





# Governance (GOVN) 505

## Innovative Public Management (Revision 3)

**Status:** Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

**Delivery mode:** [Grouped study](#) 

**Credits:** 3

**Area of study:** Arts

**Prerequisites:** There are no formal prerequisites for this course, however, a previous course in public administration, management, or political science is recommended

**Precluded:** GOVN 505 cannot be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for Athabasca University's **GOVN 405** or POLI 405.

**Faculty:** [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

**Notes:**

Students in Group Study courses are advised that this syllabus may vary in key details in each instance of the course. Always refer to the Moodle site for the most up-to-date details on texts, assignment structure, and grading.

## Overview

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher launched a comprehensive plan to reform public administration in Britain. There were three main dimensions to her plan: first, the power of the civil service was to be diminished to make the state apparatus more responsive to political direction; second, private-sector management practices were to be introduced to promote economy and efficiency in government; and third, individual citizens were to have increased freedom to counter the domination of state control over the design and delivery of public services (Aucoin 1995, p. 1). Focus on the second dimension brought major changes in organizational design and managerial practice, resulting in what came to be called the "new public management" (NPM).

Thatcher's approach was quickly emulated in the early 1980s by other Western governments that had identified similar priorities: the reduction of public spending, deficits, and debt; a reversal of the serious decline in public trust in government; and the need to modernize and streamline public service management in the new era of global competition. The resulting changes in public management—led by governments in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, especially—shifted public sector organization from its traditional hierarchical, rule-based, process-oriented, and bureaucratic structure, toward a flatter, organizational form that is characterized by partnerships with the private and nonprofit sectors. Thus, a new form of public management has been evolving over the last two decades (although there are many who would call it revolutionary, rather than evolutionary, change). Some players have more enthusiastically embraced these reforms (known as the New Public Management), while others have been highly critical of reforms that they see resulting in the "marketization" of public life, and the imposition of western-based principles in contexts for which it is a poor fit. In addition, rapid changes in information technology have left an indelible mark on all organizations. The

resulting changes have been dizzying, and change often brings unintended consequences. As Sharon L. Sutherland has said, "Every Reform Is Its Own Problem" (1991). Thirty years later, the "new" public management is not so new anymore, and is itself the target of reformation.

This course takes both a historical and a contemporary approach. It addresses the following questions: What challenges are inherent in efforts to realize major organizational change, and what are the implications for democratic governance? Can principles of organizational management be universally applied with equal success

## Outline

- Unit 1 Old — and New — Public Management
- Unit 2 The Post Bureaucratic state
- Unit 3 Culture and Values
- Unit 4 Transparency and Accountability
- Unit 5 Administrative Ethics and Professionalism
- Unit 6 Managerialism, Empowerment and Public Participation
- Unit 7 Alternative Service Delivery and Coproduction
- Unit 8 Administration in a Non-western Context
- Unit 9 Equity, Representation, and Indigenous Governance
- Unit 10 Technology and Organizational Change
- Unit 11 The Future of Public Sector Management Reform

## Objectives


The purpose of this course is to enable students to explore, and to think critically about, the fundamental changes that have taken place throughout bureaucracies in the Western world, and to enable students to evaluate these changes from a comparative perspective. The course is designed so that students will have the opportunity to work with colleagues to:

1. Enhance their own critical reading skills.
2. Discuss the major differences between old and new approaches to public management: its structures, relationships, objectives, methods, and

implications.

3. Assess major environmental changes that have led most Western governments to alter their approach to public management
4. Assess changes in public management from a non western perspective.
5. Evaluate theoretical arguments that support and reject the adoption of the principles of New Public Management (NPM) and other post-bureaucratic approaches, and assess the advantages and disadvantages to the public sector of pursuing major reform
6. Reflect critically on the long-term implications for democratic rule and citizenship of the focus on new methods of public management.

## Evaluation

To receive credit for this course, students must participate in the online activities, successfully complete the assignments, and achieve a final mark of at least 60 per cent. Students should be familiar with the Master of Arts—Interdisciplinary Studies [grading system](#) . Please note that it is students' responsibility to maintain their program status. Any student who receives a grade of "F" in one course, or a grade of "C" in more than one course, may be required to withdraw from the program.

The following table summarizes the evaluation activities and the credit weights associated with them.


Activity	Weight
Online Participation	20%
Assignment 1 (review essay)	20%
Assignment 2 (policy memo proposal)	no grade
Assignment 3 (policy memo)	20%
Assignment 4 – (research proposal)	10%
Assignment 5 – (research essay)	30%

Activity	Weight
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Materials


Denhardt, Janet V. and Robert B. Denhardt. 2015. *The New Public Service:*

*Serving not steering.* New York: Routledge.  (Print)

The package you receive should contain each of the items listed above. If anything is missing, contact the Course Materials Production division of Athabasca University. If you live in Edmonton or Calgary, we encourage you to call the Learning Centre in your city and use the automated telephone attendant to connect with Course Materials Production (the extension is 6366). If you live outside Edmonton or Calgary, but within Canada or the United States, you may call the automated attendant using Athabasca University's toll-free number, 1-800-788-9041 (extension 6366). If you live outside Canada or the United States, or if you prefer not to use the automated system, you may call Course Materials Production at (780) 675-6366. You may write in care of Athabasca University, 1 University Drive, Athabasca AB, T9S 3A3; or you may send e-mail to [cmat@athabascau.ca](mailto:cmat@athabascau.ca) .

## Athabasca University Online Materials

**Course Home Page:** You will find Course Information (including the Assignment File and other pertinent information) at the top of the course home page. You will also find your Study Guide presented unit by unit online. You will find your assignments and links to submit your work to your professor on the course home page.

**Athabasca University Library:** Students are encouraged to browse the Library's Web site to review the Library collection of journal databases, electronic journals, and digital reference tools: <http://library.athabascau.ca> .

## Important links

› [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 

- > [Focus Areas](#) 
- > [Courses](#) 
- > [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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View [previous revision](#) 

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