



SURVEY LAW 1



Syllabus & Info for Fall 2026

1. OVERALL GOALS AND PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the *Survey Law 1* course is to provide a foundation for professional surveyors to integrate legal principles, legislation and regulations within the overall framework of property boundary surveys in Ontario and Canada. The course exposes learners to concepts and processes underlying the performance of cadastral surveying such as:

- basic concepts of real property law
- definition of a legal boundary
- origins of boundary law and township survey systems in Ontario as but one jurisdictional example
- application of early survey systems to the recording of interests in land through the *Registry Act* and the *Land Titles Act* as examples of evolving systems for registration of deeds and registration of title
- boundary law principles arising from special circumstances and their impact on a land registration system
- complexities of the process of legal research and boundary investigation
- the principles established through legislation, the courts, and practices recognized as acceptable standards within the profession in evaluating evidence

The learning approach used in this course is very much a self-motivated, self-discovery one. The instruction methods – namely, reading, independent research, lectures, study questions,

discussions, quizzes and assignments – are designed to prepare for competency in survey law issues (as they relate to surveyors) by requiring learners to:

- understand the nature of law and the legal system
- wade through much material from various sources that contributes to and informs a surveyor's judgment as to the location of a retraced boundary
- clearly communicate, verbally and in writing, the results of their research as well as the reasoning underlying their opinions
- discover how survey law – and the application of legal principles to facts established through evidence – impacts a professional surveyor's work and responsibility

2. INSTRUCTOR

This course is taught by Izaak de Rijcke – a practising lawyer and land surveyor. Izaak can be contacted by email at izaak@4pointlearning.ca. Occasional guest speakers will be announced during the semester.

3. CLASS TIMES AND FORMAT

The course uses a blended delivery approach which allows remote participation and recording of classes for later viewing. There are 2 lectures per week: a “live” one scheduled for Wednesday evenings from 6 pm to 7:30 pm EST and a pre-recorded one made available later in the week. This 36-hour course is delivered entirely online over a 12-week period.

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course meets the requirements for licensure as an Ontario Land Surveyor by the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors. *Survey Law 1* has been accredited by CBEPS for purposes of meeting the requirements of the Cadastral Studies and Survey Law sections of the CBEPS syllabus. Accordingly, it may also meet the requirements for a professional licence in many other jurisdictions of Canada through reciprocity and mobility recognition.

The course book: ***Principles of Boundary Law in Canada*** can be purchased directly through Four Point Learning: https://4pointlearning.ca/4PL/Principles_Boundary_Law.pdf. In addition, selected readings will be posted on the Learning Management System (LMS) on the Four Point Learning site as the course progresses.

5. COURSE EVALUATION GUIDELINES

The criteria guiding the Instructor's evaluation of performance are as follows:

1. Quizzes (4 of them, weight: 10% each)

Each of the four sections of the course includes a quiz consisting of 3 randomized short-answer questions and 1 randomized true/false question covering the key concepts explored in the annotated readings, lectures, and the course book, *Principles of Boundary Law in Canada*.

The short-answer questions are provided beforehand as *self-study* questions since:

- i. These questions are constructed to develop competency in the analytical thinking skills required of a cadastral surveyor, as per the overarching objective for the Survey Law courses: *to provide the analytical framework and the process or best practice to follow in working through evidence in order to reach conclusions of fact which serve as the foundation for the professional surveyor's opinion.*
- ii. Furthermore, preparing answers beforehand not only allows for the abstract concepts to be appreciated with all facets, nuances, and possible implications for the practical situations a surveyor will encounter on the ground, but there is not enough time allocated during the quiz to answer these questions at the expected proficiency level, as typified by the following evaluation criteria:
 - a) **Content**
 - key elements and concepts raised in the question are all addressed
 - answer shows a clear understanding and application of course material
 - b) **Presentation**
 - content of the answer is organized in a clear and concise manner with few grammatical or stylistic errors
 - writing is to the professional standard
 - answer is clear to a lay (non-surveyor, non-lawyer) audience
 - sources used to support your answer are cited appropriately

Grading Scale	
A+	90-100
A	80-89
B+	75-79
B	70-74
C+	65-69
C	60-64
D+	55-59
D	50-54
E	40-49
F	0-39

The quizzes are accessed via the course's LMS. They can be taken any time **before** their closure date – i.e., the first Sunday following the last lecture of that section.

2. Assignments (3 of them, weight: 20% each)

The assignments are evaluated in terms of competency in:

- demonstrating critical thinking in the application of theory to a solution of the problem
- correctly interpreting the applicable regulations, statutes, and case law
- explaining the legal principles used in arriving at the proposed solution/opinion
- communicating effectively through professional presentation, grammar and referencing the sources used to construct the arguments and/or rationale

Expectations on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance productivity is emerging as a best practice and will increasingly impact how professionals do their work. Analytical AI software, which focuses on understanding existing data, making predictions, and identifying patterns within structured datasets, can alleviate geodesy, control surveys and data processing tasks. Generative AI (GenAI), on the other hand, is a type of AI that can create new content based on existing data and learned patterns. Unless the algorithm used in a particular GenAI tool is transparent about how a boundary location may be indicated, the critical thinking, communication and opinion formation skills remain as competencies for the cadastral surveyor. *Responsible use* of GenAI therefore emerges as a complementary competency and encompasses:

