ABOUT US

The Centre for Constitutional Studies is unique as the hub for constitutional research and public education in Canada. It connects leading Canadian and international scholars, contributes to constitutional debate, creates accessible educational resources, and connects constitutional experts with the public.

Centre for Constitutional Studies Staff:

Patricia Paradis, Executive Director
Aleena Reitsma, Public Legal Education Coordinator
Zara Ahmed, Administrator

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

13 webinars on constitutional issues, 1,393 attendees

19 new articles about the Constitution to website

The Constitutional Forum
3 New Issues: 29.2, 29.3, & 30.1

The Review of Constitutional Studies
2 New Issues: 24.2 & 25.1

35 new YouTube videos
461 YouTube subscribers
44,400 YouTube total views

97,977 website page views

1,740 twitter followers
471 facebook followers
THE CENTRE AND COVID-19

Since April 2020, the Centre has quickly responded to the many constitutional issues raised by the pandemic, using these as opportunities for public legal education about the Constitution. After successfully pivoting our in-person events to online platforms, and adapting to working remotely, we created several accessible resources addressing constitutionally protected rights and freedoms impacted by government responses to the pandemic, as well as broader issues involving the use of emergency powers by governments.

COVID-19 WEBINARS

This year, our Downtown Charter Series became our Online Charter Series, offering events via webinar instead of in-person. This Series aims to educate the public about specific sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in a one-hour, lunch-time format. Events are presented by academics, most of whom are from the University of Alberta, and other experts, and are intended for a general audience with little to no legal background. Four COVID-related Online Charter events were held on issues such as mobility rights and freedom of religion, and the legal balancing of breaches of those rights with government restrictions during the pandemic.

The Centre also hosted webinars on broader constitutional issues that are impacted by the pandemic with well known academics such as David Dyzenhaus and Paul Daly on “Emergency Powers and Legal Principle”.

All webinars organized by the Centre were recorded and are available on the Centre’s YouTube channel.

See Appendix A for a list of all webinars hosted by the Centre in this past year.

COVID-19 CONFERENCES

The Centre participated in planning conferences which will deal with pandemic issues and the Constitution. The first, titled, “From Isolation to Inclusion: Navigating the post-COVID World and a Public Conference on the Charter at 40” organized by Professors Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Catherine Kellogg in the Political Science Department at the U of Alberta, will be held in November 2021. The Centre is participating with production of video resources on the Charter, research on Charter gaps, and publication of a special issue of our journal, the Review of Constitutional Studies, for this conference. The second conference, to be held in Spring 2022 (originally scheduled for Spring 2021 but now postponed), titled, Pandemics and Paradigms of Government: Futures for the Rule of Law in the 21st Century, is organized by Assistant Professor Josh Nichols, (Faculty of Law, U of Alberta) and Associate Professor Amy Swiffen (Political Studies, Ryerson U). The Centre will publish a special issue of the Review flowing from this conference.
The Centre launched a Blog focused on the use and possible overreach of government powers during the pandemic. It provided an opportunity for the public, lawyers, and the judiciary to hear from experts on the constitutionality of the ever-changing and various government responses to COVID-19. The first post was published on April 27th, 2020 by Professors Dyzenhaus and Daly, and 17 subsequent posts followed by senior and junior academics across the country, from a variety of disciplines.

See Appendix B for a list of Blog posts.

An article by graduate student Kristopher Kinsinger titled, “Restricting Freedom of Peaceful Assembly During Public Health Emergencies” was published in one of the Centre’s two journals, the Constitutional Forum.

Our Summer Students published a number of articles on the Centre’s website about pandemic issues and the Constitution, such as “Travel Restrictions in a Pandemic: What are your Charter Rights?”.

See Appendix C for a list of Articles.

While government COVID-19 responses raised a number of constitutional issues, there were numerous other opportunities for constitutional discussion and education, including on questions of democratic governance, Indigenous rights, numerous Bills proposed in Alberta, and the constitutionality of carbon pricing by the federal government.


