



GBUS 830-001 Business, Government and Society

Spring 2025

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS:

Name:
Phone:

Office Location:

Email:

Office Hours: By Appointment (please ask!)

CLASS DETAILS:

Reading Period: Monday, May 5-Thursdays, June 5, 2025

Class Dates: June 6, 7 (F/S); 13, 14 (F/S); 20 (F)

Class Times: 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Class Location:

Submission Period: Saturday, June 21-Monday, July 21

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The University is situated on Treaty 4 lands with a presence in Treaty 6. These are the territories of the nêhiyawak, Anihšīnāpēk, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda, and the homeland of the Métis/Michif Nation. Today, these lands continue to be the shared Territory of many diverse peoples from near and far.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide you with an understanding of the interaction and interdependence of government, business, law and society, and how strategy and decisions of managers/executives are affected by third parties. Consideration will be given to the societal responsibilities of business, how difficult ethical considerations arise and are dealt with, and the importance of corporate reputation. Another focus will be government processes, the government-business dynamic, and strategies used by business to interact with governments, regulators, stakeholders and society. The course will also review the way governance structures and the interactions between managers and directors impact the relationship of business to societal expectations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES / OUTCOMES:

The course objectives are to allow you to:

- Better understand the business environment in Canada and globally.
- Understand how business affects government, society and public policy; and conversely how government and society impact business decision-making.
- Recognize that business faces growing societal expectations, consider the nature of "social license", and understand the implications.
- Recognize the distinct, important roles played by various stakeholders and their impact on the business environment.



- Learn about the structure and function of governments, the role of political parties and how public policy impacting business is made.
- Be familiar with the approaches and tactics used by business, government and other societal stakeholders to advance their interests.
- Introduce corporate social responsibility and ethical frameworks that can be used by managers and businesses.
- Recognize the significance of reputational risk and its management.
- Be familiar with the practices and impact of corporate governance.

To accomplish these objectives, the course will use lectures, in-class discussions, readings, case analysis, group activities and guest speakers with relevant expertise. There will be a focus on emerging issues and topics of public debate in the news.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Please read in advance all assigned readings for each of our three course days. (There is no textbook; readings will be posted on URCourses.)

At this point in your program, I am sure that you are well aware of program expectations. I believe that for this type of material, very interactive discussion is our best tool for learning. I will lead discussions in class but having a spirited (but respectful!) discussion of issues relating to our topics of choice will please me greatly. For at least some of what we will be learning, there will be some subjectivity in terms of what might be the “right” answer, so I hope to provide you with the tools and means to be able to intellectually examine thorny issues and problems and be able to think them through logically and contextually. The course assignments will be of a similar vein.

COURSE MATERIALS :

Cillia, Marton, and Solomon (2024): *Honest Work: A Business Ethics Reader (5th Ed)*. Oxford University Press. Older editions will likely also suffice but please do your own research as to what has changed between editions. Read this book before the beginning of the semester.

All additional required cases and readings will be posted on URCourses. Please ensure that you’ve read each day’s readings in advance of the relevant class day, ideally at least a few days before so that you have time to reflect and ponder what you’ve read and relate it to what you see in your workday and in the world around you.

COURSE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY:

NOTE: Assignment lengths described below are approximate. An extremely well-written analysis may be shorter than the length assigned and still be successful (note that this is very uncommon, but at least possible). Conversely, if you feel that you need longer than the length assigned, and to shorten it to the required length would reduce its quality, please feel free to exceed the assignment length noted below, but please edit your assignment to be as concise as possible (while still being effective).

- Current Issue Presentations and Discussions (20%)

Select an issue in the recent news of interest to you in which a Canadian business or organization is facing difficult pressures from external sources or is attempting to address what it sees as its social responsibil-

ities. Fully describe the issue facing the company or organization, the nature of the external forces, what you see as the implications for the company or organization, and your opinion as to how effectively the company is responding. Give a maximum ten-minute presentation on the issue (you may include a discussion in the time if you wish, though you must give your own presentation for at least five minutes), including your personal opinion of the issue.

There will be two separate presentations and discussions (see schedule). Each presentation and discussion is worth 10% of your grade (total 20%). The theme of each discussion is listed in the schedule below.