- *Clearly disclosing AI-generated content and explaining the role of AI in the process:* For what portion of the submission was GenAI used? How did you incorporate the GenAI output into the final product? Where was GenAI helpful and where did it lead you astray?
- *Validating GenAI results for accuracy, biases, reliability and relevance to the issue at hand:* Do the boundary principles applied by the GenAI tool actually exist in your jurisdiction? What are specific common law principles or statutory requirements that either support or refute the GenAI output for the fact scenario or jurisdiction you are working in?
- *Demonstrating critical analysis, reasoning and good judgement in AI-assisted submitted works:* Did the collaboration help or hinder your thought process? Did GenAI hijack your learning experience? What did GenAI get wrong?
- *Understanding the ethical guidelines and legal obligations related to privacy, intellectual property and accountability:* Are there over-arching principles within professional ethics that need to be considered when using AI tools in a particular scenario?

In survey law courses, harnessing GenAI technology as a *collaborative* tool in completing an assignment is expected. Nevertheless, submission of AI-generated content is permitted only to

a *limited extent* – and only with proper demonstration of its responsible use. It bears repeating that a cadastral survey product is not a “black box”. The analytical reasoning process supporting a land surveyor’s opinion of a boundary placement needs to be explained and must reveal the critical thinking path that has been followed. In other words, the need to explain how facts are determined and what boundary law principles are applied to reach a result remains unchanged.

6. SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND TOPICS

The outline of topics reflects a *general* overview of weekly coverage. Please be advised that the nature of this material makes it difficult to learn in a linear fashion. The outline is for *your convenience* – it is not meant to fetter the instructor’s presentation or the range of topics to be discussed. [References] are to chapters in *Principles of Boundary Law in Canada*.

SECTION 1: *The Nature of Property and Estates in Land*

- Sep 9 The Nature of Property Rights; Common Ownership or Lack of Property Rights; The Tragedy of the Commons; a brief history of English Land Law. [Chapter 1 and Appx 1]
- Sep 16 Title, Tenure and Land Holding in the New Confederation; Property Rights and Capitalism; Property Rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Freedom of Expression on Public Property; Relativity of Title and Types of Tenancy. [Appx 1]
- Sep 23 Easements and Rights of Way; Easements and Proprietary Estoppel; Licences and *profits à prendre*; Equity; Co-Ownership. [Chapter 5]
- Sep 30 Restrictive Covenants: Intention for the burden to run with Land and ascertainability. [Chapter 5]

SECTION 2: *The Nature of Boundaries*

- Oct 7 Introduction to what is a boundary; Ownership of a Hedge and Legal Boundaries; Settlement Policies; Patterns of Settlement and Imposition of Survey Lines; Colonization and Settlement Schemes; Development of Township Surveys in Ontario; Early Land Surveys in Southern Ontario. [Chapter 2]
- Oct 14 Understanding the Crown Land Granting Process; Applying for a Land Grant: Land Petitions; District Land Boards; Settlement companies; Sample List of Ontario Colonization Roads; Government Authorized Survey Lines; the Hierarchy of Evidence and when it does not apply; the Professional Surveyor’s Duty; Township Land Records. [Chapter 1]

Oct 21 Background History of the Land Tenure System in Ontario; History of the Land Registry Office; Registration of Deeds Versus Registration of Title; short History of Land Registration in England and Wales; Developing Land Registration Systems for Developing Countries; When is a Land Registration System necessary? [Chapter 7]

SECTION 3: *Issues in the Survey of Specific Boundaries*

Oct 28 Introduction to topic; Adverse possession – Overview; Who can exercise a property right vs. Who is entitled to exercise that right; Case law; *animus possidendi*; Nature of Ordinary Use; Inconsistent Use; Inconsistent Use as a Test; Claims through non-exclusive use; Conversion of Title from LTCQ to LT+. [Chapter 4]

Nov 4 Appeals under the *Land Titles Act*; the role of the land surveyor when appearing as a witness in a title related matter; Proof of Adverse Possession and Limitations; Case law; Legal Uncertainty of a Boundary Location, or Uncertainty of Remedies for the Resolution of Boundary Disputes? [Appx 3]

SECTION 4: *Special Boundaries — Public Roads and Highways*

Nov 11 **Reading Week – No class**

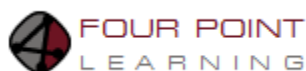
Nov 18 Introduction to topic; relocation of Original Road Allowance; Lack of Use; Property Owner's Intention; subdivider's Intention; establishing a Highway; Land Dedication for Use as Public Highway; Intention to Dedicate; Dedication and Acceptance. [Chapter 6]

Nov 25 Highways as having a special status; public commons and parks; aboriginal title; community property and what results from the nature of this property insofar as boundaries are concerned. [Chapter 9]

Dec 2 Survey Evidence of Public Roads; *Surveys Act* provisions; case law; *Road Access Act* and implications for land surveyors. [Chapters 6 and 9]

Looking forward to our learning journey together,

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