

# JSGS 800 – Métis Governance: Historical Legacy and Contemporary Transformation

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN CAMPUS	
INSTRUCTOR:	Kurtis Boyer
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OFFICE HOURS:	Book appointment <a href="#">here</a>
TERM/SEMESTER:	Winter 2025
ROOM:	Online
DATE AND TIME:	<i>Asynchronous with 2 Synchronous Sessions Fri 1-4pm</i>

## CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Grounded in the historical context, this course is forward looking, studying the Métis journey in creating uniquely Métis governance processes in the North-West that reflect the will of their people, examining current governance issues, and exploring the path to developing appropriate and effective governance frameworks necessary for sustained self-determination. The course spans from historical underpinnings to current Métis self-governance initiatives. As a distinctive component of the Canadian Indigenous governance landscape, Métis governance embodies a unique combination of influences from Indigenous and Western political traditions. The course first explores the birth of the Métis Nation, their interactions with colonial authorities, and the effects of historical policy and legislation on the Métis people, then critically examines Métis self-governance, exploring Métis law and policy, Indigenous rights and land claims, self-determination, and modern treaties. The course discusses how Métis self-governance has affected Canada's political, social, and economic fabric, exposing Indigenous self-governance's challenges and opportunities.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Métis Nation as a distinct Indigenous people with a deeply rooted governance history in the Northwest. Through a combination of historical analysis and applied, stakeholder-driven projects, students will gain both the theoretical foundations and practical skills needed to address contemporary governance challenges. Assessment will focus on students' ability to critically engage with Métis governance traditions, evaluate self-determination efforts, and develop actionable solutions informed by stakeholder collaboration. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Examine the historical and contemporary foundations of Métis governance, including key events, governance practices, and the impacts of colonial policies, while analyzing the evolution of Métis political organizations, legislative frameworks, and self-government agreements.
- Utilize governance theories and practical tools, such as SWOT analysis, stakeholder mapping, and scenario planning, to evaluate governance challenges and develop culturally informed, evidence-based recommendations for Métis governance.

- Collaborate effectively with peers and stakeholders to develop policy briefs, reports, and presentations, incorporating feedback to ensure alignment with real-world governance priorities and frameworks.

## **COURSE FORMAT**

### *Blended Online Learning: Asynchronous with **Two Synchronous Sessions***

This course employs a blended structure, combining independent study, **optional** discussions, and collaborative group projects. Students will engage with course materials on their own and through **two** mandatory interactive sessions, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of Métis governance that is both theoretical and applied.

### **Part 1: Independent Learning and Instructor Check-Ins (Week 1-4)**

In the first portion of the course, students will engage with the historical context—examining the birth of the Métis Nation, the influence of various communities in the Northwest, and the lasting impacts of colonial policies such as scrip and the denial of Métis nationhood. This foundational understanding provides a critical lens through which to view modern self-governance frameworks and emerging models of jurisdictional recognition. Learning will be driven primarily by independent readings and critical reflections.

Each week, students will:

- Engage with Assigned Readings: Core texts and supplementary materials will introduce key concepts related to Métis identity, governance structures, and historical contexts.
- Weekly Response Questions: Students will answer a focused question that requires them to critically analyze the week's themes. These written responses encourage deeper engagement with the material and can include references to additional scholarly sources students find on their own.
- Check-Ins: While Part 1 is self-directed, the instructor will hold **optional** check-ins, throughout weeks 1-3 to clarify concepts, discuss emerging insights, and ensure students are on track in their understanding. During Week 4 (Feb 10-14) there is a mandatory 10–15-minute oral check-in to confirm each student's understanding of Weeks 1–3.

This approach allows students to build a robust, evidence-informed knowledge base and become comfortable with key governance concepts at their own pace before moving into more applied learning. Each week, students will receive reading prompts and submit their written responses to the instructor via email, ensuring a flexible and accessible mode of interaction.

### **Part 2: Collaborative, Stakeholder-Driven Projects (Week 5-10)**

During the second portion of the course, students will work in small teams to address contemporary governance challenges identified in collaboration with Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) or related partners. The specific topics, methods, and deliverables will be adjusted each year as priorities evolve and as the course engages directly with MN–S representatives and the Chair in Métis Governance and Policy. Although the precise structure and expectations may shift, students can generally anticipate:

- **Team-Based Projects:** Students will be grouped into teams to work on a problem or policy issue provided by MN–S or designated stakeholders, applying the concepts and frameworks explored in Part 1.
- **Iterative Feedback:** Teams will periodically consult with the instructor and MN–S representatives to refine their approach, ensuring that recommendations are relevant, culturally grounded, and responsive to current governance priorities.
- **Adaptability:** Project timelines, milestones, and deliverables (such as presentations, or stakeholder engagement strategies) will be clarified as the course progresses, allowing for responsive and evolving learning experiences.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Part 1: Foundations of Métis Governance (Weeks 1–4)**

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Questions and a finalized reading list for each week will be provided at the start of that week.

