LE 845 Governance and Board Development
Winter 2026

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Course Dates: January 5-9, 2026
Course Delivery Method: In-Person Modular course

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course will explore the theological, historical, philosophical, psychological and structural factors that contribute to the reconceived assumptions regarding governance and board governance. In this study of the different models of governance and types of boards, emphasis is placed on best practice design or redesign, development, and function of governance and board governance within a wide range of organizational and ministry settings. The course will include a study of board and elder work in church environments.

COURSE INTEGRATION
This course is focused on optimizing the integrity and alignment of spirituality, persons, processes and organization. We focus on bringing Board members and the senior staff leader into a healthy, integrated spiritual community that contributes to optimal team performance for the good of the ministry and its mission.

COURSE TEXTS
Required

Brown, Jim. *The Imperfect Board Member: Discovering the Seven Disciplines of Governance Excellence.* San Francisco, CA: Wiley, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-7879-8610-0.

Chait, Richard P., William P. Ryan, Barbara E. Taylor. *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley. 2004. ISBN: 978-0471684206

Hoag, Gary G., Wesley K. Willmer, Gregory J. Henson. *The Council: A Biblical Perspective on Board Governance*. Winchester, VA: ECFA Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1936233946

Pellowe, John. *Serving as a Board Member: Training for Churches and Christian Agencies.* Waterloo, ON: Canadian Centre for Christian Charities, 2012. ISBN: 978-1895199338
(e-book) https://www.cccc.org/cart/view_item/serving_as_a_board_member_ebook

Pellowe, John. *The Board's Most Important Relationship: Training for Christian Ministry Directors and Staff Leaders.* Waterloo: Canadian Centre for Christian Charities, 2017. ISBN: 78-1-895199-46-8
(e-book) https://www.cccc.org/cart/view_item/ebook_board_relationship

Recommended (Articles)
Pellowe, John. *Board Development Plans*. Christian Leadership Reflections.
https://www.cccc.org/news_blogs/john/2015/05/26/board-development-plans/

Pellowe, John. How a Board Adds Value Series. Canadian Leadership Reflections.
https://www.cccc.org/news_blogs/series/how-a-board-add

Pellowe, John. *The Unique Challenges of Church Boards*. Christian Leadership Reflections.
https://www.cccc.org/news_blogs/john/2010/03/18/the-unique-challenges-of-church-boards/

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research
Papers*, available as PDF documents here: https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/documents.*

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/bookstore.

*Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (https://briercrest.instructure.com) and
their myBriercrest.ca email account.*

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES
Students will graduate:
1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.
2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

COURSE OUTCOMES
1. Comprehension of the evolution and current state of governance best practices that empowers customization and contextualization of governing structures and strategies.
2. Understanding the technical and spiritual aspects of governance that generates a maximalist vision for practicing Christian faith and spirituality in board governance and organizational leadership.
3. Competence in managing roles and responsibilities of governance and leadership, leading to healthy aligned organizations that are safe, fulfilling places for leaders to work.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Day 1   Introductions and presentation of personal challenges
           Overview – History of Governing Boards
           Overview – Evolution of Church Governance Structures
           The Theology of Governance
           Exploration of Different Church Polity Governance Types within
           Christendom
           Unpack the evolution of "Boards" from the last forty years
Day 2   The WHY of Governance
           The holistic mandate of a board – to care for the WHOLE

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The WHAT of Governance – Foundational Concepts and Contextual
Integration
Day 3   The DUTY of Governance
The HOW of Governance – the Four-fold functions of a Board
Day 4   Nuts and Bolts: Running Meetings
Building a Board Governance Document
Day 5   What makes a Board "Christian"?
Integration of Spiritual Disciplines
What Else?

ASSIGNMENTS
Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Integrative Reading Report
Overview: Each participant will be expected to read the required textbooks and write an integrative
reading report that demonstrates an initial wrestling with how to apply the material within their
current leadership context.
Details: The report will include a summary introduction, highlights of each resource, and a
conclusion that wrestles with the integration of the themes of the resources with a brief description
of potential applicability within their current context. Students will be expected to demonstrate
expertise and awareness of the reading in team and dialogical group sessions and discussions.

