

JSGS 808 - 001 – Ethical Leadership and Democracy in the Public Service

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN CAMPUS	
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OFFICE HOURS:	By Appointment; please schedule via Heather.Braun@usask.ca
OFFICE LOCATION:	Virtual Office Meetings
TERM/SEMESTER:	Term 2 (Winter 2023)
ROOM:	Online
DATE AND TIME:	Selected Thursdays 12-12:45 pm CST (Optional; check calendar for exact dates)

The syllabus for this course is comprised of this document and the document titled “JSGS Common Syllabus.”

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This course was developed by Dr. Jen Budney, Dr. Peggy Schmeiser, and Jim Engel with revisions by Danette Starblanket in 2021.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

There is a growing interest in leadership, ethics, and democracy within the profession of public administration. This course examines these three key concepts in the making of a professional public servant and connects them to the environment in which decisions are made in government.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

JSGS has developed a set of three competencies that all graduates will be able to demonstrate. The specific readings, assignments, and activities in JSGS 808 will help you both acquire and demonstrate the ability to:

1. Critique a range of ethical theories and approaches used in public sector problem solving.
2. Identify different institutional and organizational dynamics that contribute to ethical blindness and corruption.
3. Explain the ethical dimensions of a social problem or case study, and the ethical repercussions associated with different solution sets.

4. Explore how colonialism, institutionalized racism and sexism, and other forms of domination can impact policymaking, public service delivery, and workplace dynamics.
5. Assess the means by which public servants can assume leadership roles in building more ethical working environments.
6. Develop self-awareness of personal/professional collaboration and leadership skills, along with a plan for ongoing improvement.

COURSE CONTENT AND APPROACH

The purpose of the class is to provide students with an understanding of selected theories of leadership in the public sector as well as the unique challenges of exercising leadership at any level with the public service.

This course explores the leadership dimensions of administrative behaviour in the context of public service and particularly public sector organizations. The goal of the course is to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on a range of leadership theories and practices, and to help them develop leadership skills while also reflecting on the ethical dimensions of leadership within public administration. Effective leadership by public servants requires adaptive leadership, high levels of personal and organizational integrity and vigilant stewardship of various aspects of public trust including the handling of resources. Leadership is an aspect of public management but is not the same as public management and remains a distinctive skill that all successful public servants need to master as they gain more responsibility in their careers.

Leadership studies and popular media lead us to believe society is experiencing a crisis in leadership. In this course, we'll tackle that question. To do so we'll begin with the basic questions of *what is leadership*, *how do leaders lead*, and *why do followers follow*? Along the way we'll address the *so what* question- what impact do these relationships have upon "organizational performance" – particularly in public settings. How much does leadership really matter in terms of overall organizational performance? Leadership is the study of relationships, and as we all know relationships are difficult to learn from textbooks alone. We will therefore be complementing our academic study of leadership with some glimpses of leader/follower relationships.

Finally, it is important to remember that executive decisions in the public sector often require balancing issues of ethics, law, politics, organizational dynamics, and human relations. Skill in navigating these turbulent waters comes with experience, but there is also much to learn from current management theory and leadership studies. This course draws on public management literature and case studies, to build the student's competency in ethical leadership. The context is executive management of provincial and federal government organizations, but the lessons learned have broad application to all levels of government as well as public service non-profit organizations.

The class is designed so students can consider public policy options and political choices in this vital field. The course encourages students to explore viable policy options and to consider new means of leadership.

COURSE FORMAT

This course is an online instructional method. This class is designed for *asynchronous* instruction. You will view content, including readings and videos, engage in interactive activities, undertake independent assignments and engage in group problem-based discussions.

Through discussions, you will have an opportunity to engage with one another and develop our learning community. We will discuss a variety of topics throughout the class. These discussions will occur asynchronously through the online discussion boards and, optionally, synchronously through the weekly online session.

The online synchronous sessions are optional. Synchronous sessions will include full group and break out group discussions, interactive activities, and guest speakers. I encourage you to attend when you can, and to come prepared to discuss the course content for that week. Your regular attendance at the synchronous sessions offers the best opportunity to ask questions, make connections, and participate in learning based on the learning material. If you cannot make it to some or any of the synchronous sessions, no worries: the sessions will be recorded and shared with all students in the course.

In both the discussion boards and the live session, students are responsible for providing thoughtful, informed, and respectful comments.

REQUIRED READINGS

Kenneth Kernaghan and John Langford. 2014. *The Responsible Public Servant*, 2nd edition. Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

See the "Required Readings" section in each module in CANVAS for a detailed required readings list and schedule.