- Term Paper (40%) (Group Assignment)

The decade of the 2020s sees businesses, large and small, facing many challenges. Some are existential and many others raise difficult public policy and societal considerations. In groups of up to four students, you will prepare a paper. (If you strongly prefer to write the paper alone, please discuss this with me but I will give it serious consideration.)

In preparing your term paper you will assume that you are the Vice-President, Corporate Policy (or equivalent) of any Canadian organization of significant size that you wish. The organization can be private or be a Crown corporation (you may write about SaskPower if you wish but are free to choose another organization). The company CEO asks you to prepare a concise report in which you are to identify, assess and make recommendations in respect of two or three of the most vexing challenges facing the company. Your report is to include a discussion responsive to the framework described below. You are to do independent research to identify the challenges and relevant competing interests. Ample material, much of it in ongoing academic and news commentary, is available online.

Your report to the CEO will clearly identify the business situation and the key issues (including the associated difficulties and risks) the company faces. The paper should describe in detail the significant public and private stakeholders, their positions / interests in respect of the issue(s), how they are exerting pressure to achieve their goals, and the strengths and weaknesses of those positions. It should assess the priority to be afforded to the various stakeholder interests and societal expectations. There should be a discussion of alternate "solutions" or "approaches" for the company to achieve the best outcome. Your report should evaluate options, identify recommendations, propose an action plan (outlining the path for the company to best achieve the chosen recommendations to optimize its position) and discuss possible tactics to be employed by the company (identifying the tactics you would or would not recommend – and why).

The paper will be 3,000 to 4,000 words in length, not including appendices and it is **due Monday, June 30, 2025 12:00 pm (i.e. noon)**; the write-up should be uploaded to URCourses (the link to do so will be found under the schedule for that day). Please include a title page; you may also have brief appendices (including references/citations).

- Final Exam – Take home: (40%)

The final exam will be available to you on June 21 and is **due July 21, 2025 11:59 pm**; the write-up should be uploaded to URCourses (the link to do so will be found under the schedule for that day). It will contain

questions based on short case scenarios, or course discussion topics. You can use any course material or secondary research as long as it is cited.

For a description of the grading system, consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research link here: <https://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/current-students/grad-calendar/grading-system.html#gradingsystem>

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS:

Request for Deferred Submission of Work:

Late assignments will be accepted, but will be subject to a penalty of ten percentage points per day late, to a maximum penalty of fifty percentage points. Late assignments will only be accepted until 11:59 pm CST (UTC-6) the night of our final in-person course day. Assignments submitted after this date will be assigned a grade of zero.

Extensions or requests for changes by students to **final** exams and assignments due dates will require the student to complete a formal request for deferral. The student completes the request, consults with the instructor who must sign the form, and the instructor then submits the form (and any supporting documentation provided by the student) to Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR). The decision (approved or denied deferral) is made by FGSR and is usually only approved if there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, death, etc). The decision is sent by mail to the student and it is the student's responsibility to ensure the deferred requirements are met within the outlined time frame. It is also the student's responsibility to follow-up with FGSR if they do not receive a response from FGSR on their submitted request. Requests for deferral received more than two (2) weeks after the final day of the examination period will be denied. The deferral form can be found on the FGSR website at: <https://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/forms.html>

STUDENT RESOURCES

Accessibility Services

If there is any learner who, because of a disability or other consideration, may have a need for accommodation(s), and has not already done so with respect to this course, please contact the Centre for Student Accessibility before or at the start of the course <https://www.uregina.ca/student/accessibility/> . The Centre will advise how you proceed and the required communication with your instructor.

Counseling Services

If any learner is experiencing personal problems which may be affecting their studies, please consider consulting UofR Counselling Services. For more information check here <https://www.uregina.ca/student/counselling/services/index.html>

Writing Assistance

The Student Success Centre (www.uregina.ca/ssc) offers both on-line resources and in-person tutoring on writing skills.

