

Bio - Patricia M. Barkaskas



Patricia is Métis from Alberta. Her research focuses on the intersection of justice and law, including access to justice, clinical legal education, and decolonizing and Indigenizing law. She is particularly interested in examining the value of Indigenous pedagogies in experiential learning, clinical legal education, and skills-based legal training, and disrupting the normative violence of colonial legal education.

Professor Barkaskas is the Academic Director of the Indigenous Community Legal Clinic, which is located in the Downtown Eastside community of Vancouver on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. The ICLC welcomes up to thirty law students a year who provide free legal services to the Indigenous community in the Lower Mainland and throughout the province. Students are taught through hands-on experience conducting legal work on client files, including legal research, submissions, and court appearances. Professor Barkaskas is also faculty lead for the law school's Indigenous Cultural Competency Certificate, launched in September 2018. The ICC is an eight-month non-credit certificate course that assists students in developing better understandings of colonial assumptions, beliefs, and biases that form the foundation of the Canadian legal system, the history of colonial practices and policies in Canada, Indigenous perspectives on law, and what decolonization means for the practice of law.

Before attending law school, Professor Barkaskas earned a M.A. in History, with a focus on Indigenous histories in North America, and worked for Residential school survivors as an historical legal researcher for the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. As part of her J.D., she completed a Law and Social Justice Specialization. After receiving her law degree from UBC, she practiced in the areas of child protection (as parent's counsel), criminal, family, civil litigation, and prison law. She has written Gladue reports for all levels of court in BC.