

Syllabus and Reading Lists for the Examination

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Detailed below are the syllabus and reading lists for each subject in the Examination.

Please note that:

- Questions set in one paper may require knowledge of other areas of law and particularly knowledge from another paper or papers in the syllabus.
- The latest editions of recommended texts should always be used.
- Applicants should ensure that later editions have not superseded those indicated.
- Applicants are reminded that they will be expected to be familiar with the laws of Hong Kong currently in force three months prior to the Examination.

PAPER I : CONTRACT and TORT

CONTRACT

Syllabus

- 1. Formation of Contract**
 - Offer
 - Acceptance
 - Doctrine of consideration
 - Intention to create legal relations
 - Formalities, contracts requiring written evidence
 - Estoppel
 - Assumption of responsibility
- 2. Contents of Contract**
 - Classification of terms of the contract
 - Rules of construction of written contracts
- 3. The abolition of privity of contract**
- 4. Capacity of Parties**
- 5. Vitiating Factors**
 - Misrepresentation
 - Mistake
 - Duress
 - Ascendancy – i.e. the merger of Economic Duress and Undue influence
 - Unconscionable bargains
- 6. Performance and Discharge of Contract**
 - Time of performance
 - Partial performance of entire obligation
 - Discharge by performance
 - Discharge by agreement
 - Discharge by breach
 - Discharge by frustration
- 7. Assignment and Novation of Contract**
- 8. Illegality and Public Policy**
- 9. Remedies**
 - Damages:
 - (a) Remoteness and possible merger of the 1st and 2nd legs of *Hadley v Baxendale*
 - (b) Penalty/Liquidated damages

- Equitable remedies:
 - (a) Specific performance
 - (b) Injunction
 - (c) Rescission
 - (d) Restitution

10. Estoppel and Assumption of Responsibility

11. Limitation of Actions

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Cheshire, Fifoot and Furmston *Law of Contract* (17th ed. OUP, 2017)

Chitty on Contracts (36th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2025), Vol. 1 and 2 and Hong Kong Specific Contracts (7th ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2022)

Contract Law in Hong Kong (Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2011)

Hall *Foundation of Contract Law in Hong Kong* (9th ed. LexisNexis HK, 2025)

Treitel *Law of Contract* (16th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2025)

Legislation:

See after Tort Syllabus

TORT

Syllabus

- 1. Nature of Tortious Liability**
- 2. Trespass to the Person**
- 3. Trespass to Chattels**
- 4. Trespass to Land**
- 5. Defences to Trespass to the Person and Property**
- 6. Indirect Interference with the Person**
- 7. Negligence**
 - Duty of care
 - Breach of duty
 - Causation
 - Remoteness of damage
 - Defences to negligence
- 8. Employer's Liability**
 - Employers' liability to employees
 - Vicarious liability
- 9. Breach of Statutory Duty**
- 10. Occupiers' Liability and Defective Premises**
- 11. Rylands v. Fletcher Liability**
- 12. Nuisance**
- 13. Defamation, Defences and Remedies**
- 14. Interference with Economic Interest**
 - Torts involving false representations:
 - (a) Deceit
 - (b) Passing off
 - (c) Injurious Falsehood
 - Economic Torts:
 - (a) Conspiracy
 - (b) Intimidation
 - (c) Inducing breach of contract
 - (d) Unlawful interference with trade
 - (e) Breach of confidence
- 15. Multiple Tortfeasors**
 - Joint and Several Liability
 - Contribution
- 16. General Remedies**
- 17. Limitation of Actions**

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

- Buckley** *The Law of Negligence and Nuisance* (7th ed. LexisNexis UK, 2025)
Clerk & Lindsell on Torts (24th ed. and 2nd Supplement. Sweet & Maxwell, 2025)
Charlesworth & Percy on Negligence (16th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2025)
Glofcheski *Tort Law in Hong Kong* (5th ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2023)
Tort Law and Practice in Hong Kong (4th ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2025)
Winfield & Jolowicz *Tort* (21st ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2025)

Legislation for Contract and Tort Syllabus:

The Basic Law of the HKSAR

Civil Liability (Contribution) Ordinance (Cap. 377)

Control of Exemption Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 71)

Defamation Ordinance (Cap. 21)

Hong Kong Reunification Ordinance (Cap. 2601)

Law Amendment and Reform (Consolidation) Ordinance (Cap. 23)

Limitation Ordinance (Cap. 347)

Misrepresentation Ordinance (Cap. 284)

Occupiers Liability Ordinance (Cap. 314)

Unconscionable Contracts Ordinance (Cap. 458)

Civil Liability Contribution Ordinance (Cap. 377)

Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap.282)

Fatal Accidents Ordinance (Cap.22)

**PAPER II : PROPERTY LAW (including Real and Personal Property),
CONVEYANCING and
EQUITY (including the Law of Trusts)**

**PROPERTY LAW (including Real and Personal Property),
CONVEYANCING**

Syllabus

- 1. Hong Kong System of Landholding**
 - Meaning of land
 - Demarcation of land (sectioning and subdivision)
 - Government leases and conditions
 - Planning and building restrictions
 - (a) Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131)
 - (b) Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123)
 - (c) Government lease
 - Co-ownership
 - Pre-sales: consent scheme
 - Land registration
- 2. Common Ownership**
 - Nature of interest: tenancy-in-common
 - Deeds of mutual covenant
 - (a) content
 - (b) enforcement
 - Building management
 - (a) owners' incorporation
 - (b) Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344)
 - (c) owners and manager
- 3. Title**
 - Duty to show and to give good title
 - Root of title and chain of title
 - Proof of title
 - (a) encumbrances
 - (b) occupiers
 - (c) illegal structures
 - (d) breach of government grant
 - (e) breach of deed of mutual covenant
 - (f) execution of deeds
 - (i) presumptions
 - (ii) individuals; signatures
 - (iii) corporations
 - (iv) attorneys: Powers of Attorney Ordinance (Cap. 31)
 - (g) requisitions
 - Registration: priority and notice
 - Vendor and purchaser applications

4. **Transfer of Title**
 - Contract of sale
 - (a) requirement of writing
 - (b) part performance
 - Preliminary agreements
 - Formal sale and purchase agreement
 - Remedies for breach
 - (a) damages
 - (b) rescission
 - (c) specific performance
 - (d) forfeiture of deposit and relief
 - Assignment
 - (a) completion
 - (b) undertakings
 - (c) registration
5. **Easements**
 - Express
 - Implied
 - Lost Modern Grant
6. **Mortgages**
 - Nature of mortgages and charges
 - Form and contents
 - Equity of redemption
 - Registration and priority
 - Remedies of mortgagee
7. **Tenancies**
 - Creation of leases
 - (a) formalities
 - (b) deposits
 - Licences contrasted
 - Enforcement of leases
 - Termination of leases
 - (a) notice
 - (b) forfeiture
8. **Trespassers**
 - Adverse possession and limitation
 - Actions for adverse possession
 - (a) Court of First Instance
 - (b) District Court
 - (c) Lands Tribunal
9. **Personal Property**
 - Personal Property and Interests in Personal Property
 - Types of Personal Property
 - Choses in Action
 - Choses in Possession
 - Ownership