“Courts of Appeal Split on Validity of Carbon Tax” by Case Littlewood
**EXPERT PANEL - March 31st, 2021:**

Aftermath! Federal Carbon Pricing and the Decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.
Professors Eric M. Adams (Faculty of Law, U of A), Andrew Leach (Alberta School of Business, U of A), Darcy Lindberg (Faculty of Law, U of A), Jocelyn Stacey (Peter A. Allard School of Law, UBC), Noura Karazivan (Faculty of Law, Montreal) discussed Supreme Court’s carbon pricing decision and its implications for federal, provincial, and Indigenous jurisdiction in Canada.

**EXPERT PANEL - September 22nd, 2021:**

Carbon Pricing and the Constitution
Professors Eric M. Adams (Faculty of Law, U of A), Andrew Leach (Alberta School of Business, U of A), and Jocelyn Stacey (Peter A. Allard School of Law, UBC) In anticipation of the Supreme Court decision determining whether the federal government has the power to enact the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, these experts discussed why the federal government’s carbon pricing was constitutionally contentious.

**CONSTITUTIONALITY OF ALBERTA LEGISLATION**

**STUDENT ARTICLES**

“Are Protest’s Illegal in Alberta? Charter Issues with Bill 1” by Case Littlewood
“Alberta’s Bill 10: The Return of the King(s)?” by Teresa Holmes
“A Return to Balance or Empowering the Powerful? Alberta’s Bill 32” by Case Littlewood

**ONLINE CHARTER SERIES - February 08, 2021**

Constitutional Dissent - Alberta’s Critical Infrastructure Defence Act
Professor Eric M. Adams (Faculty of Law, U of A) discussed the Charter section 2 fundamental freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly in relation to the constitutionality of Alberta’s Critical Infrastructure Defence Act, which prohibits various activities with respect to “essential infrastructure”.
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

STUDENT ARTICLE
“Charter Rights on Campus? It Depends Where You Live” by Case Littlewood

MINORITY LANGUAGE RIGHTS

STUDENT ARTICLE
“Pouvez-vous dire violation de la Charte? Minority Language Rights in Canada” by Teresa Holmes

REMEDIES FOR UNCONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT ACTION

STUDENT ARTICLE
“Using the Charter to Repair the Damage of Unconstitutional Government Action” by Teresa Holmes

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

ONLINE CHARTER SERIES - June 10, 2020
Rights, Freedoms and Medical Assistance in Dying
Professor Ubaka Ogbogu (Faculty of Law, U of Alberta) discussed recent updates to Canada’s medical assistance in dying laws and discussed their constitutionality with respect to section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which protects the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

INDIGENOUS LAW vs CANADIAN LAW

ONLINE CHARTER SERIES - October 22, 2020
Indigenous Laws in Canadian Courts
Ryan Beaton (PhD candidate, UVic and lawyer, Juristes Power) discussed the Yukon Supreme Court’s decision concerning whether the Charter could be used to ‘overrule’ the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation’s Constitution.
SPEAKER EVENT - March 09, 2021
Civil Liberty and Fundamental Rights: A Juridical Perspective
Professor Quentin Skinner (Barber Beaumont Professor of the Humanities, Queen Mary University of London) gave this excellent presentation from London, England. He explored the concept of civil liberty and how it impacts the conception of fundamental rights.

ANNUAL MCDONALD LECTURE
The Centre not only hosted the Annual McDonald Lecture, but also an expert panel to reflect on the Lecture. This year’s McDonald Lecturer, Professor Jacob T. Levy (Tomlinson Professor of Political Theory, McGill), provided a timely presentation on the separation of powers, the rule of law, and current threats to constitutional democracies. Professor Levy’s presentation is keenly relevant to the current political climate, in which constitutionalism faces acute challenges worldwide. The follow-up panel provided an opportunity for scholars to consider and engage with Professor Levy’s presentation and current political circumstances.

31st Annual McDonald Lecture in Constitutional Studies
November 04, 2020
The Separation of Powers and the Challenge to Constitutional Democracy
Professor Jacob T. Levy, Tomlinson Professor of Political Theory, McGill, explored how the fragility of constitutional democracy is rooted in the separation of powers. This lecture is supported by an endowment provided by the McDonald family to the Faculty of Law in honour of the late Justice David McDonald of the Court of Appeal of Alberta.