COURSE OUTLINE (WINTER 2023)

Section 1 – Ethics and Leadership in the Canadian Public Service

Week 1 – Personal Responsibility, Public Value, and Intended Unethicality.

Optional synchronous session: Thursday, January 12, 12-12:45 pm CST

Week 2 – Ethical Frameworks, Ethical Space, and Public Value.

Discussion Board Due: Fri. Jan. 20

Week 3 – Public Interest and the Challenges of Corruption, Monopoly and Philanthropy.

Optional synchronous session: Thursday, January 26, 12-12:45 pm CST

Assignment 1 Due: Ethics in the News. Fri. Jan. 27

Week 4 – Political Neutrality, Corruption and Solutions.

Section 2 – Leading and Being an Ethical Public Servant

Week 5 – Leadership in Times of Crisis.

Assignment 2 Due: Group Work – Case/Film Study Analysis. Wed. Feb. 8

Optional synchronous session: Thursday, February 9, 12-12:45 pm CST

Week 6 – Understanding Conflict of Interest and Lobbying.

Semester Break.

Week 7 – Transparency, Confidentiality, Accountability, and the Promise of Open Government.

Optional synchronous session: Thursday, March 2, 12-12:45 pm CST

Discussion Board Due: Fri. Mar. 3

Week 8 – Accountability (continued) and Its Limits.

Assignment 3 Due: Group Work – Leadership Under Pressure. Wed. Mar. 8

Section 3 – Ethical Leadership in Action

Week 9 – Managing and Leading Ethical Behaviour.

Optional synchronous session: Thursday, March 16, 12-12:45 pm CST

Week 10 – Starting New and Leading Change.

Discussion Board Due: Fri. Mar. 24

Week 11 – Leadership and Discrimination

Optional synchronous session: Thursday, March 30, 12-12:45 pm CST

Week 12 – Bringing it All Together.

Assignment 4 Due: Ethical Leadership Reflection. Thurs. April 6

ASSIGNMENTS

Over the duration of this course, you will be asked to integrate class readings and other materials into responses and analysis as part of your completion of various assignments and discussion boards. It is essential that you review the nature and requirements of these assignments and discussion boards at the beginning of the course so that you have them in mind as you work your way through the various modules. They include two group assignments that will necessitate collaboration among group members well before the week that assignments are due. In all cases, your analysis will require you to draw upon material from multiple sessions leading up to the deadline. Having these questions in mind and jotting

down relevant notes as you work through the modules will therefore save you time when it comes to preparing your submissions.

Also please note that Assignment 4 (Ethical Leadership Reflection) due at the end of the modules is a culmination of what you have learned throughout the course. It is highly recommended therefore that you keep a journal of short entries each week about any salient points you've learned, as well as any readings and other class material that have made a particular impression on you. As outlined in the description of Assignment 4, you will eventually need to gather your weekly learnings, thoughts, and observations to inform this written reflection on leadership that will be due at the end of the final week of the modules, on Thursday, April 6, 2023.

Please see below for further details regarding assignments. **Note that all references are to be correctly cited using the APA format. All assignments are due at 11:59 pm CST (Regina time), on the due dates indicated below.** Don't hesitate to reach out by email to Bianca Jamal or me should you have any questions.

Discussion Boards (Instructions are also included in Learning Modules 2, 7 and 10)

Due: January 20, March 3, and March 24, 2023

Over the course of the term, students will be required to contribute to three discussion board questions. Your response(s) should briefly respond to at least one other post. If responding to others, your comments should be meaningful (more than just "great point" or "me too") and constructive (not critical or attacking but building on or combining ideas). This is how we can support a fruitful discussion and exchange of ideas. Discussion board responses should be between 300-400 words with citations where necessary. Discussion board questions will appear in the discussion board forum. Your final discussion board grade will be the average of your top two of the three submissions.

Assignment 1: Ethics in the News (Instructions are also included in Learning Module 3).

Due: Friday, January 27, 2023 (Maximum 600 words + references, double-spaced, 12 point font)

For your first (independent) assignment, you are asked to identify and analyze a recent or current topic or story in the news (from the last 3 months) that provides an illustration of ideas or concepts you've been exposed to in the first three weeks of the course. The topic you choose should be of particular interest to you in relation to the broad theme of ethical leadership. Please note that you should avoid topics relating to COVID 19 as this will be the basis for Assignment 3 later in the course.