- Possession (finders' possessory interests)
- Bailment
- Credit and Security
 - Security Interests
 - Different Forms of Security Interests
 - Pledges
 - Liens
 - Mortgages
 - Fixed Charges
 - Floating Charges
 - Retention of Title (*Romalpa*) Clauses
- Non-sale acquisitions: *nemo dat* and gifts
 - *Nemo dat* and exceptions
 - Gifts
 - Conditional Gifts
 - Gifts of Future Property
- Sale of Goods
 - Contract of Sale
 - Passing of Legal and Equitable Title
 - Duties of Sellers and Buyers
- Assignments of Choses in Action
 - Sales of Choses in Action
 - Sales of Legal and Equitable Choses in Action
 - Sales of Future Choses in Action
 - Sales of Part of an Identified Bulk
- Share Acquisition & Equitable Assignment
 - Protection of Interests in Property & Remedies
 - Claims in Tort (Trespass to Goods, Conversion, and Detinue)
 - Claims in Unjust Enrichment (Waiver of Tort, Claims in Subtractive Unjust Enrichment)
 - Set-off (as a self-help remedy)
- Relevant local Ordinances for the drafting of Commercial Contracts
 - Unconscionable Contracts Ordinance (Cap. 458)
 - Control of Exemption Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 71)
 - Money Lenders Ordinance (Cap. 163)
 - Supply of Services (Implied Terms) Ordinance (Cap. 457)

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Atiyah and Adams *The Sale of Goods* (15th ed. Pearson Education, 2026)

Bridge *Personal Property Law* (4th ed. OUP, 2015)

Bridge, Gullifer, McMeel and Low *The Law of Personal Property* (3rd ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2021)

Goode and McKendrick *Commercial Law* (6th ed. LexisNexis UK, 2020)

Goo and Lee *Land Law in Hong Kong* (5th ed. LexisNexis, 2022)

Megarry & Wade *The Law of Real Property* (10th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2024)

Merry, Malcolm *Hong Kong Tenancy Law* (6th ed. LexisNexis, 2016)

Merry *Building Management in Hong Kong* (3rd ed. LexisNexis, 2016)

Nield, Sarah *Hong Kong Land Law* (2nd ed. Longman Asia, 2008)

Nield, Sarah *The Hong Kong Conveyancing and Property Ordinance* (Butterworths Asia, 1988)

Nield & Da Roza *Hong Kong Conveyancing and Property Law Handbook* (3rd ed. LexisNexis, 2007)

Sheehan, Duncan *The Principles of Personal Property Law* (2nd ed. Hart Publishing, 2019)

Sihombing and Wilkinson *H.K. Conveyancing Law and Practice* (9th ed. LexisNexis, 2022)

Sihombing and Wilkinson *A Guide to Hong Kong Conveyancing* (9th ed. LexisNexis, 2021)

Sihombing and Wilkinson *A Student's Guide to Hong Kong Conveyancing* (9th ed. LexisNexis, 2021)

Conveyancing Miscellany, Title and Other Current Problems (HK Law Journal Ltd., 1989) Chapters 4 and 6

Legislation (for reference):

Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123), sections 2, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 24A, 24B, 25, 33, 40 and 41

Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344)

Conveyancing and Property Ordinance (Cap. 219)

District Court Ordinance (Cap. 336), sections 35, 36, 48A, 69, 69A, 69B and 69C

District Court Rules, Orders 86, 88 and 113

High Court Ordinance (Cap. 4), sections 17, 21F, 21G and 21H

High Court Rules, Orders 86, 88 and 113

Land Registration Ordinance (Cap. 128)

Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance (Cap. 7)

Lands Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 17), sections 3, 8A, 8B, 10, 11, 11A, 12 and 16 and Schedule

Lands Tribunal Rules, Parts I, II, XIII and XIV

Limitation Ordinance (Cap. 347), sections 7,8(1), 13 and 17

New Territories (Renewable Government Leases) Ordinance (Cap.152)

New Territories Leases (Extension) Ordinance (Cap. 150)

Powers of Attorney Ordinance (Cap. 31)

Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131)

EQUITY (including the Law of Trusts)

Equity Syllabus

1. Background to Equity

- Nature and history of equity
 - (a) Deficiencies of the common law courts
 - (b) Petitions to the Chancellor
 - (c) The Court of Chancery
 - (d) Judicature Acts 1873 and 1875
- Equitable interests
 - (a) Legal v. equitable interests
 - (b) Equitable interests v. mere equities
- Maxims of equity

2. Rules Governing Priorities

- Basic rule: ranking of competing interests in order of creation
- *Bona fide* purchaser of legal estate for value without notice
- The rule in Dearle v. Hall
[Land registration and how it affects equitable principles as to priorities are dealt with in the Property Law Syllabus in paragraph 3]

3. Equitable Assignments

4. Securities

- Pledges
- Liens
- Suretyship
[Mortgages of land are dealt with in the Property Law Syllabus at paragraph 6]

5. Equitable Remedies

- Specific performance
- Injunctions
[Damages under section 17 of the High Court Ordinance (Cap. 4)]
- Rescission
[Section 2 and section 3(2) of the Misrepresentation Ordinance (Cap. 284)]
- Rectification
- Account
- Equitable compensation
- Receivers
- Subrogation

6. Equitable Defences

- Equitable set-off
- Equitable estoppel
- Laches
- Analogy of statutes of limitation
- Penalties and Forfeitures

Trusts Syllabus

7. **Concept of a Trust**

Distinctions between trusts and other relationships (power, agency, contract, bailment and personal representatives)

8. **Concept of a Fiduciary Trust**

9. **Classifications**

- Express v. implied trusts
- Bare v. special trusts
- Fixed v. discretionary trusts
- Executed v. executory trusts

10. **Express (or Declared) Private Trusts**

- Capacity of parties
- Requirements regarding essential validity: the “three certainties”
 - (a) intention
 - (b) subject-matter
 - (c) object/beneficiary
- The beneficiary principle (non-charitable purpose trusts)

11. **Illegality**

- Trusts against public policy
- Rule against perpetuities (HK exception: Chinese customary trusts: New Territories Ordinance (Cap. 97) s.13)
- Trusts circumventing insolvency law

12. **Formalities for Creation**

- Trust of personalty
- Trust of land (Conveyancing and Property Ordinance (Cap. 219) s.5(1)(b))
- Trust of an equitable interest (Conveyancing and Property Ordinance (Cap. 219) s.5(1)(a))
- Testamentary trust (Wills Ordinance (Cap. 30) s.5)

13. **Revocation and Variation of Trusts**

14. **Trusts Imposed by Law**

- Resulting trusts
 - (a) equitable interest not or not wholly disposed of
 - (b) trust for an illegal consideration or purpose
 - (c) voluntary disposition
 - (d) purchase in the name of another; competing presumption of advancement
 - (e) Quistclose Trust
- Constructive trusts
 - (a) unauthorised profits by a trustee or fiduciary
 - (b) fraudulent or unconscionable conduct
 - (c) vendor under a specifically enforceable contract of sale
- Resulting and Constructive trusts contrasted
- Application to the trust of the family home