SPEAKER EVENT - NOVEMBER 27, 2020
The Future of Liberal Democracies and Levy’s Separation of Power Thesis
Professors Hillary Nye (Faculty of Law, U of A), Yann Allard-Tremblay (Department of Political Science, McGill), Arjun Tremblay (Department of Politics and International Studies, Regina), and Mary Liston (Peter A. Allard School of Law, UBC) discussed Professor Levy’s McDonald Lecture. They were joined by Professor Levy (Tomlinson Professor of Political Theory, McGill) for a lively discussion about the implications of his thesis.

Moderated by Keith Cherry (PhD), Killam Postdoctoral Fellow.
PROJECTS

SUMMER STUDENT PROGRAM

The Centre’s Summer Students are essential to producing plain language articles and key terms, which are available for access by the general public on the Centre’s website. The Centre hired 3 law students to research current constitutional issues and to write articles and key terms for our website. Our summer students (Teresa Holmes (2L), Case Littlewood (1L), and Spencer Millis (1L)) published 19 plain language articles about the Constitution on hot topics such as equalization and the duty to consult. Covering a myriad of timely topics, the articles provide an excellent opportunity for the public to learn about the many ways in which the Constitution affects their everyday lives, and current events.

For a full list of articles and key terms, see Appendix C.

U SCHOOL CONSTITUTION WORKSHOP

U School is organized by the University of Alberta Senate and is aimed at introducing and connecting students from socially vulnerable, Indigenous, and rural communities to the University of Alberta. The Centre presents a Constitution Workshop, taught by law students, to grade 5/6 students as part of the U School program. The Constitution Workshop teaches students about confederation and the division of powers (i.e. areas in which the provincial and federal governments can legislate), culminating in an opportunity for the students to play a lawyer, arguing which level of government should have jurisdiction over the environment.

While COVID-19 disrupted U School, the Centre created an online remote version, which could be used both for students in their classrooms and at home. Law student volunteers taught 2 Workshops to grade 5 and 6 students.

Law student volunteers also developed a grade 9 workshop about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We look forward to piloting it in the next year.

REIMAGINING RIVERS SERIES

With the Environmental Law Centre and Professors from the University of Alberta Faculty of Law, the Centre planned a Symposium for June 2022 on federalism and the environment. The Symposium was initially planned for June 2021 but was postponed because of COVID-19. However, the Centre commenced planning a series of events leading up to the Symposium to take place in 2021-2022. The Series will provide attendees with context, ideas, and diverse perspectives for thinking about jurisdictional hurdles that impact the thriving of our environment as well as innovative approaches to rethinking relationship with it.
In anticipation of the 40th anniversary of the patriation of Canada’s Constitution, the Centre is planning an April 2022 Conference in conjunction with three other Centres, the Public Law Group at the University of Ottawa, the Centre d’analyse politique: constitution et fédéralisme at l’Université du Québec à Montréal, and the Constitutional Studies Program at the University of Texas at Austin, to mark the April 17th, 1982 patriation, and the addition of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms to our Constitution. This is being planned as an in-person event.

JOURNALS

Four articles published in the Centre’s journals were cited in the Supreme Court’s decision on the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act - two in the majority, and two in dissent.

**Articles cited by majority:**


*Review of Constitutional Studies Article* - “Kyoto, the Constitution, and Carbon Trading: Waking a Sleeping BNA Bear (Or Two)” by Stewart Elgie

**Articles cited by dissent:**

*Constitutional Forum Articles* - “Autonomy, Subsidiarity, Solidarity: Foundations of Cooperative Federalism” by Hugo Cyr

“Canadian Federalism in the Context of Combating Climate Change” by Alexis Bélanger
Available by subscription, the Review is Canada’s only peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, academic journal dedicated to the exploration and analysis of constitutional law and theory. The Review publishes original scholarly work on the theoretical, functional, and doctrinal aspects of constitutional law, and provides a forum for the analysis of constitutionalism in its various political, social, and historical contexts. The Review also welcomes articles with a focus on comparative or global constitutionalism.

