyse how various factors have influenced and continue to influence the development of human rights law in Ontario and Canada.
3. Protecting Rights and Freedoms: analyse situations in which it may be appropriate to limit rights and freedoms, and explain the arguments for and against such limitations.

Criminal Law:

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Foundations of Criminal Law: explain the foundational concepts of criminal law and their legal significance.
2. Legal Processes and Procedures: describe the structures and key roles and processes of the Canadian criminal justice system and explain key interrelationships among them.
3. Criminal Justice System: assess the ability of the Canadian criminal justice system to provide appropriate and even-handed justice to people living in Canada.
4. Development of Criminal Law: analyse how various factors have influenced the development of Canadian criminal law.

Civil Law:

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Introduction to Tort Law: analyse the legal foundations of tort law; the factors influencing its developments; and the role of individuals, groups, and courts in its processes.
2. Introduction to Family Law: analyse the legal foundations of family law; the factors influencing its development; and the role of individuals, governments, and courts in its processes.
3. Introduction to Employment Law: analyse the legal foundations of employment laws; the factors influencing its developments; and the role of employers, employees, and the courts in its processes.
4. Introduction to Contract Law: analyse the legal foundations of contract law; the factors influencing its developments; and the role of individuals, groups, and the courts in its processes.

COURSE CONTENT (110 HOURS)

Unit	Length
Unit 1: Legal Foundations	17 hours
Unit 2: Rights and Freedoms	24 hours
Unit 3: Criminal Law	29 hours
Unit 4: Civil Law	26 hours
Unit 5: Final Essay	11 hours
Final Exam	3 hours
Total	110 Hours

UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

TO DEVELOP AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CANADIAN LEGAL SYSTEM, WE WILL EXPLORE LEGAL ISSUES WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECT OUR LIVES AS CANADIAN AND THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE LAW AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN ADMINISTERING THE LAW. WE WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP INFORMED OPINIONS ON LEGAL ISSUES AND TO SUPPORT THEM WITH LEGAL KNOWLEDGE IN A VARIETY OF MEDIUMS.

UNIT 1: LEGAL FOUNDATIONS

In this unit, students will think about why society requires laws, the different divisions of law within our legal system, and how law has developed through Canadian history, and the various changes that have resulted from social and cultural factors.

UNIT 2: RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

In this unit, students will learn about the legal definition of human rights and how this definition has changed and developed throughout history. Students will also learn about the protections and limitations provided under Canadian law and develop informed opinions about their own rights.

UNIT 3: CRIMINAL LAW

In this unit, students will learn about criminal law and its significance in Canadian law and society as a whole. They will learn about the processes of the criminal justice system and think critically about the punishments handed down by the court system. They will think critically and develop opinions about justice and Canadian criminal law.

UNIT 4: CIVIL LAW

In this unit, students will learn about civil law and the factors that differentiate it from criminal law. They will learn about the functions and processes of family, labour, and contract law, and how the Canadian legal system regulates the law in more personal cases.

UNIT 5: FINAL ESSAY

The overall goal of this unit is for students to bring together their skills and knowledge learned throughout this course to write a well-argued, MLA-style, academic essay on an individually-selected topic through independent research. Students will choose their own topic and form their thesis and form their arguments based on the content of this course. They are encouraged to consider the historical, cultural, political, and sociological contexts of their issue while maintaining a legal perspective.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

The students will experience a variety of activities:

Participation activities are seven standardized, course-wide prompts (Teach the Teacher, Concept in Action, Spot the Error, Concept Connections, Take a Position, Claim/Support/Question, and a culminating Course Takeaways video) embedded at set points throughout the course. They build metacognitive engagement with unit concepts and contribute to the course's participation grade.

Presentations are utilized to outline concepts, explain theory with the use of examples and practice questions, and incorporate multi-media opportunities for students to learn more (e.g. online simulations, quizzes, etc.).

End of unit conversations are opportunities for students to express their ideas, problem solving, and thought processes with a teacher who provides timely feedback.

Reflection is an opportunity for students to look back at concepts and theories with new eyes, to relate theory to practice, and to align learning with their own values and beliefs.