Due: January 5, 2026 (prior to the start of class)
Evaluative criteria: APA formatting, clear grammar and sentence structure, overall paper structure
(see above), comprehension of key concepts, personal and contextual reflection/application.
Length: 7-10 pages (2500 words max)
Value: 30% of grade

Mid-Course Assignments:

2. In-Class Participation
Each participant will be expected to engage in class discussions, as well as contributing supporting
resources that they have come across and found helpful. Students will be assigned groups during
class time to work on various case studies and have various discussions.

Due: During class
Evaluative criteria: attendance, quality of engagement with lectures and class discussions,
contribution to group work.
Value: 25% of grade

Post-Course Assignments:

3. Multi-Year Board Development Plan
Create a maximum of twelve board development modules to cover the entire ideal board
development program that you would recommend to a board. The program is meant to be

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delivered over the course of a single board term (usually three or four years). Each module needs to be a standalone model because usually a portion of the directors rotate on and off the board each year. You are not writing the actual training material, but the outline that would guide someone to write the training material.

Each module should include:
1. Title
2. Description of what it covers
3. Rationale for the topic (the benefits to the board, staff, and ministry as a whole)
4. Desired outcomes
5. Key Learnings to be included

Due: March 6, 2026
Evaluative criteria: APA formatting, clear grammar and sentence structure, integration of key concepts and resources addressed in class, evidence of personal reflection and appropriate contextual application.
Length: 10-12 pages (3000 words max)
Value: 45% of grade

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar.

Attendance Policy
In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses
Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Online Courses
If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Semester-Based Courses
All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

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Modular Course Schedules
Modular classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission
All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the academic calendar.

Return of Graded Assignments
Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the Seminary. If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty
As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

> Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

> Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the Seminary Calendar and

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the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on Canvas and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations
Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, Tom. The Complementary Model Board of Governance. AMC NPO Solutions. 2015.

Barton, Ruth Haley. Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups, n.d

Carver, John. Boards That Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organizations. 3rd edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

Carver, John, and Miriam Carver. Reinventing Your Board: A Step-by-Step Guide to Implementing Policy Governance. 2 edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

Chait, Richard P., Thomas P. Holland, and Barbara E. Taylor. The Effective Board of Trustees. Phoenix, AZ: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1991.

Chait, Richard P., William P. Ryan, and Barbara E. Taylor. Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards. 1st edition. Hoboken, N.J: Wiley, 2004.

Charan, Ram. Boards That Deliver: Advancing Corporate Governance From Compliance to Competitive Advantage. 1st edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005.

Getz, Gene. Elders And Leaders. 1st edition. Chicago, IL: MOODY PUBLISHERS, 2003.
Hotchkiss, Dan, and Anthony B. Robinson. Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership. 2 edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016.

Laughlin, Frederic L., and Robert C. Andringa. Good Governance for Nonprofits: Developing Principles and Policies for an Effective Board. Illustrated edition. New York, NY: AMACOM (Harper Collins), 2007.

Malphurs, Aubrey. Leading Leaders: Empowering Church Boards For Ministry Excellence. 1st edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005.

Olsen, Charles M. Transforming Church Boards into Communities. Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995.

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Stahlke, Les, and Jennifer Loughlin. Governance Matters: Relationship Model of Governance, Leadership And Management. Edmonton, AB: Governancematters.Com Inc, 2003.

Stoesz, Edgar, and Chester Raber. Doing Good Better: How to Be an Effective Board Member of a Nonprofit Organization. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2002.

Toon, Peter, L. Roy Taylor, Paige Patterson, Sam E. Waldron, and Stanley N. Gundry. Who Runs the Church?: 4 Views on Church Government. Edited by Steven B. Cowan. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Zimmer, Donald E. Leadership and Listening: Spiritual Foundations for Church Governance. Herndon, VA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011.