Two issues were published in the 2020-2021 fiscal year; issues 24.2 and 25.1. We have received 17 submissions for the forthcoming issue.

See Appendix D for a list of articles published in each issue.

The Forum is available free of charge through the University of Alberta Online Journal System (OJS). Articles published draw from many disciplines, including law, history, economics, political science, sociology and philosophy. The Forum’s publication schedule and the reasonably short turnaround time from submission to publication allow the Forum to provide insightful commentary on current topics of Canadian and international constitutional importance.

Three issues were published in the 2020-2021 fiscal year; special issue 29.2 on campus speech and general issues 29.3 and 30.1.

See Appendix E for a list of articles published in each issue.
RESEARCH ASSOCIATES/ POST DOCTORAL FELLOWS

Post Doctoral Fellow Keith Cherry (PhD) began work with the Centre in September 2020 as part of his Killam Fellowship with Assistant Professor Josh Nichols. We were very fortunate to have Keith’s perspectives and assistance. He helped with planning an expert panel in November 2020, where Professor Jacob Levy’s McDonald Lecture was discussed, and moderated that event. He then also edited a Special Issue of the Forum which will be published in early September 2021.

Richard Mailey (PhD) worked as a Research Associate with the Centre this year. He assisted with copy-editing all articles for the Centre’s two journals, producing a 6-part podcast series on the Charlottetown Accord, working with our Summer Students, and with Legacies of Patriation conference planning. His assistance has been invaluable, and we look forward to launching his podcast series in early 2022.

ADVISORY BOARD

The Centre is grateful for the continued guidance and dedication of our Advisory Board which comprises 12 members from three U of A faculties as well as 3 members of the judiciary, lawyers, and members of the public. This year, we bid farewell to Professor Lise Gotell (Women’s & Gender Studies, U of A) who served as Board Chair for 2 years, and Professor James Muir (History and Classics, U of A), both of whom completed 2 three-year terms with the Board. We thank them for their work on projects, and for their support while serving on the Board, and wish them all the best in their future endeavours. We welcomed Professor Rebecca Sockbeson (Education, U of A) and Professor Philip Bryden (Law, U of A; former Dean, 2009-2014) to our Advisory Board.

See Appendix F for a list of our Advisory Board members for 2020-2021.
The Centre for Constitutional Studies is an academic center established at the University of Alberta and is accountable to the University through the Dean of the Faculty of Law. The Centre’s primary financial support comes from the Alberta Law Foundation (ALF). The Centre gratefully acknowledges ALF’s continuing support.

This year, the Centre also welcomed our new Administrator, Zara Ahmed, in November 2020. Thank you to all our Board members, editors, contractors, student employees and volunteers, for your assistance and support. Without you, our work would not be possible.

For more about our people see: https://www.constitutionalstudies.ca/the-centre/#member-listing. To stay up to date on the Centre’s work, sign up for our newsletter here.
APPENDIX A - WEBINARS

Wednesday, March 31, 2021
Aftermath! Federal Carbon Pricing and the Decision of the Supreme Court of Canada
Eric M. Adams, Andrew Leach, Darcy Lindberg, Noura Karazivan, & Jocelyn Stacey

Monday, March 22, 2021
Online Charter Series: The Constitutional Right of Religious Freedom in Canada
Howard Kislowicz

Tuesday, March 09, 2021
Civil Liberty and Fundamental Rights: A Juridical Perspective
Quentin Skinner

Wednesday, February 24, 2021
Online Charter Series: Section 1, the Charter’s Balancing Provision
Patricia Paradis

Monday, February 08, 2021
Online Charter Series: Constitutional Dissent
Eric M. Adams

Wednesday, January 13, 2021
Online Charter Series: Contact Tracing Apps
Emily Laidlaw & Joel Reardon

Friday, November 27, 2020
The Future of Liberal Democracies, and Levy’s Separation of Powers Thesis
Jacob T. Levy, Yann Allard-Tremblay, Hillary Nye, Mary Liston, & Arjun Tremblay
Moderated by Keith Cherry

