







Human Services (HSRV) 363

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Governance (Revision 3)

Status:	Replaced with new revision, see the course listing  for the current revision 
Delivery mode:	Individualized study online  . Delivered via Brightspace.
Credits:	3
Areas of study:	Arts or Social Science
Prerequisites:	None. This is a senior course and as such students are expected to have advanced analytical and writing skills.
Precluded:	HSRV 363 is a cross-listed course—a course listed under two different disciplines. GOVN 380 is the same course, and thus HSRV 363 cannot be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for GOVN 380.
Challenge:	HSRV 363 has a challenge for credit option.
Faculty:	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences 

Overview

Human Services 363: Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Governance is a senior-level, three-credit course that provides an overview of the nonprofit and voluntary sector. The goal of the course is to help students develop a deeper understanding of the nature of governance, leadership, and management in the nonprofit sector in an increasingly complex environment. The course introduces students to the major conceptual and theoretical perspectives on the voluntary sector, and encourages them to apply their learning to understanding and dealing with challenges currently faced by voluntary-sector leaders and managers.

The nonprofit or "third" sector has undergone considerable change in the last few decades and is having to contend with

- off-loading of services from governments that has created new demands for service delivery, which often involve more complex programs and users with special needs.
- a more competitive funding environment that has led voluntary organizations to experiment with more innovative types of fundraising and to get involved in commercial activities.
- demands for greater accountability and evaluation of effectiveness that requires new skills and approaches.
- international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) increasingly becoming powerful actors in a globalized world in which information technologies facilitate instant communication.
- redesigned relationships that require new ways for voluntary organizations to be involved in policy development.
- the need to question traditional settler-colonial conceptions of philanthropy, and to decolonize and Indigenize the voluntary sector.

While the primary focus of this course is the nonprofit and voluntary sector in Canada (at national, provincial, and local levels), examples from the international context will also be discussed.

Although HSRV 363 is aimed at students in the BPA Human Services major, it may also be of interest to students seeking a social science or general interest course.

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

Work-integrated learning is “a form of curricular experiential education that formally integrates a student’s academic studies with quality experiences within a workplace or practice setting” (**Co-Operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada** [↗](#), 2021). This course gives students the opportunity to practice important skills that are required in working in the voluntary sector: researching issues; summarizing and synthesizing information, and writing clear and succinct documents to convey that information; and making policy recommendations.

WIL is integrated into this course through the assignments. Assignment 1: Research Essay Outline, Assignment 4: Research Essay, and Assignment 5: Policy Memo involve using skills and writing documents that are required in the voluntary sector. The three assignments are interconnected since they build on the same topic and research. Assignment 5 is particularly relevant to WIL, since in it students prepare for real work experiences by writing a succinct policy memo targeted at a busy decision maker.


Outline

The course consists of eight units:

- Unit 1: Overview of the Voluntary Sector: Concepts and Perspectives
- Unit 2: The Rise of the Voluntary Sector and the Sector in an International Context
- Unit 3: Social Capital and Volunteerism
- Unit 4: Service Delivery in a Restructured Welfare State
- Unit 5: Engagement in Policy Development
- Unit 6: Governance, Leadership, and Accountability
- Unit 7: Financing, Fundraising, and Philanthropy
- Unit 8: Managing in a Complex Environment: The Road Ahead


Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for HSRV 363, students must complete and submit all of the assignments and the Midterm Quiz. They must achieve an overall grade of **D**

(50 percent)  for the course. The final grade in the course is based on the marks achieved for the following activities.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Research Essay Outline	10%
Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography for the Research Essay	10%
Assignment 3	5%
Midterm Quiz	25%
Assignment 4: Research Essay	25%
Assignment 5: Policy Memo	25%
Total	100%

Materials

This course either does not have a course package or the textbooks are open-source material and available to students at no cost. This course has a **Course Administration and Technology Fee**  , but students are not charged the Course Materials Fee.

Online Materials

All course materials, including readings and videos, can be accessed online.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit** [↗](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for the HSRV 363 challenge registration, you must complete all required components, and achieve an overall grade of at least **D (50 percent)** [📄](#).

Activity	Weight
Written Assignment	25%
Exam	75%
Total	100%

[📄](#) **Challenge for credit course registration form**

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) [↗](#)
- › [Program planning](#) [↗](#)
- › [Request assistance](#) [↗](#)
- › [Support services at AU](#) [↗](#)

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.

Opened in Revision 3, March 6, 2025

Updated November 10, 2025

View **previous revision** 
