



Opening Up Tort Law

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 structure and strategy 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

“The draft student-produced Common Law Torts Wiki commentary is: [v]ery 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.”

“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.”

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

“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.”

Summer RA impact

“The pages of the Torts Wiki have thus far been written primarily by research assistants who just finished their first year of law school. As a result, the language used is generally far more accessible to first-year law students than some of the more traditional academic resources. By including embedded resources, the Wiki accommodates a wider range of learning styles than traditional textbooks.”

Gabriella Pasolli

“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.”

Cléa Catona

“Working with Professor Beswick last summer was a rewarding and educational experience. It was quite fulfilling being able to start this unique project from scratch, work together as part of dynamic a team, and now see the resource being used by first-year tort law students.”

Alirod Ameri

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 on *Democratising Research and Teaching* (2022)
- Publication**
- S. Beswick & M. Zapach, “The Open Casebook Revolution” (2024) 3 Sup. Ct. L. Rev. (3d)



- Presentations on ‘The Open Casebook Revolution’**
- Society of Legal Scholars Conference (2023)
 - Canadian Law of Obligations Conference (2022)
 - Australasian Law Academics Association Conference (2022)

“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!”

Lillian Callender

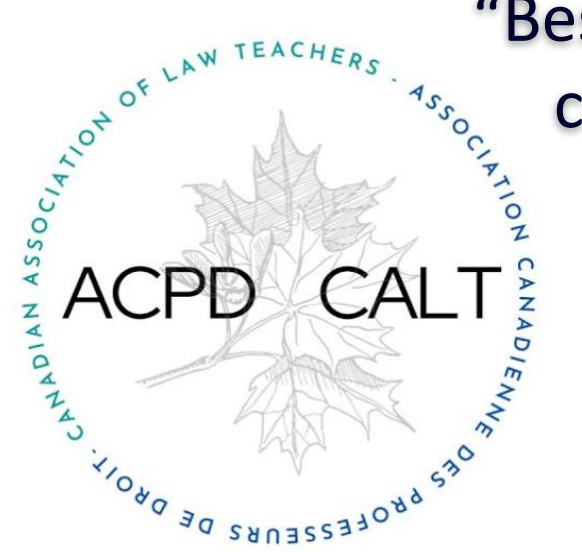
“By looking for case law from around the world, I learned how to navigate legal databases from multiple jurisdictions. It was interesting to discover that courts in India, Hong Kong, and Singapore apply many of the same fundamental tort principles as Canadian courts. Creating quiz questions for other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

Maddison Zapach



“clearly and elegantly presented,’ ‘a joy to use,’ and ‘a clear winner with students.’”

“Beswick’s *Tort Law* is relatively purely a casebook ... But what a casebook!”



Open Educational Resource Champion (2023, 2024)

Student Society of UBC Vancouver

Partners

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Poster designed by Cléa Catona.