Wednesday, November 04, 2020
31st Annual McDonald Lecture in Constitutional Studies
Jacob T. Levy

Thursday, October 22, 2020
Ryan Beaton

Monday, September 28, 2020
Online Charter Series: Pandemic Travel Restrictions- Do They Violate Your Mobility Rights?
Arthur M. Grant & Cara Zwibel

Tuesday, September 22, 2020
Carbon Pricing and the Constitution
Eric M. Adams, Andrew Leach, & Jocelyn Stacey

Wednesday, June 10, 2021
Online Charter Series: Rights, Freedoms and Medical Assistance in Dying
Ubaka Ogbogu

Wednesday, May 20, 2020
COVID-19: Emergency Powers and Legal Principle
David Dyzenhaus & Paul Daly
February 03, 2021 - COVID-19 & Cellphone Surveillance
Joel Reardon, Emily Laidlaw, & Greg Hagen

October 22, 2020 - Le Concept juridique de l’urgence sanitaire: une protection contre les virus biologiques et ... politiques
Marie-Claude Premont & Marie-Eve Couture-Menard

July 20, 2020 - Emergencies and the Rule of Learning
Jocelyn Stacey

June 29, 2020 - The Freedoms We Cannot Afford to Ignore During COVID-19
Kristopher Kinsinger & Brian Bird

June 22, 2020 - COVID-19 and the Exercise of Legislative Power by the Executive
Shaun Fluker

June 15, 2020 - Pandemic Preparedness and Responsiveness in Canada: Exploring the Case for an Intergovernmental Agreement
Michael Da Silva & Maxime St-Hillaire

June 08, 2020 - The Absolute Limits of Canada's Emergency Powers: The Unwritten Constitutional Principles Entrench Rights that Remain Non-Derogable in Extremis
Ryan Alford

Sarah Burningham

June 01, 2020 - Indigenous Peoples and COVID-19: Protecting People, Protecting Rights
Kate Gunn

May 28, 2020 - Justice in Troubled Times: Pandemic Disrupts the Right to be Tried Within a Reasonable Time
Owen Griffiths

May 25, 2020 - Are Quebec and Canada having a “Schmittian” (or Iheringian) moment?
Maxime St. Hillaire

May 21, 2020 - Exercising Indigenous Jurisdiction Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic
Angela D’Elia Decembrini

May 18, 2020 - Drug approvals: exclusive Health Canada jurisdiction or fair game for the provinces?
Lorian Hardcastle & Ubaka Ogbogu

May 14, 2020 - The One vs the Many: When Public Health Conflicts with Individual Rights
Amy Swiffen

May 12, 2020 - Part-Two: COVID-19 & the Canadian Constitution
Sujit Choudhry

May 11, 2020 - Part One: COVID-19 & the Canadian Constitution
Sujit Choudhry

May 07, 2020 - Regulating the Covid-19 Pandemic: Forms of State Power and Accountability Challenges
Paul Daly

April 27, 2020 - Canada the Good?
David Dyzenhaus
**Student Articles**

Using the *Charter* to Repair the Damage of Unconstitutional Government Action  
Teresa Holmes

Pouvez-vous dire violation de la Charte? Minority Language Education Rights in Canada  
Teresa Holmes

A Return to Balance or Empowering the Powerful? Alberta’s Bill 32  
Case Littlewood

*Charter* Rights on Campus? It Depends Where You Live  
Case Littlewood

British Columbia’s Guardian Angels…Straight from Hell? BC’s Civil Forfeiture Act Case  
Spencer Millis

A Fair Deal for Alberta: Are Changes to the Equalization Program Coming?  
Case Littlewood

They’ve Got No Strings: Separation of Powers, Judicial Independence, and the Rule of Law in the Meng Wanzhou Case  
Teresa Holmes

Court of Appeal Split on Validity of Carbon Tax  
Case Littlewood

Duty to Consult With Whom?  
Case Littlewood

Alberta’s Bill 10: The Return of the King(s)?  
Teresa Holmes

Teresa Holmes

Caging the Virus: Is Mandatory Isolation Constitutional?  
Teresa Holmes

Conversion Therapy Ban: Does Calgary’s New Bylaw Violate Religious Freedoms?  
Spencer Millis

