What is tort law?
Tort law recognises and responds to civil wrongdoing and empowers victims of harm or loss to sue those who are responsible for it.

Course themes
- Tort law is grounded in community standards and values
- Rights of action in private law afford plaintiffs the right to sue
- Our common law constitution assumes equality of all (including public officials) under law
- The common law develops incrementally: precedent upon precedent
- The common law is a dialogue taking place over time within and between jurisdictions

Project aims
That tort “law be widely known and that” students and “citizens have unimpeded access to that law.”

Interviews
UBC Today • The Advocate • Slaw blog

Casebook
Tort Law: Cases and Commentaries (2021 CanLII Docs 1859) is an open-access pedagogical resource that compiles excerpts of curated case law, legislation and other sources on the law of tort. The resource aims to facilitate the teaching and learning of the compulsory tort law component of a law degree in common law Canada, as well as upper-level courses on specialized topics in tort.

Flexibility and accessibility are two key design features of this resource. Cases are broken down by topic and connected by hyperlinks across different sections of the casebook. All of the cases and materials link back to their original source on open-access or online-access platforms. The material is updated annually and is freely available online in multiple and printable formats.

Wiki commentary
The Common Law Torts Wiki is a free student-produced faculty-supervised and interactive resource that dives into the diverse field of the common law of torts. Students can use it alongside their other course materials to further their understanding of the subject and explore themes from classroom discussion in more depth. The Wiki integrates and links to various media and sources—quizzes, videos, podcasts, news items, blogs, articles, and books—to help students appreciate the context within which the tort judgments and concepts arise.

Self-assessment quizzes
Multiple-choice quizzes draw on the casebook content and integrate thoughts and reflection questions, helping students to gauge their understanding of the material in their own time.

Guided answer exercises
Guided exam answer exercises developed in Qualtrics outline a strategy and structure to help students learn to analyse and answer both problem- and essay-style law school exam questions.

Course website
A UBC Blog course webpage compiles Prof. Beswick’s relevant teaching and research outputs, including teaching materials, important slides, past exams, and select scholarship on the subject. The site also collects other resources and advice for law students on pursuing the path of a legal scholar.

Hyflex Socratic method
The course materials complement the Socratic method of teaching and learning, which the Allard School of Law facilitated in a hybrid flexible format beginning in 2020. Students who would otherwise miss a class can actively participate remotely via large-room Zoom conferencing systems. Students can engage with the professor’s questions and with each other whether attending class in person or remotely.

1L student impact
“Very well done. The use of online materials is both easier considering the realities of how most people in the average age range of students live their lives today (rarely consuming print media), and more cost-effective.”

“The draft student-produced Common Law Torts Wiki commentary is very helpful as an additional guide when I have questions regarding the course topics. Allows me to get a more holistic vision of the course material.”

“I enjoyed the quizzes. I appreciate how every wrong choice has an explanation for why it is incorrect.”

“The casebook for this course is amazing! It is very clear and easy to follow and the length of each case is manageable and not too overwhelming.”

Summer RA impact
Gabriella Pascoli

“Working on the Torts Wiki was an incredible opportunity to expand my knowledge of tort law and connect it to thought-provoking current events. To add, it was special to create a resource that supports open access learning opportunities!”

“Very nice and clean. This is a unique course as it employs both volume and summarizing cases. "The resources linked in both the casebook and Wiki, such as other cases, articles, books, podcasts, videos, quizzes, and discussion questions, allow students to interact with materials at their own pace. Contributing to the Wiki strengthened my analytical and critical thinking abilities to identify and synthesize complex legal issues, as well as my own understanding on issues in tort law.”

“I think it’s a great resource for students wanting to learn about tort law. It’s very informative and helpful.”

Scholarly dissemination
Roundtables on open-access pedagogy
Canadian Association of Law Teachers
Conference Roundtable on The Open Law Book Revolution (2022)
Green College Leading Scholars’ series
in Comparative Research and Teaching (2023)

Australasian Law Academics Association Conference (2023)

Presentations on “The Open Casebook Revolution”
Society of Legal Scholars Conference (2023)
Canadian Law of Obligations Conference (2022)

“By looking for case law from around the world, I learned how to navigate legal databases from multiple jurisdictions. It was interesting to discover that courts in India, Hong Kong, and Singapore apply many of the same fundamental tort principles as Canadian courts. Creating quiz questions for other students helped me understand the concepts I learned as a student on a deeper level.”

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