FACULTY BIOGRAPHY:

Jim MacKenzie has been in the insurance and risk management industry since 1990, serving as an insurance broker for a pair of Regina insurance brokerages and focusing on personal insurance (auto and residential) and small- to medium-sized commercial (business) insurance. In 2022, Jim transitioned to risk

management with the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement at the Government of Saskatchewan and worked on the ministry's insurance program, leading the effort to modernize its business continuity program, and providing consultative advice to ministries and agencies in the provincial government. Jim was awarded a Deputy Minister's award in 2023 for his work with the ministry. In 2024 he moved to the Ministry of Social Services as Manager, Risk Management and Insurance for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, where he is responsible for overseeing the risk of Saskatchewan Housing Corporation's stock of social and seniors' housing.

Jim earned his Master of Business Administration degree from the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Regina in 2005 and also holds a Diploma of Associate of Administration from Regina. Additionally, he has earned both his Chartered Insurance Professional and Fellow Chartered Insurance Professional designations from the Insurance Institute of Canada (the latter with honours).

Jim began his teaching career in 1999, instructing courses for the Insurance Institute of Saskatchewan toward the Insurance Institute of Canada's Chartered Insurance Professional designation. He began his University of Regina career as a sessional lecturer in 2005 and, including spring/summer 2025 appointments, has taught 75 courses including BUS 205 Management Communications, BUS 260 Introduction to Organizational Behaviour, BUS 291 (formerly 492AA) Personal Finance, BUS 306 Ethics in Decision Making, BUS 361 Performance Management, BUS 400 Business Strategy, and BUS 405/EMBA 860/GBUS 830 Business, Government and Society.

Jim serves as president of Queen City Toasters, a private Government of Saskatchewan Toastmasters club, as well as RIMS Canada Council representative for SKRIMS, the Saskatchewan Risk and Insurance Managers Society and is a member of the Ethics Committee of the Insurance Institute of Canada. He is a past president and past national chair of the Canadian Condominium Institute and a past president of the South Saskatchewan chapter of the Institute. Jim is also a past president of the Insurance Institute of Saskatchewan and a former member of the Insurance Institute of Canada's board of governors.

In 2023 Jim received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee medal from the province of Saskatchewan in recognition for service to community (volunteer work and teaching).

Jim has been married to Lori for 35 years and lives in Regina. In his spare time he enjoys photography, hiking, snowshoeing, kayaking, travelling, and tinkering with computers (both modern systems running Linux and retrocomputer systems running period operating systems) and picked up cross-country skiing in 2024 (so please don't judge him if you see him on the trails). He is also rediscovering his childhood love for astronomy. He can often be found at Prince Albert and Riding Mountain National Parks.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

NOTE: The schedule is subject to change. I will provide as much notice as I can should this occur.

Times are approximate. I may allow some topics to go longer than scheduled, particularly if we are having insightful discussions about them.

DAY ONE: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Friday, June 6

Business, Government and Society – What Does It All Mean?

This session will lay the foundation for the course. We'll think about the role SaskPower plays in Saskatchewan's economy and society as a Crown-corporation electrical generation and supply utility.

We'll also spend some time on learning basic theories of ethics, how to think about it and how it relates to both businesses and government within society.

Guest Speaker: Rebecca Gibbons, Assistant Deputy Minister, Energy Regulation, Ministry of Energy and Resources, Government of Saskatchewan (former Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Strategy, Ministry of Environment)

DAY TWO: A VERY COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT

Saturday, June 7

Framing Business, Government and Society Interaction

This session will provide a bird's eye view, demonstrating some of the important realities of the business environment in both a small business context and a broader societal and geopolitical view.

Stakeholders

This session will further explore the complexity of the ecosystem in which business operates with a focus on the identification and management of stakeholders interests.

Corporate Social Responsibility

This session will assess competing views of the extent to which business has obligations, legal or practical, which go beyond the maximization of profit for shareholders.

Social License

This session will explore whether it is necessary (or even possible) for a business to acquire a sustainable "social license" for its activities, and if it is possible how business should go about it.

Current Issue Presentation/Discussion (1/2): Choose an issue or organization that creates possible problems for society, the economy, government, or similar. 1:00-4:30 pm

DAY THREE: GOVERNMENTS AS CENTRAL ACTORS

Friday, June 13

Role and Structure of Government/ The Public Policy Process

This session will examine the structure of government in Canada within which public policy relevant to business is made, and also take a look at how the public policy process works.

Business Influence/ Lobbying and other Tactics

This session will identify some of the ways business attempts to influence government action, focusing on what works and what doesn't.