#### **Week 1 (January 20–24): Métis Nationhood – A Nation Among Nations**

##### **Focus:**

- Understand Métis nationhood through governance practices, cultural traits, and land-based identity.
- Critically examine the concept of nationhood, especially as it applies to Indigenous peoples.

##### **Readings (subject to change):**

1. Gaudry, Adam. "Chapter 3 – 'Enjoying Our Own Government Based on True Conceptions of Freedom': Buffalo Hunt Governance and Expression of Political Authority." In *Kaa-tipeyimishoyaahk - 'We Are Those Who Own Ourselves': A Political History of Métis Self-Determination in the North-West, 1830-1870*. PhD diss., University of Victoria, 2014.
2. Andersen, Chris. "Peoplehood and the Nation Form: Core Concepts for a Critical Métis Studies," in *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies*, edited by Jennifer Adese and Chris Andersen, 20–43. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021.
3. Macdougall, Brenda. "The Myth of Métis Cultural Ambivalence." In *Contours of a People: Métis Family, Mobility, and History*, edited by Nicole St-Onge, Carolyn Podruchny, and Brenda Macdougall, pp. 422-451. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012.

##### **Due:**

- Weekly written response (max 400 words) reflecting on Métis nationhood by Sunday midnight (January 26).

#### **Week 2 (January 27–31): Assimilation and Denial of Nationhood**

##### **Focus:**

- Understand the unique assimilation story of the Métis, including key policies (e.g., scrip, road allowances) and their impacts on communities.
- Explore how Métis nationhood was denied through epistemic injustice, racialization, and assimilation policies.
- Situate these processes in broader governance and constitutional recognition challenges.

##### **Readings (subject to change):**

1. Excerpts from Adams, H. (1989). *Prison of Grass*.

2. Boyer, K., & Andersen, C. (2024). *Defining a Nation: Métis Nation Building in the Face of Epistemic Injustice* (excerpts)
3. Dubois, J., & Saunders, K. (2017). "Explaining the Resurgence of Métis Rights." *Canadian Public Administration*.

**Due:**

- Weekly written response (max 400 words) analyzing the impact of assimilation policies by Sunday midnight (February 2).

**Week 3 (February 3–7): Political Development & Institutions of Self-Government****Focus:**

- Understand the historical trajectory of Métis political mobilization and the formation of self-governing institutions.
- Examine contemporary models of Métis governance, including agreements with federal and provincial governments.
- Consider how evolving governance structures address current challenges while reflecting Métis values.

**Readings (subject to change):**

1. Dubois, J., & Saunders, K. (2017). "Rebuilding Indigenous Nations Through Constitutional Development: A Case Study of the Métis in Canada."
2. Gaudry, A. (2018). "Better Late Than Never? Canada's Reluctant Recognition of Métis Rights and Self-Government."
3. Selected chapters from Saunders, K., & Dubois, J. (2019). *Métis Politics and Governance in Canada*.
4. Madden, J., Graham, J., & Wilson, J. (2005). *Exploring Options for Métis Governance in the 21st Century*.
5. *Constitution of the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan* (with amendments)
6. *Métis Nation—Saskatchewan Citizenship Act* (with amendments)

**Due:**

- Weekly written response (max 400 words) reflecting on institutional development and governance due by Sunday midnight (February 9).

**Week 4 (February 10–14): Check-In and Preparatory Discussions****Focus:**

- Review and consolidate knowledge gained in Weeks 1–3.
- **Mandatory 10–15 Minute Oral Check-Ins:** Each student must sign up for a time slot to discuss Weeks 1–3 content with the instructor.

