

**UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH**  
**Department of Political Science**

**POLS 4250 (01) Topics in Public Management (Fall 2019)**  
**Public Sector Leadership**

**Instructor – Dr. Tim A. Mau**

**Office Hours: TBD or by appointment (MACK 531)**

**Extension 52170 or email: [tmau@uoguelph.ca](mailto:tmau@uoguelph.ca)**

---

**Course Objectives**

The world has changed dramatically in the past several decades: it has grown more complex, global, inter-connected and the exigencies of competitiveness increasingly dictate that all organizations – be they private, public or non-profit – must recruit and develop knowledge-based employees. While it is absolutely critical that these organizations, if they are going to succeed in this new environment, are led by individuals who have technical knowledge, maturity, self-awareness and vision, increasingly there has been recognition of the need to develop leadership capacity throughout the organization. However, the reality is that most organizations lack the talent needed to grow and prosper in this environment. Despite earlier claims to the contrary, the public sector is no different in that regard. As such, this fourth year seminar in public management and administration will focus on one of the most critical human resources issues facing the public service, namely the identification, recruitment and training of civil servants to assume positions of leadership.

As Joseph Rost has eloquently and forcefully argued, it is imperative that scholars move beyond the outmoded industrial paradigm of leadership as good management. The concepts of leadership and management, while they are inter-related in many important respects, must be understood as two distinct phenomena. Therefore, the course explores the theories, models and definitions of leadership that have evolved in the literature (related primarily to private sector organizations) and highlights the often-cited distinctions between leadership and management.

It also examines the extent to which leadership concepts and theories are applicable to the public sector. After all, the notion of bureaucratic leadership is antithetical to our historic understanding of the link between bureaucracy and democracy as exemplified in the politics-administration dichotomy.

Having established both the legitimacy of and need for strong, ethical leadership in the public sector, the course will explore how leadership is manifested in this context. Specifically, we will investigate the nature and extent of leadership in the public sector and how it ultimately contributes to good governance. This will include an examination of how public sector leaders can use vision and mission statements to accomplish organizational objectives as well as their sources of power and influence.

The course concludes by discussing how public sector leaders can be identified and either recruited or trained to assume positions of authority and great responsibility. Is it possible to train public servants to be more effective organizational leaders? If so, how can that best be accomplished?

Students who have completed this course should be able to:

- (i) categorize the various theories and models of leadership;
- (ii) synthesize and integrate ideas related to leadership as outlined in the leadership literature and apply it to the field of public management and administration;
- (iii) understand the purpose and importance of strong, ethical public sector leadership;
- (iv) identify and evaluate applications of leadership in the public sector;
- (v) recognize the tremendous challenges of and opportunities for public sector leadership;
- (vi) critically assess the extent to which the public service is able to effectively develop leadership capacity through a policy of continuous learning;
- (vii) (through the vehicle of thought papers) express clear and sound positions on issues related to public sector leadership;
- (viii) communicate confidently and effectively with their classmates so as to impart knowledge and understanding of the course material.
- (ix) Think strategically about their career aspirations and develop an action plan to realize those short-, medium- and long-term goals.

### **Course Format**

As a senior honours seminar at a learner-centred institution, students will be expected to play an active role in the teaching and learning process. The role of the instructor will be to help provide the broader context for the material being reviewed and to facilitate the class discussion when it falters. While the first part of most seminars will involve some traditional lecturing, it is my expectation that each member of the class will actively participate in the assessment of the weekly readings. In addition, each student will have an opportunity during the semester to assume a lead role in introducing some of the subject matter under discussion.

You will be required to read several 'core' readings for this course that will serve as the basis for our discussion each week. In addition, beginning in week two, there will be 'supplementary' readings that you will present as part of a team (comprising three members) to the seminar group. The detailed course outline will clearly specify which readings each week are mandatory for the entire class and those that will be divided up and assigned to specific students.

If the learning process is to be fruitful for all concerned, it is absolutely essential that you come to class prepared to discuss the weekly readings. That being said, there may be times that you have a difficult time grasping some of the concepts or material covered. Do not worry if that is the case because there will be others in the class who will be able to master the readings. Moreover, the course instructor is ultimately responsible for facilitating your comprehension of the subject matter.

### **Required Textbook**

TBD