



Syllabus

Family Law (Alberta)

(Revised for May 2020)

Candidates are advised that the syllabus may be updated from time-to-time without prior notice.

Candidates are responsible for obtaining the most current syllabus available.



Family Law (Alberta)

This syllabus includes legislative changes that take effect on July 1, 2020. Every legislative change is addressed in a document that is available online at the Department of Justice, Canada website. The document is entitled: “The *Divorce Act* Changes Explained”. Irwin Law plans on publishing Payne and Payne, *Canadian Family Law*, 8th ed., 2020 on or before July 1, 2020. References in the current syllabus necessarily can only refer to Payne and Payne, *Canadian Family Law*, 7th ed., 2017. The highlighted text hereafter appearing in this syllabus inform the candidate of particular sections of the Department of Justice document that require the candidate’s attention for the purpose of the Family Law examination.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will review fundamental principles of family law. Significant emphasis will be placed on the economic and parenting consequences of family breakdown and divorce. This course will not deal with the specialized topic of child protection. Contemporary issues such as family violence, rights of unmarried cohabitants, domestic contracts, and alternative dispute resolution processes will be addressed.

The primary sources of family law in Canada are found in the federal *Divorce Act* and in diverse provincial and territorial statutes. Provincial and territorial legislation in Canada differs widely in form. This course will focus, therefore, on federal divorce legislation and Alberta statute law. Cross-references to statutes in other provinces and territories are not feasible because of their multiplicity and lack of uniformity.

The objectives of this course are as follows:

- to provide an overview of family law with particular emphasis on the economic and parenting consequences of family breakdown and divorce;
- to analyse contemporary issues in family law;
- to develop legal skills in dealing with family disputes; and
- to identify the special nature of family disputes and innovative approaches to their resolution, such as mediation, arbitration and custody assessments

EXAMINATION

The examination is a three-hour open-book exam. Students may take any material they wish into the examination room. Students who are unfamiliar with open-book examinations are advised that they must know their material before the examination is held. There will not be time



during the examination for students to search for solutions in areas with which they are not already familiar. A sample examination question paper is provided on the NCA website.

PRIMARY TEXT AND STATUTES

1. Payne and Payne, *Canadian Family Law*, 7th ed., 2017, Irwin Law, (hereinafter Payne, C.F.L.)
2. *Divorce Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. 3 (2nd Supp.), as amended.
3. *Federal Child Support Guidelines*, SOR/97-175, 8 April, 1997, as amended.
4. *Spousal Support Advisory Guidelines* (Department of Justice, Canada, July 2008)
5. *Spousal Support Advisory Guidelines: The Revised User's Guide* (Rogerson/Thompson, Department of Justice, Canada, April 2016)
6. *Family Law Act*, S.A. 2003, c. F-4.5, as amended.
7. *Family Property Act*, c. F-4.7 comes into force on January 1, 2020 and will apply to both married couples and interdependent partners.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

- J.G. McLeod and A.E. Mamo, *Matrimonial Property Law in Canada* (Looseleaf Service), (hereafter M.P.L.C.), Alberta tab, Carswell, Thomson Professional Publishing, Toronto/Vancouver
- Payne and Payne, *Child Support Guidelines in Canada, 2020*, Irwin Law



COURSE CONTENT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Definition of Marriage and Family

Reference re Same-Sex Marriage, [2004] 3 S.C.R. 698

Civil Marriage Act, S.C. 2005, c. 33

Civil Marriage of Non-Residents Act, S.C. 2013, c. 32

M. v. H., [1999] 2 S.C.R. 3

Québec (Attorney General) v. A., 2013 SCC 5, [2013] S.C.J. No. 5 (Quicklaw)

Kerr v. Baranow and *Vanasse v. Seguin*, [2011] 1 S.C.R. 269

2. Constitutional Framework

Payne, C.F.L., 10-11

3. Fragmentation of Judicial Jurisdiction

Payne, C.F.L., 12-13

4. Formation and Annulment of Marriage

Marriage Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. M-5, as amended

Payne, C.F.L., 14-38

II. FAMILY VIOLENCE

Protection Against Family Violence Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. P-27