This short assignment is intended for you to begin applying concepts learned in class to a real-world situation. It is a very short assignment so please give careful thought to how you will present your ideas. A well-structured assignment of this length should include an introductory paragraph, 2-3 paragraphs of background and analysis and a concluding paragraph.

Your task is to identify an issue - e.g. in relation to ethics generally, personal responsibility, public value, ethical frameworks and space, public interest, corruption, monopolies, philanthropy, etc. - and analyze it based on class readings and other material. You may for example, choose to study a local or regional public project that may have been negatively influenced by philanthropy, monopoly, or corruption, or

where a public-private partnership or contracting of services may have had a negative effect on public value and/or eroded trust in government.

Focus on the players involved and whether their actions or activities strike you as reflecting a successful or failed approach to ethics and leadership. If it appears to be a positive model, explain why and highlight what you consider as potential best practices. If it appears to be a failed or less than optimum example of applied ethics or leadership, explain why you think that's the case, along with recommendations on how the situation might be handled more appropriately. Keep in mind that many situations may potentially reflect both positive and negative aspects of what may be considered the signs of ethical leadership. The important thing is for you to convey your thoughts and analysis clearly based on what you have learned in class thus far. Your overall assignment should include at least three references to readings and other material included in the first three course modules.

Hint: If you're feeling stuck in finding a topic or story, it may be helpful for you to look at the glossary of terms included in the modules each week – that might help refresh your memory on the range of topics and issues addressed by or associated with leaders in public and other sectors. And try to focus your search via online or print media sources on those sections that address government or political action, as well as the reports on business and corporate activity. Remember that for better or worse, the news is full of stories and reports of how leaders have either impressed or failed their constituents. If you still feel stuck, don't hesitate to reach out to the instructor at least a week before the due date, with a couple of options for consideration.

Assignment 2: Case/Film Study Analysis - Group assignment (Instructions are also included in Learning Module 5).

Due: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 (1 group submission, maximum 1350-1500 words + references, double-spaced, 12 point font).

For your second assignment you are asked to work in assigned groups of 3-4 to reflect on and analyze Tasha Hubbard's film, *Two Worlds Colliding* (National Film Board of Canada: 2005). The link to this film is here https://www.nfb.ca/film/two_worlds_colliding/ and can also be found in Module 4.

Each member of the group should watch the film. Then together as a team, you should discuss and prepare one combined group written submission that addresses the following questions:

1. Where do you see examples of ethical leadership in the film? Where do you see examples of unethical leadership?
2. Would you describe the unethical behaviour in this case as corruption? Why or why not?
3. Hubbard's films have been greeted with hostility (particularly in social media) by people who disagree with her framing of events and situations. What does her work share with whistleblowing?
4. What risks did the police officer who believed Darrell Night take, if any?
5. Did the Saskatoon Police practice due diligence in investigating Darrell Night's claims?

What organizational cultural factors permitted grave wrongdoing by public servants (police) to continue for so long? What broader cultural and historical factors permitted it and are these still present?

Your overall written submission should consist of an Introduction, 3 Sections (each corresponding to one of the three questions above) and a Conclusion. Though not necessary, group members may find it helpful to assign members of the team to take responsibility for leading preparation of certain sections and/or the overall presentation (though the content of the entire submission must still benefit from everyone's insights through your exchanges as a group). Alternatively, the presentation could also flow like a report on deliberations with indications of which member of the group thought what and why for each question (this can be particularly helpful where there are strong differences of opinion). You could also choose a format that combines both approaches. Regardless, your analysis should be informed by what you have learned in the first four weeks of the course, and submissions must include reference to at least two readings or other material (beyond Hubbard's film itself) from Modules 1 to 4 in response to each question above (so at least 6 required readings must be referenced in the overall paper).

Grades will be assigned collectively so it is important for everyone to contribute extensively and equitably to the final product. This assignment is also an exercise in teamwork (a huge part of leadership) so each student will also be asked to provide an evaluation of how the group worked together with individual scores (out of 5) assigned by each member for each of their team members (including themselves). While final grades for this Assignment 2 (15 points total) will be based on the overall grade for the written submission, team member evaluations of individual contributions will be averaged with similar group evaluations (also out of 5) undertaken as part of Assignment 3 (also a group assignment). So, 5 points total will later be allocated for each student's overall group work participation in the course based on the average of the evaluations they receive from group members for Assignments 2 and 3.

Lastly, please keep in mind that this film covers very difficult subject matter that can affect individuals in different ways. Please remember to be respectful in your group interactions and sensitive to the potential impacts that your views and language might have on others.