Discussions with the instructor are facilitated through video conferencing, discussing the concepts and skills being studied. This enables two-way communication between the student and the instructor, to share ideas and ask questions in dialogue. This also helps to build a relationship between the student and instructor.

Discussion forums are an opportunity for students to summarize and share their ideas and perspectives with their peers, which deepens understanding through expression. It also provides an opportunity for peer-to-peer feedback.

Practical extension and application of knowledge are integrated throughout the course. The goal is to help students make connections between what they learn in the classroom and how they understand and relate to the world around them and their own lives. Learning becomes a dynamic opportunity for students to be more aware that their learning is all around them and enable them to create more meaning in their lives.

Individual activities/assignments assessments are completed individually at a student's own pace and are intended to expand and consolidate the learning in each lesson. Individual activities allow the teacher to accommodate interests and needs and to assess the progress of individual students. For this reason, students are encouraged to discuss IEPs (Individual Education Plans) with their teacher and to ask to modify assessments if they have a unique interest that they feel could be pursued in the assessment. The teacher plays an important role in supporting these activities by providing ongoing feedback to students, both orally and in writing.

Research is an opportunity to apply inquiry skills to a practical problem or question. Students perform research to gather information, evaluate quality sources, analyze findings, evaluate their analysis, and synthesize their findings into conclusions. Throughout, students apply both creative thinking and critical thinking. New questions are also developed to further learning.

Writing as a learning tool helps students to think critically about course material while grasping, organizing, and integrating prior knowledge with new concepts. Good communication skills are important both in and out of the classroom.

Brainstorming, charts, and graphs are a great way for students to synthesize their knowledge of subject matter visually through graphic organizers, pictures, and texts.

Readings are an opportunity for students to gain insight from a variety of texts online and further develop literacy skills. Students may print out the reading material to use it to highlight, take notes, and have with them when a computer is not available.

Cases are summaries of real-life situations wherein students relate theories and concepts towards understanding a real-world context. This helps students to understand the application and use of knowledge.

Articles are examples of concepts and theories being discussed in the public realm and with respect to current events. They are snapshots not only of why theories/concepts/applications are relevant but also provide a window into the broader context of subject matter knowledge and understanding. Students learn through reading and analysis that the subject matter is deeply related to, and intertwined with, society and the diverse perspectives of lived experience.

Oral presentations in an online environment are opportunities for students to present live or record presentations, expressing their ideas and understanding orally.

Reflective/comparative analysis and evaluation of written work is very important in this course. Concepts and skills are modelled in examples (exemplars), which students can refer to and utilize to self-evaluate their own work. A variety of texts are shared, and students are encouraged to make comparisons with different texts, real life situations, and their own writing.

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

Assessment: The process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the identified curriculum expectations. Teachers provide students with descriptive feedback that guides their efforts towards improved performance.

Evaluation: Assessment of Learning focuses on Evaluation which is the process of making a judgement about the quality of student work on the basis of established criteria over a limited, reasonable period of time.

Reporting: Involves communicating student achievement of the curriculum expectations and Learning Skills and Work Habits in the form of marks and comments as determined by the teacher's use of professional judgement.

STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSMENT

Assessment practices can nurture students' sense of progress and competency and information instruction. Many diagnostic tools, e.g. checklists and inventories, are used at regular intervals throughout the units to encourage students' understanding of their current status as learners and to provide frequent and timely reviews of their progress. Assessment of student acquisition of listening and talking, reading and viewing and writing skills also occurs regularly through unobtrusive teacher observation and conferencing.

Units conclude with performance tasks, e.g., interviews and from essays that build towards and prepare students for the end-of-course culminating task in Unit Five. Teachers are encouraged to share goals with students early in the course and to connect unit learning experiences frequently and explicitly with big ideas, overall expectations, and performance tasks, i.e. check bricks; teacher-adapted generic rubrics available in many sources, including the *Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) Profile*, so that they are more task-specific. The teacher might ask: "What does the criteria look like for this particular task?" Or "What does limited effectiveness look like?" The teacher could involve students in the discussion, modification, or creation of rubrics, and teach students to use rubrics as a learning tool that can support the writing process and practice.

