

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Introduction to Governance

Course Number and Section:

GLE

2001F 550

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

Course Description:

The idea and practice of governance is a central theme in 21st century public, private, and community decision-making. Governments, businesses, and nonprofits all find themselves cross-pressured by divergent values and conflicting interests while grappling with problems of increasing technical complexity and social diversity. In such turbulent environments, “no one is in charge or has the answer” – all actors and organizations need to work together to tackle shared problems. Yet, the collaboration is rarely easy or fast.

The study of governance examines collaborative processes in different institutional settings from the local to the global, through various disciplinary lens, and from the distinctive perspectives of government, business, and nonprofit sectors. Governance research is critically engaged: it asks whether, how, and how well today’s “grand challenges” or “wicked problems” in the economy, society, and environment are addressed through multi-sectoral collective action.

The GLE learning strategy is grounded in case studies that allow up-close exploration of the ways in which 21st century policy issues play-out in theory and in practice. Case examples are drawn across governance scales from local communities working for “sustainable cities” to national governments mobilizing around “inclusive innovation.”

The challenges we are facing make collaborative governance and ethical leadership more urgent. But what does it actually mean to “Build Back Better”? Are countries still capable of bold collective action or is the polarization and division too intense? These are some of the big questions that drive our intellectual engagement.

Learning Outcomes:

Comprehensive introduction to the field of Governance Studies with a focus on public policy, community innovation, and organizational decision-making. Students will gain understanding of critical concepts such as sectoral innovation and collaboration, institutional design, multi-level governance, and learn to creatively compare or combine different disciplinary perspectives on governance.

Teaching support and research opportunity for students to test governance theories through literature reflection and case studies. Students work with leading-edge governance scholarly sources and conduct their own analyses of governance practices and experiments.

Time and tools for students to work collaboratively in developing governance case studies and in sharing research work.
Equip students with the knowledge and skills to use the case study method to understand how governance theory plays-out in practice.
Build a holistic intellectual foundation for students in Huron's Governance, Leadership, and Ethics Major, offering insight into each sub-theme and preparing students for more specialized GLE courses.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

This course will draw on two central texts, which are available through the library:

If students choose to purchase their own copies, here are the costs of the paperback versions of the central texts as of Dec 2024: Emerson and Nabatchi (2015), \$41.36; Kahane (2017), \$28.95.

The class may also engage with a range of articles, podcasts and more which will be available on OWL under Course Readings. A list of readings is also provided at the end of this syllabus, which may be amended as the course progresses.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Thematic reflection	10/10/2025	10
Team case presentation		25
Outline of governance case report	10/24/2025	10
Governance case report	11/28/2025	30
Class contributions		25

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

Thursday, August 14, 2025