15. **The Trustee**
 - Appointment
 - Death, retirement and removal
 - Duties in relation to the trust property
 - (a) duty to collect in the assets
 - (b) duty to invest
 - (c) duty to distribute
 - Duties in relation to the beneficiaries
 - (a) duty to maintain equality between the beneficiaries
 - (b) duty to keep accounts and records
 - Powers
16. **Breach of Trust and Fiduciary Duty and Remedies therefor**
 - Unauthorised profits
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Account of profits
 - Equitable compensation
 - Tracing
17. **Liabilities of Third Parties for Disposition of Property in Breach of Trust**
 - Inconsistent dealing
 - Knowing receipt
 - Dishonest assistance
18. **Control by Beneficiaries (the rule in Saunders v. Vautier)**

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

P Davies & G. Virgo *Equity and Trusts: Text, Cases and Materials* (4th ed. OUP, 2025)

Hanbury & Martin *Modern Equity* (23rd ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2024)

Hayton, McFarlane & Mitchell *Text, Cases and Materials on Equity and Trusts* (15th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2022)

Lewin on Trusts (20th ed. and 1st Supplement. Sweet & Maxwell, 2023)

M. Merry *Are T'sos Really Trusts?* (2012) 42 HKLJ 669

Snell's Equity (35th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2024) (for reference)

Spry *Principles of Equitable Remedies* (9th ed. Thomson Reuters Australia, 2013)

Underhill and Hayton *Law of Trusts and Trustees* (20th ed. LexisNexis, 2022)

G. Virgo *The Principles of Equity & Trusts* (5th ed. OUP, 2023)

Belinda Wong *Chinese Customary Law – an Examination of Tsos & Family Tongs* (1990) 20 HKLJ 13

Legislation:

Conveyancing and Property Ordinance (Cap. 219), section 5

High Court Ordinance (Cap. 4), section 17

New Territories Ordinance (Cap. 97), section 13

Recognition of Trusts Ordinance (Cap. 76)

Sale of Goods Ordinance (Cap.26)

Trustee Ordinance (Cap. 29)

Wills Ordinance (Cap. 30), section 5

PAPER III : CRIMINAL LAW, CRIMINAL PROCEDURE and CRIMINAL EVIDENCE

CRIMINAL LAW

Standards

Candidates will be expected to be knowledgeable in the principles of criminal liability as set out below.

Syllabus

- 1. Criminal Capacity**
 - Age
 - Insanity
 - Automatism
- 2. Elements of a Crime – Factors Determining Criminal Liability**
 - (a) Criminal Conduct**
 - Acts
 - Omissions
 - Actus reus
 - Causation
 - (b) Fault**
 - Mens rea
 - Intention
 - Recklessness
 - Negligence
 - Strict, vicarious and corporate liability
- 3. Participation**
 - Principal offenders
 - Secondary parties
 - Joint enterprise
- 4. Defences**
 - Capacity
 - (a) age
 - (b) insanity/automatism
 - (b) intoxication
 - Lawful use of force
 - Duress
 - Necessity
 - Provocation
 - Mistake
 - Consent
- 5. Classification of Offences**

6. Preparatory Offences

- Conspiracy
- Incitement
- Attempt

7. Specific Crimes

- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Assault
- Sexual offences
 - (a) rape
 - (b) indecent assault
 - (c) incest
 - (d) unlawful sexual intercourse
- Public order offences
 - (a) public meetings etc
 - (b) disorder in public places
 - (c) offensive weapons
- Criminal damage
- Offences of dishonesty
 - (a) Theft
 - (b) Deception offences including fraud
 - (c) Robbery
 - (d) Handling stolen goods
 - (e) Burglary
- Commercial crime and corruption
 - (a) Fraud
 - (b) Conspiracy to defraud
 - (c) Deception
 - (d) Forgery
 - (e) Bribery and corruption
- Triads
- Dangerous drugs
- Immigration offences
- Organised and Serious Crimes, including dealing with proceeds of indictable offences
- Offences against national security including seditious intention

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Archbold Hong Kong 2026 *Criminal Pleading, Evidence & Practice* (Sweet & Maxwell Asia)

Arlidge & Parry *Fraud* (6th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2020)

Ian McWalters SC *Bribery & Corruption Law in Hong Kong* (5th ed. LexisNexis, 2023)

Legislation:

Complex Commercial Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 394)

Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200)

Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134)

Homicide Ordinance (Cap. 339)

Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance (Cap.455)

Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap. 201)

Theft Ordinance (Cap. 210)

Offences Against the Person Ordinance (Cap. 212)

The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (Instrument A305)

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

Standards

Candidates will be expected to be knowledgeable in:

- (i) principles of evidence in criminal proceedings;
- (ii) the drafting of notices of appeal, and advices; and
- (iii) the rules of practice and procedure as set out in the syllabus below.

Syllabus

- 1. Hong Kong's Criminal Courts**
 - Magistrate's Court
 - Juvenile Court
 - District Court
 - Court of First Instance of the High Court
 - Court of Appeal of the High Court
 - Court of Final Appeal
- 2. Criminal Procedure**
 - Police powers
- 3. Commencement and Progress of Proceedings**
 - Prosecuting authorities and the Secretary for Justice's role
 - Arrest, detention, seizure of property, arrest and false imprisonment
 - Questioning of suspects and obtaining statements
 - Charging
 - Bail
 - Proceeding by summons
 - Service and compelling attendance at court
- 4. The Charge**
 - Summonses, charges and indictments
 - Duplicity
 - Joinder of offences and offenders
 - Severance and separate trials
- 5. Procedure in Magistrates' Court**
 - Bail applications
 - Plea before Magistrate
 - Trial before Magistrate
 - Amendment
 - Sentencing
 - Transferring to and from District Court
 - Committals to Court of First Instance
- 6. Procedure in District Court**
 - From transfer to trial
 - Trial in District Court
 - Sentencing

7. **Procedure in Court of First Instance**
 - Preparing indictment and preliminary matters
 - Arraigning the accused
 - Trial in Court of First Instance
 - Role of judge and jury
8. **Particular Problems during Trials**
 - Admissibility of cautioned statements; voir dire, and alternative procedure
 - Objecting to the information, charge or indictment
 - The duty to the court and the client
 - Vulnerable witnesses, video linking and pre-trial statements
 - Stay of proceedings
9. **Evidence**
 - See Criminal Evidence syllabus
10. **Verdict and Sentencing**
 - Alternative verdicts
 - Principles of sentencing
 - Available sentences
 - Sentencing guidelines
 - Enhancement of Sentence
11. **Appeals**
 - Appealing from Magistrates' Court
 - Magistrates' review powers
 - Appealing from the District Court
 - Appealing from Court of First Instance
 - Appealing from Court of Appeal
 - Reviewing sentence
 - Role of prosecution and defence in appeal process
12. **Costs**
 - Court's power to award costs
 - Compensation and restitution orders
 - Forfeiture proceedings
 - Duty Lawyer Scheme
 - Legal Aid