**Due:**

- No formal written assignments this week.
- **Oral Check-In (mandatory) – sign-up required.**

## Part 2: Applied, Stakeholder-Driven Projects (Weeks 5–10)

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### Two Mandatory Synchronous Sessions (Week 5 & Week 10)

#### Week 5. Project Initiation Meeting (February 24)

*Meeting with project sponsors to review their needs.*

**Focus:** Meeting with project sponsors to review their needs and officially start the stakeholder-driven projects.

#### Readings:

- Review on-line project management advice: <https://www.wrike.com/project-management-guide/project-lifecycle/>
- Four phases of project management: <https://hbr.org/2016/11/the-four-phases-of-project-management>
- Templates and information packets for project activities on Canvas site

#### DUE:

- Midnight February 26: Form teams and choose project
- Live meeting : Friday 28 1-4pm

#### Week 6. Asynchronous Project Charter and Plan (March 3)

**No live session.** Teams will submit their Project Charter and Plan asynchronously.

#### Readings:

- A guide to project charters: <https://www.projectmanager.com/blog/project-charter>
- More information on project charters vs. statement of work, with examples: <https://thedigitalprojectmanager.com/project-charter/>
- Questions to consider when writing a project proposal: <https://www.projectmanager.com/blog/how-to-create-a-project-proposal>
- Defining project scope: <https://www.greycampus.com/blog/project-management/steps-involved-in-defining-project-scope>

#### DUE:

- Charter and plan submitted asynchronously by midnight, March 2. The instructor will provide written feedback.

#### Week 7. Asynchronous Draft Outline, Peer Review, and Sponsor Feedback (March 10)

1. **Teams Submit Draft Outlines to Instructor** (e.g., Monday of Week 7).
  - The instructor reviews each outline to ensure it is professional and ready for sponsor input.
  - Instructor either approves or requests revisions before sponsor sees it.
2. **Once Approved, Teams Send Outlines to Sponsor Asynchronously** for written feedback.
  - The sponsor has a set window (3–5 days) to provide comments.
  - **Peer Review** also occurs during this window, where teams exchange outlines and give each other feedback.
3. **Instructor-Facilitated Feedback Discussion**
  - The instructor oversees the feedback process, ensuring teams understand and integrate the sponsor's suggestions.

**DUE:**

- Draft outline submitted to instructor by midnight, March 10 (or earlier if you prefer).
- **Approved outlines** forwarded to sponsor for asynchronous feedback.
- Teams incorporate both peer and sponsor feedback by the end of Week 7.

**Week 8. Groups Meet on Their Own & Continue Working (March 17)**

- **No new deliverable this week.** Teams use this period to further refine their outlines and begin developing the final report, integrating sponsor feedback.
- **Optional** office hours are available for questions or troubleshooting.

**Week 9. Draft Final Report (March 24)**

- Teams submit their draft final report asynchronously to the instructor by midnight, March 24.
- The instructor or sponsor may provide brief written comments if needed.
- No additional peer review this week.

**Week 10. Synchronous Final Presentation to Sponsors (March 31)**

**Focus:** Teams will have 30 minutes total (15-minute presentation + 15-minute Q&A) with sponsors.

**DUE:**

- Submit final written report by midnight, April 2.
- Submit final slide deck by April 3, 12 noon.
- Attend the synchronous session for live presentations to the sponsors (April 4).

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION****Part 1 (Foundations of Métis Governance) – 35%**

Part 1 assesses students' foundational understanding of Métis governance through both written and oral components. Each element is designed to evaluate individual engagement with the course materials and the ability to articulate key concepts.

**1. Weekly Written Responses (21%)**

- Students will submit three written responses (Weeks 1–3), each worth 7%.
- Submissions should demonstrate independent thought, critical engagement with readings, and clarity in presenting key ideas.

**2. Mandatory Oral Check-In (14%)**

- During Week 4, each student will participate in a 10–15 minute one-on-one oral check-in with the instructor.
- This session will assess the student's ability to articulate and expand on, knowledge gained Weeks 1–3.
- If oral explanations do not align with the depth and quality of written submissions, a mark adjustment may occur.

In Part 2, students are primarily assessed on collective deliverables (Project Charter, Written Report, Final Presentation) for a group grade, with a single, final peer and self-evaluation that can adjust individual marks to ensure fairness and accountability based on each member's actual contribution.

### **Applied, Stakeholder-Driven Projects – 65% total**

Part 2 involves collaborative, real-world project work guided by external stakeholders. Each component is designed to assess both the team's ability to apply governance concepts to practical challenges and individual accountability within the team.

- 1. Project Charter (15%)**

Teams will develop a Project Charter detailing scope, objectives, timeline, and roles.

- 2. Written Project Report (35%)**

Each team will produce a final written report outlining their analysis, findings, and recommendations. All team members receive the same mark for the final report. It is the team's responsibility to ensure equitable contribution. The report should draw meaningfully from both the historical foundations covered in Part 1 and the practical policy frameworks used in the project.