Assessment & Evaluation at OES: Triangulation of Learning

In alignment with the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Growing Success* policy, student achievement across all high school courses at Ontario eSecondary School (OES) is evaluated through the **triangulation of evidence: observations, conversations, and student products**.

OES courses incorporate each of these evidence sources in a variety of ways to provide every student with equitable opportunities to demonstrate their learning:

- **Observations:** Collected through video recordings, interactive digital tools, learning logs, and synchronous task demonstrations.
- **Conversations:** Gathered via teacher-student conferences, oral defenses, virtual check-ins, and reflective feedback dialogues.
- **Products:** Demonstrated through major projects, essays, lab reports, performance tasks, and final assessments.

By evaluating a balanced variety of evidence, OES teachers apply professional judgment to ensure accurate, fair, and comprehensive assessment of each student's progress.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

- Discussion forums
- Completed templates and graphic organizers
- Oral presentations & active listening
- Tests and quizzes
- Reflections
- Case study worksheets
- Research projects and reports
- End of unit conversations (Google Meets)
- Final exam

EVALUATION

The final grade will be determined as follows:

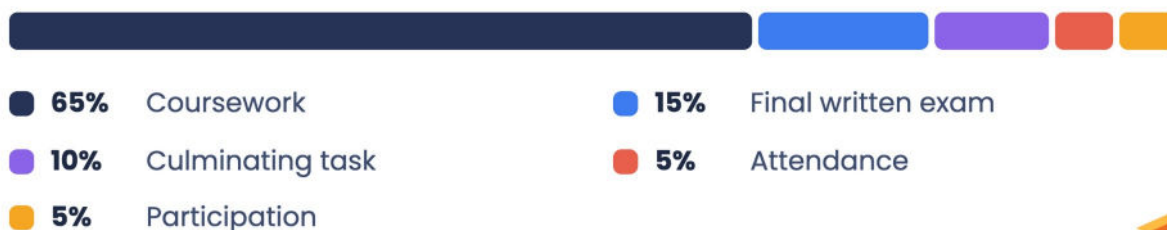
- ☐ 65% percent of the grade will be based on evaluation conducted throughout the course. This portion of the grade should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement throughout the course, although special consideration will be given to more recent evidence of achievement.
- ☐ 25% of the grade will be based on a final evaluation administered at the end of the course. This evaluation will be based on evidence from a culminating task and a final written examination, both comprehensive of the course. The final evaluation is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate comprehensive achievement of the overall expectations for the course.
- ☐ 10% of the grade will be based on the student's attendance and participation throughout the course, assessed according to Ministry criteria.

(*Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools*. Ontario Ministry of Education Publication, 2010 p.41)

CLU3M Understanding Canadian Law

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How the final mark is calculated from September 2026

**TERM WORK EVALUATIONS (65%)**

Evaluation Item	Description	Category	Weight
Unit 1: News Report	Students will review current news articles and report on current examples of Canadian law in a recorded short video.	K, T, C, A	16
Unit 1 Teacher Conference	Students will participate in a discussion with their teacher on their chosen examples of Canadian law in the news.	K, T, C, A	
Unit 2 Human Rights Timeline	Students will create a human rights timeline, showcasing what they have learned throughout the unit.	K, T, C, A	16
Unit 2 Teacher Conference	Students will participate in a discussion with their teacher on their timeline.	K, T, C, A	
Unit 3 Summative Assessment Booklet	Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the Canadian justice system process throughout this interactive activity.	K, T, C, A	16
Unit 3 Teacher Conference	Students will participate in a discussion with their teacher.	K, T, C, A	
Unit 4 Summative Assessment Civil Law Pamphlet	Students will create a pamphlet which explains how civil law can be used in everyday life in Canada	K, T, C, A	17
Unit 4 Teacher Conference	Students will participate in a discussion with their teacher.	K, T, C, A	

FINAL EVALUATIONS (25%)

Evaluation Item	Description	Category	Weight
Final Essay	Final essay and reflection: Students will write an argumentative, MLA-format essay on a selected topic of law, following several steps to develop their thesis and arguments. This will be followed with a meeting with their instructor to reflect on their topic and their skills and strengths.	K, T, C, A	10

Final Exam	An exam to cover the major units studied through this course.	K, T, C, A	15
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ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%)