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Archbold Hong Kong 2026 *Criminal Pleading, Evidence & Practice* (Sweet & Maxwell Asia)

Blackstone *Criminal Practice 2026* (with Supplements 1, 2 and 3. OUP, 2025)

Bruce, A.A. *Criminal Procedure: Trial on Indictment* (LexisNexis, 1996 onwards)

Cross and Cheung *Sentencing in Hong Kong* (11th ed. LexisNexis, 2024)

Halsbury's Laws of Hong Kong Vol. 9 – *Criminal Law and Procedure*; Vol.3 – *Bribery and Organised Crime*

Knight, C. and Upham, A. R. *Criminal Litigation in Hong Kong* (4th ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2021)

Hong Kong Criminal Procedure Handbook (3rd ed. LexisNexis, 2008)

Legislation:

Essential:

Costs in Criminal Cases Ordinance (Cap. 492)

Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Cap. 221) and Indictment Rules (Cap. 221)

District Court Ordinance (Cap. 336)

High Court Ordinance (Cap. 4)

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Ordinance (Cap. 484)

Independent Commission Against Corruption Ordinance (Cap. 204)

Juvenile Offenders Ordinance (Cap.226)

Magistrates Ordinance (Cap. 227)

Police Force Ordinance (Cap. 232)

Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance (Cap.455)

The Secretary for Security's "Rules and Directions for the Questioning of Suspects and the Taking of Statements" 1992

For reference, including subsidiary legislation:

Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap. 383)

Community Services Orders Ordinance (Cap. 378)

Complex Commercial Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 394)

Detention Centres Ordinance (Cap. 239)

Drug Addiction Treatment Centres Ordinance (Cap. 244)

Jury Ordinance (Cap. 3)

Legal Aid in Criminal Cases Rules (Cap. 221D)

Probation of Offenders Ordinance (Cap. 298)

Rehabilitation Centres Ordinance (Cap. 567)

Rehabilitation of Offenders Ordinance (Cap. 297)

Training Centres Ordinance (Cap. 280)

The "Prosecution Code", Department of Justice

CRIMINAL EVIDENCE

Syllabus

- 1. Introduction**
 - Principal items and classification of evidence
 - Relevance
 - Admissibility
 - Best evidence rule
 - Probativeness and prejudice
 - Judicial discretion to exclude
- 2. Burden and standard of proof**
 - Legal burdens
 - Evidential/persuasive burden
 - Criminal standard of proof
- 3. Proof without evidence**
 - Presumptions
 - Judicial notice
 - Formal admissions
- 4. Division of functions between judge and jury**
 - Questions of law and fact
 - The voir dire and challenges to admissibility
 - Sufficiency of evidence
- 5. Witnesses (1) – Competence and compellability**
 - Accused and co-accused
 - Spouse
 - Children
 - Miscellaneous cases (diplomats, persons of unsound mind etc)
- 6. Witnesses (2) - Character**
 - Relevance
 - Good character
 - Bad character
- 7. Witnesses (3) – General**
 - Examination in chief
 - Cross examination
 - Corroboration
 - Protection of vulnerable witnesses
 - Warnings for special witnesses in criminal cases
- 8. Witnesses (4) – Overseas**
 - S.73 and 74 of the Evidence Ordinance
- 9. Course of evidence**
 - Rule against prior inconsistent statements
 - Refreshing memory
 - Hostile witnesses
 - Prior inconsistent statements
 - Collateral questions

- Evidence in rebuttal
- 10. Opinion evidence**
 - Non-expert opinion evidence
 - Expert opinion evidence
 - Ultimate issues
- 11. The Rule against Hearsay**
 - Development of the rule and rationale
 - General principles
 - Exceptions
- 12. Admissions and Confessions**
 - Definitions
 - Oppression
 - Voluntariness
 - Unreliability
 - Implication of co-accused
 - Derivative evidence
 - Mixed statement rule
 - Residual discretion
 - Lies and the Lie Direction
- 13. Evidence unfairly or illegally obtained**
 - The common law
 - Statute
 - Human rights
 - Judicial discretion as to
- 14. Privilege**
 - General principles
 - Legal professional privilege
 - Privilege against self-incrimination
 - Marital privilege

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Bruce and McCoy *Criminal Evidence in Hong Kong* (3rd ed. LexisNexis, 1996 onwards)

Cross on Evidence (14th ed. LexisNexis Australia, 2023)

Hong Kong Evidence Law Handbook (6th ed. LexisNexis Butterworths, 2025)

Phipson on Evidence (21st ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2025)

Colin Tapper, *Cross and Tapper on Evidence* (13th ed. OUP, 2018)

Legislation:

Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Cap. 221)

Evidence Ordinance (Cap. 8)

Hong Kong Law Reports

**PAPER IV : HONG KONG LEGAL SYSTEM, CONSTITUTIONAL and
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW and COMPANY LAW**

HONG KONG LEGAL SYSTEM

Syllabus

- 1. Background to the Hong Kong Legal System**
 - Hong Kong as a British dependent territory before 1 July 1997
 - Sino-British Joint Declaration 1984
 - The Basic Law
- 2. Interface between the Hong Kong and Mainland Legal Systems**
- 3. Sources of Hong Kong Law**
 - The Basic Law under the Constitution of the People's Republic of China
 - Common law and rules of equity
 - Statute law
 - Chinese customary law
 - National laws under Annex III to the Basic Law
 - Treaties
 - Customary international law
- 4. The Constitutional Roles of the Chief Executive, the Government of the HKSAR, and the Legislature**
 - The political structure
 - The office of the Chief Executive
 - The Government of the HKSAR
 - o Powers and functions
 - The Legislative Council
 - o Powers and functions
 - o Restrictions on law making process
 - o Supervision of Executive
 - o Impeachment powers
- 5. Statutory Interpretation**
 - General rules of construction
 - Methods of construction
 - Presumptions
 - Omissions
 - Retrospective effect of statutes
 - Aids to construction
 - Repeals and penal statutes
 - Enabling statutes
 - Delegated legislation
- 6. Doctrine of Stare Decisis and Binding Precedents**
- 7. The Judiciary**
 - Judicial independence
 - Functions and jurisdictions of different levels of courts

- Limits to jurisdiction
 - Specialised Courts and Tribunals
- 8. Jury System**
- Principle of trial by jury under Article 86 of the Basic Law
 - Juries in criminal trials
- 9. Legal Aid**
- Right of access to court
 - Legal Aid Department
 - Legal aid in civil cases
 - Legal aid in criminal cases
 - Supplementary legal aid scheme
 - Duty Lawyer Service
- 10. Arbitration and Mediation**

Recommended Reading Materials

Books and Other Materials:

Halsbury's Law of Hong Kong Vol. 1 Administrative Law (LexisNexis)

Eric Ip *Law and Justice in Hong Kong* (5th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2025)

Stefan H C Lo, Kevin K Y Cheng & Wing Hong Chui *The Hong Kong Legal System* (2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2020)