### **Individual Accountability and Grade Adjustments**

While the project deliverables (Charter, Report, Presentation) each earn a single "group mark," your **final individual mark** may be **raised or lowered** based on peer- and self-evaluation results. For example, if your team's Final Report earns 80% collectively, students who contributed substantially above average might see their grade for that report adjusted to 85%, while those who contributed below average might receive 75%.

- 3. Final Presentation and Discussion with Sponsors (15%)**

Teams will present their report findings and recommendations to the sponsoring organization during Week 10. The presentation should be professional, clear, and responsive to the stakeholders' needs. Marks will be awarded for the quality of the presentation, the ability to answer questions effectively, and the engagement with the sponsor's feedback

## WINTER 2024 – WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS TABLE

Week	Dates (Mon-Sun)	Key Focus/Topics	Assignments/Due Items
1	Jan 20–26	Métis Nationhood- Foundational contexts - Concept of nationhood (esp. for Indigenous peoples)	<b>Weekly Written Response #1</b> (max 400 words) <i>Due: *Sun, Jan 26 (midnight)</i>
2	Jan 27–Feb 2	Assimilation & denial of Métis nationhood- Impacts of scrip, road allowances- Broader governance & constitutional challenges	<b>Weekly Written Response #2</b> (max 400 words) <i>Due: *Sun, Feb 2 (midnight)</i>
3	Feb 3–9	Political development & institutions of self-government- Contemporary models of Métis governance	<b>Weekly Written Response #3</b> (max 400 words) <i>Due: *Sun, Feb 9 (midnight)</i>
4	Feb 10–16	Check-In and Preparatory Discussions – Review Weeks 1–3 and prepare for applied project work (Part 2).	<b>Mandatory Oral Check-In</b> – Scheduled throughout Week 4.
-	Feb 17–23	<b>Reading Break</b> (No Classes/Assignments)	<i>No sessions, no deliverables this week</i>
5	Feb 24–Mar 2	<b>Project Initiation &amp; Team Formation Mandatory Synchronous Meeting: Friday, Feb 28 (1–4pm)</b> - Meet with sponsors (MN–S)	<b>Form Teams &amp; Choose Project by Wed, Feb 26 (midnight)</b> 2. <b>Live Sponsor Meeting</b> on Fri, Feb 28 (1–4pm)
6	Mar 3–9	<b>Project Charter &amp; Plan</b> - Instructor provides written feedback	<b>Project Charter &amp; Plan</b> (team submission) <i>Due: *Sun, Mar 9 (midnight)</i>
7	Mar 10–16	<b>Draft Outline &amp; Peer Review</b> - Asynchronous sponsor feedback on outlines	<b>Draft Outline</b> (team submission) <i>Due: **Sun, Mar 16 (midnight)*</i> - After instructor OK, outlines go to sponsor & peers for feedback
8	Mar 17–23	<b>Refine Outline &amp; Begin Final Report</b> - Incorporate sponsor feedback	<b>No new deliverables</b> - Continue drafting final report, consult optional office hours if needed
9	Mar 24–30	Teams submit <b>Draft Final Report</b> for instructor review	<b>Draft Final Report</b> (team submission) <i>Due: *Sun, Mar 30 (midnight)</i>
10	Mar 31–Apr 6	<b>Final Presentations &amp; Wrap-Up Mandatory Synchronous Session: Friday, Apr 4 (time TBA)</b>	1. <b>Final Written Report</b> (team) <i>Due: **Wed, Apr 2 (midnight)</i> 2. <b>Final Slide Deck</b> (team) <i>Due: **Thu, Apr 3 (noon)</i> 3. <b>Live Presentation</b> to sponsors on <b>Fri, Apr 4</b> (15-min presentation + 15-min Q&A)

## **ENROLLMENT**

Class enrollment will be normally limited to 30 students.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS**

Students are expected to attend all sessions. If you are unable to attend in person, we will have a synchronous Zoom call which will be taped. You must let the instructor and your team members know ahead of any session you intend to join by Zoom.

Active participation in class discussion is expected by all students.

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This material has been developed by Kurtis Boyer, in collaboration with Métis Nation - Saskatchewan. The collaboration involved a process of shared creativity and knowledge exchange, resulting in this educational resource. All rights, including intellectual property rights, are acknowledged to be a product of this collaboration. We appreciate the invaluable contributions made by both parties and respect the intellectual property generated through this partnership.