Positive that the Government is obligated to support you? Think Again  
Spencer Millis

Are Protests Illegal in Alberta? *Charter* Issues with Bill 1  
Case Littlewood

To be Tried Within a Reasonable Time: Affirming the Jordan Ceilings  
Case Littlewood

Alberta and its Physicians Clash Over a Right to Sometime Besides Striking  
Case Littlewood

**Key Terms**

Majority, Concurring, and Dissenting Decisions

Purposive Approach to Charter Interpretation
Volume 24.2 Articles

Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action across Intergovernmental Landscapes: Who Can and Should do What?
Johanne Poirier & Sajeda Hedaraly

Federal Loyalty and the ‘Nature’ of Federalism
Michael Da Silva

On the Limits of Proportionality
Iryna Ponomarenko

References, Law, and Political Decision-Making
Emmett Macfarlane

Volume 25.1 Articles

The Separation of Powers and the Challenge to Constitutional Democracy
Jacob T Levy

Law, Faith, and Canada’s Unwritten Constitution
Howard Kislowicz

Against Privileging the Charter: The Case of Federal Pre-Enactment Constitutional Review
Wade Wright

The Expansion of the Constitutional Court in Italy: Ruling the Void in Times of Political Instability
Fortunato Musella and Luigi Rullo

Multiculturalism Has a Past, but Does it Have a Future? A Review of Rita Chin’s The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe: a History and Hugh Donald Forbes’ Multiculturalism in Canada: Constructing a Model Multiculture with Multicultural Values
Arjun Tremblay
Volume 29.2 - Special: The Campus Speech Issue Articles

Introduction: Symbolic Politics, Constitutional Consequences
Kate Bezanson and Alison Braley-Rattai

Compelling Freedom on Campus: A Free Speech Paradox
Jamie Cameron

The Politics of Campus Free Speech in Canada and the United States
Stephen L. Newman

Universities, the Charter, Doug Ford, and Campus Free Speech
James L. Turk

Academic Freedom, Canadian Labour Law and the Scope of Intra-Mural Expression
Michael Lynk

Alison Braley-Rattai and Kate Bezanson

Volume 29.3 Articles

The Toronto Municipal Election: Judicial Failure to Protect the Structure of the Canadian Constitution
(Alyn) James Johnson

Do Consumers Really Benefit from the Federal Paramountcy Doctrine? A Critique of Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions v Telus Communications Inc.
Catherine Mathieu

Constitutionalism and the Genetic Non-Discrimination Act Reference
Shannon Hale and Dwight Newman

Volume 30.1 Articles

Toronto’s 2018 Municipal Election, Rights of Democratic Participation, and Section 2(b) of the Charter
Jamie Cameron and Bailey Fox

Restricting Freedom of Peaceful Assembly During Public Health Emergencies
Kristopher E G Kinsinger

“This Charter applies...“: The Supreme Court of Canada’s Fundamental Error in the Trinity Western University decisions
Ian Peach

The Common Good and Legal Interpretation: A Response to Leonid Sirota and Mark Mancini
Stephanie Serafin, Kerry Sun, and Xavier Foccroulle Menard
APPENDIX F - ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Professor Steven Penney (Chair), Faculty of Law, University of Alberta
Justice Anna Loparco, Court of Queen’s Bench
Justice Thomas Rothwell, Court of Queen’s Bench
Justice Nathan Whitling, Court of Queen’s Bench
Professor Emeritus Philip Bryden, Faculty of Law, University of Alberta
Assistant Professor Valerie Lapointe-Gagnon, Campus Saint-Jean
Leah McDaniel, Barrister and Solicitor, Alberta Justice
Assistant Professor Joshua Nichols, Faculty of Law, University of Alberta
Judy Piercey, Community Member
Associate Professor Rebecca Sockbeson, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta
Professor Linda Trimble, Department of Political Science, University of Alberta
Associate Professor Jared Wesley, Department of Political Science, University of Alberta