Sir Anthony Mason, "The Role of the Common Law in Hong Kong", in *The Common Law Lecture Series 2005* (Faculty of Law, The University of Hong Kong, 2006) pp. 1-26

Raymond Wacks (ed) *The New Legal Order in Hong Kong* (HKU Press, 1999)

Raymond Wacks (ed) *Hong Kong, China and 1997: Essays in Legal Theory* (HKU Press, 1994)

Peter Wesley-Smith *The Sources of Hong Kong Law* (HKU Press, 1994)

Legislation and Other Legal Instruments:

Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's China on the Question of Hong Kong

The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Treatment of the Laws Previously in Force in Hong Kong in accordance with Article 160 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Twenty Fourth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress on 23 February 1997)

Administrative Appeals Board Ordinance (Cap. 442)
Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance (Cap. 86)
Competition Ordinance (Cap. 619)
Coroners Ordinance (Cap. 504)
District Court Ordinance (Cap. 336)
High Court Ordinance (Cap. 4)
Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Ordinance (Cap. 484)
Hong Kong Reunification Ordinance (Cap. 2601)
Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission Ordinance (Cap. 92)
Judicial Officers (Tenure of Office) Ordinance (Cap. 433)
Jury Ordinance (Cap. 3)
Labour Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 25)
Lands Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 17)
Legal Aid Ordinance (Cap. 91)
Legal Officers Ordinance (Cap. 87)
Legal Practitioners Ordinance (Cap. 159)
Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap. 542)
Magistrates Ordinance (Cap. 227)
Official Languages Ordinance (Cap. 5)
The Ombudsman Ordinance (Cap. 397)
Small Claims Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 338)

CONSTITUTIONAL and ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

Syllabus

- 1. The Nature and Characteristics of Constitutions**
- 2. Constitutional Doctrines**
 - Autonomy
 - Separation of powers
 - Democracy
 - The rule of law
 - Human rights
- 3. The Basic Law of the HKSAR and its Constitutional Relationship with the PRC Constitution**
 - The constitutional status of the HKSAR under ‘one country, two systems’
 - The relationship between the SAR and the Central Government of the PRC
- 4. Interpretation of the Basic Law**
 - The importance of interpretation and the mode of interpretation
 - Sharing of power of interpretation between NPCSC and the HKSAR Courts
 - o Art. 158 of Basic Law
 - o Judicial referral, classification test and necessity test
 - o Effects of NPCSC interpretation
 - o NPCSC interpretations so far
 - Contrasting methods of interpretation by the NPCSC and the HKSAR Courts
 - o Common law interpretation by HKSAR Courts
 - o NPCSC’s method of interpretation
- 5. Framework for rights protection in Hong Kong**
 - Instruments protecting rights
 - o Basic Law
 - o International treaties e.g. ICCPR
 - o Bill of Rights Ordinance
 - Permissible restriction
 - Concepts in rights protection
 - o Prescribed by law
 - o Proportionality
 - o Separation of powers and Deference
 - o Generous approach to interpreting fundamental rights
 - Examples of rights protection
 - o Right to freedom of expression and assembly
 - o Right to equality
 - Constitutional remedies
 - o Declaration of validity
 - o Remedial interpretation
 - o Suspension of declaration
 - o Prospective overruling
 - o Temporary validity order

6. **Judicial Review**
 - Scope of judicial review
 - The doctrine of ultra vires
7. **Illegality**
 - No unfettered discretion
 - Excess of power
 - Improper purposes
 - Relevant and irrelevant Considerations
 - Fettering of discretion
 - Error of law and jurisdiction
 - Error of fact
8. **Irrationality**
 - Wednesbury test
 - Examples of irrationality
 - Sliding scale of intensity of review
9. **Procedural Requirements and Fairness**
 - Applicability of common law principle of natural justice
 - Overarching principle: balancing
 - o What procedures does fairness require in all the circumstances
 - Specific principles
 - o Right to be heard
 - o Right to fair consultation
 - o Duty to give reason
 - o Right to unbiased decision
10. **Legitimate Expectation**
 - Procedural legitimate expectation
 - o When does a legitimate expectation arise
 - o Justified resiling from a legitimate expectation
 - o Remedies
 - Substantive legitimate expectation
11. **Practice and Procedure for Application for Judicial Review**
 - When to use RHC O.53
 - Leave requirement
 - Parties
 - o Applicant
 - o Putative Respondent
 - o Interested Party
 - o Intervener
 - o Amicus Curiae
 - Promptness requirement
 - Standing (locus standi)
 - Exhaustion of alternative remedies
 - Remedies
 - o Certiorari
 - o Mandamus
 - o Prohibition
 - o Private law remedy: declaration, injunction and damages
 - Costs

12. Habeas Corpus

- The writ of habeas corpus
- Procedure

Recommended Reading Materials

Books: Hong Kong

Johannes Chan, H.L. Fu & Yash Ghai *Hong Kong's Constitutional Debate: Conflict over Interpretation* (HKU Press, 2000)

Johannes Chan & Chin Leng Lim *Law of the Hong Kong Constitution* (3rd ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2021)

Yash Ghai *Hong Kong's New Constitutional Order: The Resumption of Chinese Sovereignty and the Basic Law* (2nd ed. HKU Press, 1999)

Danny Gittings *Introduction to the Hong Kong Basic Law* (2nd ed. HKU Press, 2016)

Richard Gordon QC & Johnny Mok SC *Judicial Review in Hong Kong* (3rd ed. LexisNexis, 2025)

Stefan H C Lo, Kevin K Y Cheng & Wing Hong Chui *The Hong Kong Legal System* (2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2020)

P.Y. Lo *The Hong Kong Basic Law* (LexisNexis, 2011)

P.Y. Lo *The Judicial Construction of Hong Kong's Basic Law* (HKU Press, 2014)

Ramsden & Jones *The Hong Kong Basic Law Annotations and Commentary* (Sweet & Maxwell Asia 2010)

Swati, Ramsden & Scully-Hill *Hong Kong Administrative Law* (2nd ed. LexisNexis 2013)

Books: Other

De Smith *Judicial Review* (9th ed. and 1st Supplement. Sweet & Maxwell, 2024)

Wade & Forsyth *Administrative Law* (12th ed. OUP, 2022)

Articles

Albert Chen, "The interpretation of the Basic law – common law and Mainland Chinese perspectives" (2000) 30 HKLJ 380

Albert Chen, The Rule of Law under "One Country, Two Systems": The Case of Hong Kong 1997-2010, (2011) 6(1) National Taiwan University Law Review 269

(2007) 37 (Special Anniversary Issue) *Hong Kong Law Journal* (articles by Sir Anthony Mason, the Hon. Wong Yan Lung, Denis Chang, Yash Ghai, Johannes Chan. Po Jen Yap, Benny Tai and Wang Zhenmin and Ling Bing)

Legislation and Other Legal Instruments:

The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Fifth Session of the Fifth National People's Congress on 4 December 1982)

Decision of the National People's Congress on the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted by the Seventh National People's Congress at its Third Session on 4 April 1990)