Government, Regulatory and Legal Intrusion

This session will further examine how governments and the courts sometimes constrain or assist business in order to achieve societal goals, with particular focus on pipeline politics and constitutional obligations to First Nations.

Guest Speaker: Dan Hersche, President and Chief Executive Officer, Global Transportation Hub; former Executive Director, Legislative and Advisory Services, Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement, Government of Saskatchewan

DAY FOUR: IMPROVING THE ODDS

Saturday, June 7

Applied Business Ethics

This session will consider the importance of a strong ethical culture, the principles underlying business ethics, and scenarios illustrating the application of those principles.

Living in a Fishbowl: Reputational Risk

This session will examine how business reputations are achieved and sustained and, where necessary, salvaged when at risk of being lost.

Corporate Governance/ Where were the Directors?

This session will identify the importance of sound governance structures to organizational success and highlight key indicators of sound (and unsound) governance.

Today's Business: Disruption and Expectations

This will be a session examining some of the learnings of the course against the backdrop of important issues of current interest.

Guest Speaker: Sandra Arberry, Deputy Registrar and Conflict of Interest Commissioner of Saskatchewan, Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists Saskatchewan.

DAY FIVE: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this session, we'll see how all the elements of this course fit together. We'll also consider the issues of conflict of interest and, particularly, lobbying and how (and if) lobbying suits both the encouragement of economic activity and the fulfillment of the interests of society at large.

Current Issue Presentation/Discussion (2/2): Choose an issue or organization that poses issues of ethics, conflict of interest, or lobbying. 10:30 am-12 pm; 1 pm-2:30 pm

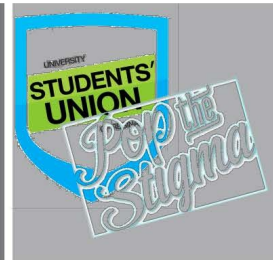
Guest Speaker: Treena Amyotte, Director, Indigenous Relations, Saskatchewan Power Corporation, former Director of Business Development, PFN Group of Companies.

AFTER LECTURES ARE COMPLETED:

WORK DUE: Term Paper due 11:59 pm June 30

WORK DUE: Take-Home Final Exam due 11:59 pm July 21

University of Regina Counselling Services



Feeling Stressed? Always worried?

Some stress is normal when you're going to university but **1 in 5 students** will suffer from enough distress that they **would benefit from counselling**.

What can I do?

The U of R offers several counselling services free of charge for students at the U of R. These sessions are confidential and easy to access for students – simply go to the second floor of Riddell, Room 251 to make an appointment.

When should you go?

Knowing when to schedule an appointment can be tough. Some common issues you might need help with include test anxiety, if you've experienced a trauma like losing a family member or a close friend, or if you've recently ended a relationship.

If the feelings you're experiencing are more intense and severe counselling services can also provide urgent service within 3 days and referrals as needed.

What options are available for me?

Personal Counselling – This is a great option if you'd like one on one attention for things like anxiety and panic, relationship conflict, depression, grief and loss, academic issues, body image and substance abuse. Up to 5 sessions are free per semester. Try it – talking about your problems can be more helpful than you might think!

Group Counselling – Simply put, you're not alone. Many students are experiencing the same things as you. The U of R offers a wide variety of group counselling opportunities that can help teach many skills for managing your mental health, including: Meditation and relaxation, Healthy relationships, Stress Management and Self-Care.

But I can't afford counselling...

Seeking counselling doesn't have to be cost prohibitive. Many students can benefit from the 5 free sessions offered by the University as a benefit of being a student.

If you need more sessions make sure you contact URSU and visit www.iHaveAPlan.ca. Many expenses that are related to mental health, including going to a psychologist, are partially covered by your Student Health and Dental Plan!

What else can I do?

Self-care - taking better care of yourself, can help you out. Eating better, working out, smoking and drinking less and balancing school with fun can all help with mental health!

Have a problem but don't know how to fix it?

URSU's Student Advocate can help you free of charge!

- Academic Appeals
- Disciplinary Appeals
- Student Loan Appeals
- E-mail advocate@ursu.ca to schedule an appointment today!
- Emergency Bursaries
- Notary Public
- Rentalsman Appeals