Assignment 3: Leadership Under Pressure – Group assignment (Instructions are also included in Learning Module 8).

Due: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 (1 group submission, 1750-2000 words + references, double-spaced, 12 point font)

The COVID19 pandemic has provided many opportunities to observe leadership over the past several months, particularly from senior elected leaders (in Canada and internationally, including Prime Ministers and Presidents), medical health officers, WHO leaders, mayors, provincial and federal government officials, health authorities, school boards, Indigenous leaders, etc. Working in assigned groups of 4-5, you are to each choose a leader or organization whose leadership style you'd like to analyze. Then as a group, you are to discuss and compare your analysis to collectively identify the top best practices and models of ethical leadership among the leaders and organizations selected, as well as any less than stellar examples or performances of ethical leadership where appropriate.

To make this work, each member of any given group will have to choose a different leader or organization for their own analysis and as a basis for their contribution to group deliberations and the final submission. Each group will submit one document that will consist of multiple sections: a shared introduction; individual sections each prepared by one student in the group (with the name of the student responsible for that section indicated in parentheses) that provides information and analysis of the ethical and leadership qualities of the specific person or organization they selected; a collective analysis section based on group deliberations (about best practices and models of ethical leadership as

well as some less than stellar examples or performances); and, a shared conclusion that ties together the overall paper and provides recommendations for going forward during the current pandemic or to address future similar crises.

Based on this structure, each student will be graded according to 50-50 allocation, with half of their grade based on their analysis of the individual person or organization they chose, and the other half of their grade based on the shared evaluation given to all group members based on the overall written submission (including the shared introduction, analysis section and conclusion). Individual and group analysis of ethical leadership should be based on what you have learned from course readings and other material with at least three references to class sources included for each individual student analysis of their selected individual or organization.

Assignment 4: Ethical Leadership Reflection (Instructions are also included in Learning Module 12).

Due: April 6, 2023 (1250-1500 words + references, double-spaced, 12 point font).

This last assignment is a culmination of everything you have learned from all the modules over the course of the term. It presents an opportunity for you to reflect on your perceptions of leadership in ways most pertinent to you. Essentially, this assignment is intended as a means of self-reflection on your own leadership abilities, your learning process, and those parts of yourself you wish to develop as you think about your own role as a leader throughout your career.

Numerous frameworks discussed in class modules have ideally now helped inform your concept of leadership. Drawing on readings and other material from class modules, be sure to describe yourself as a leader, the existing or anticipated context(s) in which you lead (could be within a work context, within your academic experience, and/or another experience), your assumptions about the nature of that context, and the definition of good leadership that informs your self-analysis. In defining leadership, describe your criteria for successful leadership and the limitations of using particular frameworks to describe yourself and others in that way. Finally, reflect upon how your conceptions of leadership have changed during class and how those changing perceptions might influence your leadership in the future.

This is a very personal exercise, and as such, there is no right or wrong answer. Your submission will be graded on the level of analysis and reflection (e.g. superficial vs. deep) based on concepts and theories discussed in class and your own self-assessment. Ideally you will be considering this exercise and composing your essay throughout the course as your knowledge and understanding of leadership concepts grow. Learning activities, self-tests and reflection sections embedded in various modules will support this work and give you ideas for content. There should be references to multiple modules and concepts covered throughout the course, with reference to at least 5 required course readings or other material that span all three sections of the class outline.

Contributions to Groupwork/Peer Evaluation

Due: Same day as 2 group work assignments – February 8 and March 8

Teamwork and collaboration is a huge part of leadership. On the same day as group work assignments are to be submitted, students will be asked to complete a table with peer evaluation grades for all members of their group, including themselves. Evaluations will be based out of 5 points (1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, etc.) and are intended to reflect students' observations about the quality and extent of contribution made by each of their group members to collective activities. Space will also be made available for

comments where appropriate. Both peer evaluation exercises will be averaged to provide a final grade (5%) for student contributions to course group work. All individual peer evaluations will remain anonymous though students can request further information regarding their overall evaluation if desired.

EVALUATION

Discussion Board (average of the top two of the three submissions)	15%
Assignment 1: Ethics in the News	15%
Assignment 2: Group Work – Case/Film Study Analysis	15%
Assignment 3: Group Work – Leadership Under Pressure	20%
Assignment 4: Ethical Leadership Reflection	30%
Contributions to Group work	5%
Total	100%

ENROLLMENT LIMIT

Class enrollment will be normally limited to 27 students.