Decision of the National People's Congress on the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Adopted by the Seventh National People's Congress at its Third Session on 4 April 1990)

Decision of the National People's Congress on the Method for the Formation of the First Government and the First Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Adopted by the Seventh National People's Congress at its Third Session on 4 April 1990)

Decision of the National People's Congress Approving the Proposal by the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the Establishment of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted by the Seventh National People's Congress at its Third Session on 4 April 1990)

Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the English Text of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted on 28 June 1990)

The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Articles 22(4) and 24(2)(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted by the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress at its Tenth Session on 26 June 1999)

Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong

The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted by the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress at its Eight Session on 6 April 2004)

Interpretation of Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted at the 15th Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 27 April 2005)

Interpretation of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted by the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress at Its 22nd Session on 26 August 2011)

Interpretation of Article 104 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted by the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress at its Twenty-fourth Session on 7 November 2016)

Decision of the National People's Congress on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to Safeguard National Security (Adopted by the [third session of the thirteenth National People's Congress](#) on 28 May 2020)

Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 14 and Article 47 of the PRC Law on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Adopted at the 38th Session of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress on December 30, 2022)

Chief Executive Election Ordinance (Cap. 569)

Electoral Affairs Commission Ordinance (Cap. 541)

Rules of the High Court, Order 53 and Order 54

Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap. 383)

Legislative Council Commission Ordinance (Cap. 443)

Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382)

Private Bills Ordinance (Cap. 69)

Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (Instrument A305)

Landmark Cases re Constitutional Law

- Ng Ka Ling & Others v Director of Immigration (1999) 2 HKCFAR 4
- Ng Ka Ling & Others v Director of Immigration (No 2) (1999) 2 HKCFAR 141
- Lau Kong Yung & Others v Director of Immigration (1999) 2 HKCFAR 300
- Director of Immigration v Chong Fung Yuen (2001) 4 HKCFAR 211
- Shum Kwok Sher v HKSAR (2002) 5 HKCFAR 381
- Solicitor v Law Society of HK (Secretary for Justice, intervener) (2003) 6 HKCFAR 570
- Leung Kwok Hung v HKSAR (2005) 8 HKCFAR 229
- Po Fun Chan v Winnie Cheung (2007) 10 HKCFAR 676
- HKSAR v Lam Kwong Wai (2006) 9 HKCFAR 574
- HKSAR v Koo Sze Yiu (2014) 17 HKCFAR 811
- Anderson Asphalt Ltd v Secretary for Justice [2009] 3 HKLRD 215
- Democratic Republic of the Congo v FG Hemisphere Associates LLC (No. 1) (2011) 14 HKCFAR 95
- Re Leung Kwok Hung (2012) 15 HKCFAR 686
- Ubamaka v Secretary for Security (2012) 15 HKCFAR 743
- Vallejos & Domingo v Commissioner of Registration (2013) 16 HKCFAR 45
- Kong Yunming v Director of Social Welfare (2013) 16 HKCFAR 950
- Leung Kwok Hung v The President of the Legislative Council of the HKSAR (No 2) (2014) 17 HKCFAR 841
- Hysan Development Co Ltd and Others v Town Planning Board and Oriental Generation Ltd (Intervener) (2016) 19 HKCFAR 372
- Chief Executive of the HKSAR & Anor v President of the Legislative Council & Ors [2017] 1 HKLRD 460 (CA); (2017) 20 HKCFAR 390 (CFA)
- Kwok Cheuk Kin v Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (2017) 20 HKCFAR 353
- QT v Director of Immigration (2018) 21 HKCFAR 324

- Kwok Cheuk Kin v Director of Lands [2021] HKCFA 38
- HKSAR v Lai Chee Ying (2021) 24 HKCFAR 33
- HKSAR v Ng Hau Yi Sidney, [2021] HKCFA 42
- Lai Chee Ying v Commissioner of Police [2022] 5 HKLRD 205, [2022] HKCA 1574
- Q v Commissioner of Registration [2023] HKCFA 4
- Sham Tsz Kit v Secretary for Justice [2023] HKCFA 28
- Infinger v The Hong Kong Housing Authority [2024] HKCFA 29
- HKSAR v Tam Tak Chi [2024] HKCA 231
- Tam Sze Leung & Ors v Commissioner of Police [2024] HKCFA 8
- HKSAR v Ng Ngoi Yee Margaret & Ors [2024] HKCFA 24
- HKSAR v Tam Tak Chi [2024] HKCFA 25
- Li Yik Ho v Secretary for Justice [2024] HKCFAR 30

Landmark Cases re Administrative Law

- Padfield v Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food [1968] AC 997
- Secretary of State for Education and Science Appellant v Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Respondents [1977] AC 1014
- Carltona Ltd v Commissioners of Works [1943] 2 All ER 560
- Anisminic Ltd v Foreign Compensation Commission [1969] 2 AC 147
- E v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2004] QB 1044
- Associated Provincial Picture Houses, Limited v Wednesbury Corporation (1948) 1 KB 223
- R v Secretary of State for the Home Department Ex p. Al-Fayed (No.1) [1998] 1 WLR 763
- Attorney General of Hong Kong v Ng Yuen Shiu [1983] 2 AC 629
- Ng Siu Tung & Others Director of Immigration (No 2) (2002) 5 HKCFAR 499

COMPANY LAW

Syllabus

1. Business Organisations

- (a) **Distinctions between Companies and other Forms of Organisations**
 - (i) **Sole Proprietorship**
 - (ii) **Partnership**
 - (iii) **Company**
- (b) **Choice of Business Vehicle**

2. Company Practice

- (a) **Types of Company**
 - public v. private companies
 - companies limited by shares
 - companies limited by guarantee
 - unlimited companies with share capital
 - non-Hong Kong companies
 - specified corporations
- (b) **Incorporation**
 - consequence of incorporation
 - registration
 - continuing requirements
 - powers and functions of Registrar of Companies (Part 2, CO)
 - dissolution, deregistration and restoration
- (c) **Company Articles**
 - content and effect
 - model articles
 - alteration
 - distinction between objects, powers and regulations
- (d) **Share Capital**
 - abolition of par value
 - share capital v. loan
 - classes of shares and class rights (ss.176-192 CO)
 - reduction of capital
 - share redemptions and buy-backs
 - financial assistance
 - (uniform) solvency test (s.205 CO) and solvency statement (s.206 CO)
- (e) **Membership**
 - subscribers and shareholders
 - transfer of shares
 - transmission of shares
 - common incidence of share ownership
 - valuation of shares
 - meeting of shareholders (constitution and conduct)
 - resolutions of shareholders' meeting

(f) Management

- corporate governance
- relations between directors and members
- responsible person (s.3 CO)

(g) Directors

- nature of directorship
- natural v. corporate directors
- types of directorship (incl. *de facto* and shadow directors)
- qualification and disqualification
- appointment and removal
- powers of directors
- duties
 - statutory duties of care, skill and diligence (ss.465-466)
 - common law duties
 - fiduciary duties
- fair dealing by directors
- meeting of directors (notice, constitution, conduct, resolutions)
- dealings with third parties and binding transactions (s.117 CO)
- attribution
- ratification of and remedies for breach of duties
- relief from liabilities

