

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **Governance Theories and Thinkers**

Course Number and Section

GLE

4010F 550

Instructor Name(s): Neil Bradford

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This seminar explores foundational ideas, thought leadership, and policy entrepreneurship in the contemporary study of Governance, Leadership and Ethics. Seminar learning is organized around three inter-connected themes.

1. Studying influential GLE thinkers and their ideas about collective action, collaborative governance, and ethical leadership.
2. Testing the interplay between theory and practice, applying GLE ideas in diverse real-world governance settings, ranging from the local to the global scales and across economic, environmental, and social fields.
3. Reflecting on the different styles of thinking and modes of analysis that shape GLE studies, ranging from normative visions and causal theory to policy applications.

The seminar considers the GLE's intellectual underpinnings and the transformative potential of "big ideas" in public affairs. It asks why, when, and how particular "public intellectuals" influence the discourse and practice of governance and policy. We will also consider the evolving forms of public intellectuals from traditionally engaged scholars to emerging social media influencers. While weekly readings are extensive, we will often share responsibilities for equitable coverage. Student teams will facilitate seminars and "workshop" their own thought leadership on topics of particular interest and passion.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

First, it will provide students with a multi-disciplinary and comparative understanding of the socio-political theories and influential thinkers shaping the contemporary study of Governance, Leadership and Ethics. While today's most complex, urgent public problems require some form of collective action and collaborative governance, the conditions for success or failure are not well-understood. Often overlooked or understudied is the creative role of ideas in clearing the path for innovation. We address this knowledge gap by exploring the relationship between governance theories and institutional practice in different policy contexts and geographic settings.

Second, the seminar explores the "knowledge menu" of different types of ideas and modes of analysis that structure the contemporary field of study in governance, leadership, and ethics. Students will compare intellectual engagements across a spectrum of normative, theoretical, empirical, and applied research.

Third, the course aims to strengthen student capacity for individual thought leadership and contributions to our social imagination. We will ask about the conditions enabling idea generation, factors driving governance and policy innovation, and processes of knowledge transfer.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

There are no required textbooks. Course materials will be drawn from a combination of open access sources and books/chapters/articles/reports available through Western library.

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
GLE Responsive Essay	10 19 2026	25%
Enhancing GLE Thought Leadership	12 8 2026	25%
In Class Test	11 23 2026	25%
Seminar Engagement/Leadership	12 1 2026	25%

Sunday, August 16, 2026

Huron Brief Course Outline 2026/27

In-course Costs \$000.00

For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.