Payne, C.F.L., 93-133

III. DIVORCE (INCLUDING COROLLARY PROCEEDINGS FOR SUPPORT AND CUSTODY)

1. Emotional Dynamics of Marriage Breakdown; Dispute Resolution Processes

Divorce Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. 3 (2nd Supp.) as amended, s.7 to 7.7(3) (negotiation; mediation)

Family Law Act, S.A. 2003, c. F-4.5, ss. 5, 32(2)(c), 97-98

Family Justice Services (Alberta Courts online)

Payne C.F.L., 134-177



2. Jurisdiction

Divorce Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. 3 (2nd Supp.) as amended, ss. 3 to 6.3
Payne, C.F.L., 179-191
Office of the Children's Lawyer v. Balev, 2018 SCC 16, [2018] 1 SCR 398

3. Effective Date and Effect of Divorce

Divorce Act, ss. 12, 13 and 14
Payne, C.F.L., 191-193

4. Recognition of Foreign Divorces

Divorce Act, s. 22
Payne, C.F.L., 194-196

5. Marriage Breakdown as Ground for Divorce

Divorce Act, s. 8
Payne, C.F.L., 196-210

6. Bars to Divorce

Divorce Act, s. 11
Payne, C.F.L., 210-221
Bruker v. Marcovitz, [2007] 3 S.C.R. 607

7. Interim Support Orders

Divorce Act, subs. 15.1(2) and 15.2(2)
Payne, C.F.L., 224-230 and 528-529

8. Child Support Orders

Divorce Act, ss. 15.1 and 15.3
Federal Child Support Guidelines, as amended
Child Support Recalculation Program Regulation, Alta. Reg. 287/2009, as amended
Payne, C.F.L., 389-544 and 650-652
Chartier v. Chartier, [1999] 1 S.C.R. 242
H.(U.V.) v. H.(M.W.), [2008] B.C.J. No. 717 (Quicklaw), 59 R.F.L. (6th) 25 (C.A.)
Francis v. Baker, [1999] 3 S.C.R. 250
Contino v. Leonelli-Contino, [2005] 3 S.C.R. 217
Hunt v. Smolis-Hunt, [2001] A.J. No. 1170 (Quicklaw), 20 R.F.L. (5th) 409 (Alta. C.A.).



D.B.S. v. S.R.G., L.J.W. v. T.A.R., Henry v. Henry, Hiemstra v. Hiemstra, [2006] 2 S.C.R. 231

Haisman v. Haisman, [1994] A.J. No. 553 (Quicklaw), 7 R.F.L. (4th) 1 (C.A.)

9. Spousal Support Orders

Divorce Act, ss. 15.2 and 15.3

Payne, C.F.L., 222-388

Spousal Support Advisory Guidelines (Rogerson/Thompson, Department of Justice, Canada, July 2008)

Spousal Support Advisory Guidelines: The Revised User's Guide (Rogerson/Thompson, Department of Justice, Canada, April 2016)