(h) Protection for Shareholders

- personal action
- derivative action (common law and statutory)
- petition on unfairly prejudicial conduct
- just and equitable winding up
- relations between shareholders' agreement, and articles of association
- inspection of company records (s.740 CO)
- statutory injunction (s.729 CO)

(i) Reports and Accounts

- profit and loss account
- balance sheet
- statement of changes in financial position
- statutory duties in relation to preparation of statements and reports

3. Company Charges and Securities

(a) Corporate Capacity and Director's Authority to Create Security

- general capacity (s.115 CO)
- limitation by Articles

(b) Debentures

- definition
- debentures v. shares
- remedies

(c) Fixed Charges

- definition
- remedies

- (d) **Floating Charges**
 - definition
 - fixed or floating charge
 - statutory restrictions
 - crystallization
 - priority
 - remedies
- (e) **Other Charges**
 - rights of set-off
 - cash deposits
 - shares
 - title retention clauses
 - remedies
- (f) **Registration of Charges**
 - procedures
 - effect of registration
 - late registration for foreign corporations
 - consequences of non-registration

4. **Winding Up and Insolvency**

- (a) **Court Appointed Receivers**
 - appointment of receiver
 - position of the receiver
 - disqualification of appointment as receiver
 - effect of appointment
 - duties of the receiver
 - receiver's rights and powers
- (b) **Voluntary Liquidation**
 - members' voluntary liquidation
 - creditors' voluntary liquidation
- (c) **Compulsory Liquidation**
 - parties involved (including the winding up of foreign companies)
 - grounds for winding-up
 - commencement
 - court's powers
 - powers and duties of the liquidator
 - consequences of commencement of compulsory liquidation
 - consequences of winding-up order
 - liquidation procedures (proof of debt, ranking of claims and principle of pari passu distribution)
- (d) **Avoidance Actions**
 - unfair preferences
 - charges created as floating charges
 - fraudulent conveyances
 - misfeasance proceedings
 - fraudulent trading
 - void dispositions

- (e) **Reorganising or Restructuring Insolvent Companies**
- compromises and scheme of arrangements

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Butterworths Hong Kong Company Law Handbook (27th ed. LexisNexis, 2025)

Butterworths Hong Kong Company Law (Winding Up and Miscellaneous Provisions) Handbook (6th ed. LexisNexis, 2024)

Company Law in Hong Kong: Insolvency 2023 (Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2023)

Company Law in Hong Kong: Practice and Procedure 2023 (Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2023)

Stefan Lo & Dr. Qu *Law of Companies in Hong Kong* (4th ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2023)

Smart, Lynch & Tam *Hong Kong Company Law: Cases, Materials & Comments* (Butterworths Asia, 1997)

The New Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622) A Butterworths Hong Kong Handbook (LexisNexis, 2014)

Tyler & Lo *Hong Kong Company Law: Legislation and Commentary* (Butterworths Asia, 1998 onwards)

Reference reading:

Official Receiver's Office *A Simple Guide to Compulsory Winding-up of Companies* (2001) (Note this is available from the website: www.info.gov.hk/oro)

Briefing Notes on each Part and relevant commentary on the New Companies Ordinance (available from the Companies Registry website: http://www.cr.gov.hk/en/companies_ordinance)

Legislation:

Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622)

Companies (Winding Up and Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap. 32)

Companies (Winding-up) Rules

Companies (Disqualification of Directors) Proceedings Rules

Partnership Ordinance (Cap. 38)

Rules of High Court, Order 102

PAPER V : CIVIL PROCEDURE, CIVIL EVIDENCE, PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT and ADVOCACY

CIVIL PROCEDURE and CIVIL EVIDENCE

Standards

Candidates will be expected to be knowledgeable in:

- (i) causes of action and remedies in contract, tort, restitution and equity;
- (ii) the standards of professional conduct and ethics as set out in the Code of Conduct of the Bar of the HKSAR;
- (iii) the drafting of pleadings, affidavits, witness statements, statements of truth, and advices; and
- (iv) the rules of practice, procedure and evidence as set out in the syllabus below.

Syllabus

1. Hong Kong's Civil Courts

- Sources of civil procedure: Ordinances, Rules of Court and Practice Directions
- Jurisdiction of the courts, including supervisory jurisdiction
- District Court and Tribunals
- Court of First Instance of the High Court
- Court of Appeal
- Court of Final Appeal

2. Pre-action Considerations

- The cause(s) of action
- Proper and necessary parties
- Time limits

3. Underlying objectives of the rules of the High Court and District Court

- The underlying objectives
- Case management powers
- Use of alternative dispute resolution procedures such as mediation

4. Commencement and Progress of Proceedings

- Modes of originating process
- Modes of service
- Acknowledgement of service
- Service out of the jurisdiction
- Choice of forum and transfer

5. Pleadings and Particulars

- Their function
- Statement of claim
- Defence
- Counterclaim and/or set off
- Reply to Defence and Defence to Counterclaim
- Further and Better Particulars

- 6. Interlocutory Applications**
 - Judgment in default and summary judgment
 - Joinder of parties and third party proceedings
 - Interpleader
 - Striking out and stay of proceedings
 - Withdrawal and discontinuance
 - Security for costs
 - Interim payment
 - Discovery and inspection of documents
 - Case management summons and conference
 - Interrogatories and admissions
 - Witness statements
 - Expert reports
 - Case management and pre-trial review
 - Unless Order and relief from sanctions
- 7. Pre-emptive Remedies**
 - Interlocutory injunctions, interim preservation
 - Mareva injunctions
 - Anton Piller orders
 - Prohibition orders
- 8. Termination and Compromise**
 - Without prejudice rules
 - Offers to settle
 - Sanctioned offers and Sanctioned payments
 - Settlement agreements
 - Consent orders and judgments
 - Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
- 9. Trial**
 - Preliminary issues
 - Organisation and conduct of trial
 - Trial by judge or a master
 - Review of judgment and liberty to apply
- 10. Judgment and Enforcement**
 - Orders, accounts and enquiries
 - Oral examination
 - Injunctions and prohibition orders in aid of enforcement
 - Receivers: equitable execution
 - Committal and sequestration
 - Garnishee orders, charging orders, writs of execution; writs of possession
- 11. Evidence**
 - Notice to admit and produce
 - Affidavits and witness statements
 - Statements of truth
 - Writs of subpoena
 - Hearsay evidence
 - Expert evidence
 - Depositions
 - Court experts

12. Costs

- Entitlement and discretion
- Bases and scales
- Wasted Costs Order
- Costs on interlocutory applications and of trial and appeal
- Summary assessment of costs

13. Appeals

- Appeals to a judge in chambers
- Appealing a judgment
- Appeals to the Court of Appeal
- Appeals to the Court of Final Appeal
- Stay of execution pending appeal
- Security for cost of appeal
- Admission of fresh evidence on appeal

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Essential:

Hong Kong Civil Procedure 2026 (Sweet & Maxwell Asia)