Evaluation Item	Description	Category	Weight
Attendance	Assessed according to the Ministry's attendance criteria (Growing Success, September 2026 update), based on the proportion of unexcused absences over the course.	N/A	5
Participation	Assessed according to the Ministry's participation criteria (Growing Success, September 2026 update), based on engagement in class discussions and activities throughout the course, including the standardized participation prompts (see Teaching and Learning Strategies).	N/A	5

AFL/AAL/AOL Tracking sheet:

Unit 1: Foundations of Law

AAL	AFL	AOL
Quiz: "What do you know about Canadian law?"	Foundations and Concepts of Law Questions	News Report
Video Analysis "A Vision of Crimes in the Future"	"How Laws are Made and Changed"	Instructor Discussion
Forum Discussion		

Unit 2:

AAL	AFL	AOL
"In Search of a Perfect World" questions	"Human Rights Cases in Canada" Case Studies and Video: Observation	Human Rights Timeline
Forum Discussion: Observation	"Cases that have changed Canadian society" questions	Instructor Discussion
"The Indian Act Explained" KWL Chart	"A Commission on the Status of Women" assignment	
	Discrimination Case Studies	
	"The Indian Act Explained" KWL Chart	
	Video Reflection	

Unit 3:

AAL	AFL	AOL
Forum Discussions	"Elements of Crime" Case Studies	Criminal Justice Booklet
	"The Role of Courts in Our Justice System" questions	Instructor Discussion

	"What are my rights if I'm detained or arrested?" questions	
	"Researching a Role" worksheet and video	
	"Criminal offences, Defences, and Sentences" assignment: Observation	
	"Investigating a Crime" Worksheet	

Unit 4:

AAL	AFL	AOL
"Civil Law vs. Criminal Law" chart	"Civil Law Case Studies"	Civil Law Pamphlet
Forum Discussions	"The Paisley Snail" questions	Instructor Discussion
	"Family Law Case Studies"	
	"Property Division, Support, and Custody Case Studies"	
	"In Brief: Contract Law" questions	
	16x9 Video Response	

Finals

AOL
Final Task: Argumentative Essay
Final Exam

CONSIDERATION FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

PLANNING PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

OES teachers are the key educators of students with special education needs and have a responsibility to help all students learn. Program planning for students with special education needs is guided by the principles set out in *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2013): all students can succeed; each student has their own unique patterns of learning; successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience; and universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students. Where a student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the accommodations identified in the IEP — instructional, environmental, and assessment — are implemented within the course, and the online learning environment is adapted accordingly. The asynchronous structure of OES courses provides built-in flexibility that supports many common accommodations, including extended time for assignments and assessments, breaks as needed, access to assistive technology, and the ability to review instructional material multiple times.

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Ontario schools have some of the most linguistically diverse student populations in the world, and OES serves English language learners across Ontario and internationally. English language learners may be Canadian-born or newcomers; they may have experience of highly sophisticated educational systems or may have come from regions where access to formal schooling was limited. In planning this course, teachers consider the strengths and needs of English language learners and provide appropriate adaptations consistent with *English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2007). Supports within the online environment include modification of instructional language without modification of curriculum expectations, use of visual and multimedia supports, opportunities to replay and review lesson content, extended time

where appropriate, and teacher feedback that models academic English. Assessment accommodations, such as granting additional time and permitting the use of bilingual dictionaries, are provided where appropriate.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Consistent with *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (2009) and *Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations* (2017), environmental education is embedded across the curriculum rather than treated as a separate subject. Teachers help students acquire knowledge about the environment, develop skills to address environmental issues, and foster attitudes that motivate responsible environmental action. As an online school, OES also models environmental responsibility through paperless course delivery and the elimination of daily commuting. In this course, students examine how law responds to environmental issues, including environmental protection legislation and the legal responsibilities of individuals, corporations, and governments toward the environment.

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

This course is planned and delivered in accordance with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools* (2013). OES is committed to an inclusive learning environment in which all students feel welcomed, respected, and able to succeed, regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, or socio-economic status. In this course, teachers select learning materials that reflect the diversity of Ontario and the wider world, address bias in texts and resources where it arises, and ensure that assessment practices are fair and free of cultural assumptions. Because OES students learn from communities across Ontario, Quebec, and around the world, discussion activities and teacher feedback are moderated to maintain a respectful, harassment-free environment for all learners.

FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION

In accordance with *A Sound Investment: Financial Literacy Education in Ontario Schools* (2010) and current Ministry direction on financial literacy, students are provided with opportunities to build the knowledge and skills needed to make informed financial decisions, understand their roles as consumers and citizens, and think critically about the economic forces that affect their lives. OES also supports students in meeting the Ministry's financial literacy graduation requirement, as described in the OES School Course Calendar. In this course, students develop financial literacy through legal contexts, including consumer protection, contract law, and the legal dimensions of financial decisions and obligations.

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT EDUCATION

Program planning in this course aligns with the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007), which supports improved outcomes for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and promotes awareness and understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives, and contributions among all students. Where appropriate to the curriculum expectations, teachers incorporate Indigenous perspectives, authors, and content, and approach these topics with accuracy and respect, drawing on Ministry-recommended resources. All OES students benefit from opportunities to deepen their knowledge of the histories and contemporary realities of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, including the legacy of the residential school system and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action related to education.

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Information and communications technology (ICT) is integral to every OES course: instruction, learning activities, assessment, and teacher-student communication all take place through the school's learning management system. ICT tools — including multimedia lessons, digital texts, simulations, video conferencing for proctored assessments, and word-processing and productivity software — extend and enrich instruction and allow students to collect, organize, and present their learning in a range of formats. Teachers help students develop digital citizenship skills, including responsible and ethical use of technology, critical evaluation of online sources, protection of personal information, and academic integrity in digital

environments, consistent with OES's Acceptable Use, Academic Honesty, and Artificial Intelligence policies as published in the School Course Calendar.

CAREER EDUCATION

Consistent with *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools* (2013), teachers support students in answering the four questions at the centre of education and career/life planning: Who am I? What are my opportunities? Who do I want to become? What is my plan for achieving my goals? Expectations in this course include many opportunities for students to apply their skills to work-related situations, explore educational and career options, and become self-directed learners. OES guidance staff support students in course selection, postsecondary application planning (including OUAC, CEGEP, and international pathways), and the development of individual pathways plans. This course supports pathways into law, law enforcement, public policy, government, advocacy, and related fields, and these career connections are highlighted throughout the course.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION AND OTHER FORMS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Planned learning experiences in the community, including job shadowing, work experience, and cooperative education, provide students with opportunities to see the relevance of their classroom learning, explore careers of interest, and develop essential workplace skills consistent with *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Cooperative Education* (2018). Students may earn up to two cooperative education credits toward their compulsory credit requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Students interested in experiential learning opportunities related to this course are encouraged to contact OES guidance staff to discuss options available to them.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Although OES students learn remotely, health and safety remain integral considerations in program planning. Teachers model and promote safe and healthy practices for online learning, including sound ergonomics, balanced screen time, regular breaks, and strategies that support positive mental health and well-being. OES maintains a safe and respectful virtual learning environment consistent with the school's codes of conduct, bullying prevention expectations, and privacy practices as published in the School Course Calendar, and students are provided with clear channels for reporting concerns to their teachers, guidance staff, or the Principal.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations will be based on meeting with parent, teachers, administration and external educational assessment report. The following three types of accommodations may be provided:

- ☐ **Instructional accommodations:** such as changes in teaching strategies, including styles of presentation, methods of organization, or use of technology and multimedia.
- ☐ **Environmental accommodations:** such as preferential seating or special lighting.
- ☐ **Assessment accommodations:** such as allowing additional time to complete tests or assignments or permitting oral responses to test questions.

Other examples of modifications and aids, which may be used in this course, are:

- ☐ Provide step-by-step instructions.
- ☐ Help students create organizers for planning writing tasks.
- ☐ Record key words on the board or overhead when students are expected to make their own notes.
- ☐ Allow students to report verbally to a scribe (teacher/ student) who can help in note taking.
- ☐ Permit students a range of options for reading and writing tasks.

- ☐ Where an activity requires reading, provide it in advance.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for enrichment.