Moge v. Moge, [1992] 3 S.C.R. 813

Bracklow v. Bracklow, [1999] 1 S.C.R. 420

Miglin v. Miglin, [2003] 1 S.C.R. 303

Boston v. Boston, [2001] 2 S.C.R. 413

Leskun v. Leskun, [2006] 1 S.C.R. No. 920

Dowhaniuk v Dowhaniuk, 2014 ABQB 217

10. Variation, Rescission or Suspension of Corollary Support Orders

Divorce Act, s. 17

Federal Child Support Guidelines, s. 14

Payne, C.F.L., 311-333 and 467-484

L.M.P. v. L.S., [2011] 3 SCR 775

11. Parenting Arrangements after Divorce

As of July 1, 2020, fundamental legislative changes will come into effect with respect to parenting disputes that arise between divorcing and divorced parents. Many of these changes reflect pre-existing provincial legislative provisions in Alberta, British Columbia or Nova Scotia. The changes include: replacing the traditional terminology of “custody” and “access” with terminology that relates to parenting; establishing a non-exhaustive list of criteria to assist courts in determining the “best interests of the child”; calling upon prospective litigants and their lawyers to address the feasibility of using out-of-court family dispute resolution services; introducing measures to assist courts in addressing family violence; and establishing a framework for situations where one of the parents wishes to relocate a child of the marriage. Candidates taking the Family Law examination in 2020 are expected to be familiar with these changes. The best current source respecting these changes are found online at the Department of Justice, Canada website in a document entitled: “The *Divorce Act* Changes Explained”. Examination candidates should focus their attention on sections 16(1) to 17(11) of the revised *Divorce Act* set out in this document.



12. Effect of Corollary Orders

Divorce Act, s. 20

13. Appeals

Divorce Act, s. 21

14. Evidence and Procedure

Divorce Act, ss. 23, 24, 25 and 26

IV. CHILD AND SPOUSAL SUPPORT UNDER PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

1. General

Family Law Act, S.A. 2003, c. F-4.5, as amended
Adult Interdependent Relationships Act, S.A. 2002, c. A-4.5
Alberta Child Support Guidelines
Payne, C.F.L., 647-653

2. Definitions

Family Law Act, ss. 46-48

3. Child Support Statutory Criteria

Family Law Act, ss. 49-55

4. Spousal Support or Adult Independent Partner – Statutory Criteria

Family Law Act, ss. 56-63

5. General Matters

Family Law Act, ss. 64-82

V. ESTABLISHING PARENTAGE

Family Law Act, ss. 6-15

**VI. GUARDIANSHIP, CUSTODY AND ACCESS (PARENTING AND CONTACT ORDERS)
UNDER PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION**

Family Law Act, S.A. 2003, c. F-4.5, ss. 16 - 45



Payne, C.F.L., 653-702

Office of the Children's Lawyer v. Baley, 2018 SCC 16

VII. MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY

J.G. McLeod and A.E. Mamo, *Matrimonial Property Law in Canada* (Looseleaf Service), (hereafter M.P.L.C.), tab, Alberta, Carswell, Thomson Professional Publishing, Toronto/Vancouver

1. Property Division

The *Matrimonial Property Act* has been amended so as to apply to both married couples and interdependent partners. The title and chapter number of the *Matrimonial Property Act* have been repealed and the following substituted: *Family Property Act*, c. F-4.7

Hodgson v. Hodgson, [2005] A.J. No. 22 (Quicklaw), 13 R.F.L. (6th) 339 (C.A.)

Carmichael v. Carmichael, [2007] A.J. No. 1 (Quicklaw), 40 R.F.L. (6th) 21 (C.A.)

Hanson v. Hanson, [2009] A.J. No. 623 (C.A.) (Quicklaw)

Jensen v. Jensen, [2009] A.J. No. 878 (C.A.) (Quicklaw)

Campa v Campa, 2016 ABCA 187, [2016] A.J. No. 606 (C.A.) (Quicklaw)

Smith v. Smith, 2016 ABCA 376

O'Neil v. Yaskowich, 2018 ABQB 599

Peermohamed v. Pirani, 2018 ABQB 698

2. Severance of Joint Tenancy

Felske Estate v. Donszelman, [2009] A.J. No. 619 (C.A.) (Quicklaw)

3. Possession of Matrimonial Home

Family Property Act, c. F-4.7, Part 2

Q.B. Family Law Practice Note 4 (Ex Parte Restraining Orders) (Sept. 1, 1997)

Protection Against Family Violence Act, R.S.A. 2000, c.P-27, as amended

4. Occupation Rent

Milne v. Milne, [2009] A.J. No. 360 (C.A.) (Quicklaw), paras. 83-84



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Online Resources

The majority of case law and legislative resources needed by NCA students are available on CanLII, the free legal information resource funded by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (www.canlii.org). That includes all decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada, and all federal, provincial, territorial and appellate courts.

Your registration fee also includes free access to the Quicklaw resources of Lexis Nexis. Your ID and password will be arranged and emailed to your email address on file a few weeks after the end of the registration session.

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