Hong Kong Civil Justice Reform Practice Manual (2nd ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia 2010)

Recommended:

Jen *Hong Kong Civil Court Practice 2025 Desk Edition* (LexisNexis)

Halsbury's Law of Hong Kong, Vol. 5 Civil Procedure (Lexis Nexis)

Dave Lau *Civil Procedure in Hong Kong: A Guide to the Main Principles* (4th ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2017)

Douglas Clark *Civil Litigation in Hong Kong* (7th ed. Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2026)

P.Y. Lo *Hong Kong District Court Practice* (6th ed. LexisNexis, 2024)

Cheung, Chim and Meggitt *A Guide to Civil Procedure in Hong Kong* (7th ed. LexisNexis, 2022)

Recommended (other):

Bullen & Leake & Jacob's Precedents of Pleadings (19th ed. and 1st Supplement. Sweet & Maxwell, 2022)

O'Hare & Browne *Civil Litigation* (21st ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2024)

C. Hollander *Documentary Evidence* (15th ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2024)

Sime S.A. *A Practical Approach to Civil Procedure* (26th ed. OUP, 2024)

Stone and Brock *Commercial Litigation in Hong Kong, A Practical Guide* (2nd ed. Sweet & Maxwell, 2017)

Legislation:

Essential:

Evidence Ordinance (Cap. 8)

High Court Ordinance (Cap. 4) and Rules of High Court (Cap. 4A)

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Ordinance (Cap. 484)

District Court Ordinance (Cap. 336) and Rules of District Court (Cap. 336H)

Limitation Ordinance (Cap. 347)

Practice Directions, High Court

For Reference:

Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1)

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Syllabus

- 1. Practice Requirements**
 - Admission requirements
 - Issuing of practicing certificates
 - Compulsory professional indemnity insurance
 - Pupillage and limited practice
 - Dual qualification rule
 - Admission of overseas counsel for a particular case
- 2. Chambers Administration**
- 3. Acceptance and Return of Instructions**
 - Cab-rank principle
 - Marking of counsel's diary
 - Collection of the brief
 - Signed backsheets
 - Grounds for withdrawal and the return of the brief
 - Situations not entitling counsel to withdraw
 - Working with senior counsel
 - Direct professional access work
 - Overseas practice
 - Foreign work or working in Hong Kong with overseas connection
 - Delegation of works
- 4. Practice Promotion**
- 5. Duties**
 - Duties to the lay client in general
 - Duties when defending a person accused of a crime
 - Duties when prosecuting a person accused of a crime
 - Duties to the opposing parties
 - Duties to the profession
 - Duties to observe the Code and professional standards
 - Duties to the Courts
 - Duties relating to alternative dispute resolution
 - Duties to report offence(s) or other relevant matters to the Bar Council
- 6. Authorities of Counsel**
 - Express authority
 - Implied authority
 - Limitations upon counsel's authority
- 7. Conduct of Work**
 - Competency
 - Confidentiality
 - Conflict of interest
 - Drafting documents
 - Contact with witnesses
 - Attendance of professional client
 - Conduct in court
 - Media comment
 - Case of employed barristers and non-practising barristers

- 8. Fees**
- Charging basis
 - Brief fee
 - Refreshers
 - Negotiation of fee
 - Payment arrangements
- 9. Discipline**
- Powers of the Bar Council
 - Disciplinary Tribunal

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Wilkinson & Meggitt *The Professional Conduct of Lawyers in Hong Kong Desk Edition* (LexisNexis, 2022)

Professional Conduct and Risk Management in Hong Kong (Sweet & Maxwell Asia 2007)

Legislation:

Legal Practitioners Ordinance and subsidiary legislation

Other:

Code of Conduct of the Bar of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

ADVOCACY

Standards

Candidates will be expected to be knowledgeable in:

- (i) the practice of advocacy in civil or criminal courts, at first instance, and on appeal;
- (ii) the standards of professional conduct and ethics, as set out in the Code of Conduct of the Bar of the HKSAR; and
- (iii) the rules of practice and procedure, and evidence as set out in the syllabus below.

Syllabus

1. Introduction

- Litigation contrasted with arbitration and mediation
- The language of the courts
- Addressing the court

2. Ethics and Conduct

- Duty to client
- Duty to court
- Duty to opposing party
- The Bar Code and Circulars
- Case law
- When in doubt
- Enforcement of standards by the Bar and the courts
- Witnesses
- Conflicts
- Do's and Don'ts re legal visits

3. Preparation and Planning

- Mastering the facts
- The issues
- Structures and chronologies
- Research: analysis and distinguishing cases
- Procedure, evidence and tactics
- Words and Style
- Repetition
- Preparation of the PTR/CMQ form
- What is required in a CMH
- Drafting prosecution opening
- Drafting admitted facts

4. Speaking in Court

- Voice and presentation
- Confidence
- Body language and appearance
- Conducting remote hearings

5. **Interlocutory Applications**
 - Limitations at the interlocutory stage
 - Requirements of Skeleton Arguments and their timing

6. **Applications for Summary Judgment**
 - Strategy
 - On fact, or law
 - Preparation

7. **Bail Applications and Mitigation**
 - Making the applications, and structure
 - Mitigation bundle

8. **Trial**
 - Voir Dires and alternative procedure
 - Submissions of no case to answer
 - Opening speeches in civil and criminal cases
 - Half time submission
 - Closing speeches in civil and criminal cases
 - Juries
 - Matters to note when prosecuting versus defending
 - Vulnerable witnesses
 - Expert witnesses

9. **Evidence in Chief**
 - Do's and don'ts
 - Organisation and preparation
 - Anticipating cross-examination and oral evidence

10. **Cross-examination**
 - Aims
 - Organisation and style
 - Duties
 - Cross-examining experts and police officers
 - Handling objections and traps
 - Ending

11. **Re-examination**
 - Do's and don'ts

12. **Appellate Advocacy**
 - The judgment
 - Appeals on law, fact, or discretion
 - Importance of Skeleton Arguments, and their timing
 - Order of speeches
 - Directions from the Court – when to fill what

Recommended Reading Materials

Books:

Essential:

Archbold Hong Kong 2026 *Criminal Pleading, Evidence & Practice* (Sweet & Maxwell Asia)

Code of Conduct of the Bar of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Hong Kong Civil Procedure 2026 (Sweet & Maxwell Asia)

Wilkinson, Rajwani & Pierce *Advocacy and the Litigation Process in Hong Kong*
(4th ed. LexisNexis, 2020)

Legislation:

Legal Practitioners Ordinance

Other reference materials:

Hong Kong Bar Association Circulars

Practice Directions [1999] HKLRD (PD)

Other texts:

Keith Evans *The Language of Advocacy* (OUP, 1998)

Michael Hyam *Advocacy Skills* (4th ed. OUP, 1999)

Mauet & McCrimmon *Fundamentals of Trial Technique* (4th ed. Thomson Reuters
Australia, 2018)

Murphy & Barnard *Evidence and Advocacy* (5th ed. OUP, 1998)

Noel Shaw *Effective Advocacy* (Sweet & Maxwell, 1996)