



## LE 849 Leadership and Management Current Issues: Social Systems Spring 2026

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Course Dates: June 1-5, 2026  
Course Delivery Method: On campus modular course

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the mindsets and practices needed to build and positively influence social systems and networks. It expands upon the learnings of previous courses by applying systems thinking on a broad scale to consider the skills needed for complex social change.

### Required COURSE TEXTS

Scripture: Ex. 19:1-6, 1 Peter 2:4-9; Psalm 72:1-14; Proverbs 31:4,8-9; Mt 4:17- 26:29 – studying the distinctives of God's people and the Kingdom of Heaven/God

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Revenge of the Tipping Point: Overstories, Superspreaders, and The Rise of Social Engineering*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Co., 2024. pp. 13- 233 (220 p.)

Hirsch, Allen with Kelly, Rob. *Metanoia: How God Radically Transforms People from the Inside Out*. 100 Movements Publishing, 2023. (259 p)

Kahane, Adam, *Facilitating Breakthrough: How to Remove Obstacles, Bridge Differences, and Move Forward Together*. Berrett-Koehler, 2021. (224 p.)

Scharmer, Otto. *Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications*. Berrett-Koehler, 2018. (192 p)

Silsbee, Doug. *Presence Based Leadership: Complexity Practices for Clarity, Resilience, and Results That Matter*. Yes! Global Inc. 2018. 978-0-692-05334-8 (286p.)

### Required Articles and Book Summaries

Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* book summary (2 pages)

### Required Videos

(8 min) Are Bad Listeners Actually Bad at Listening  
To view, [click this link](#).

(3.40 min) N.T. Wright, The Kingdom of God is Here

To view, [click this link](#).

(2.04 min) N.T. Wright, The Kingdom of Heaven and Sovereignty of God

To view, [click this link](#).

*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).

### **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

Students who engage thoughtfully will:

1. Embrace and articulate an ethical and Christ-centered approach to leadership that is culturally and contextually informed.
2. Demonstrate adaptive and facilitative management principles and practices.
3. Exhibit and articulate biblically informed self-awareness and humble confidence.
4. Exemplify theologically informed collaborative leadership principles and practices.
5. Understand and apply systems thinking and the principles of systems complexity, systems health, systems change, and social innovation.

### **COURSE OUTCOMES**

Students who engage thoughtfully will:

1. Develop a contextualized approach to facilitative and adaptive leadership and culture shaping.
2. Develop increased leadership agility to respond to changes in the environment.
3. Exhibit the mindsets and skillsets that inform planning, problem solving and polarity management.
4. Be exposed to trend projection, scenario development and futures research, and develop indicators of system wellbeing.
5. Articulate and embrace a Christ-centered, theologically informed understanding of change and transformation.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Day 1	<p>Introduction to Social Systems</p> <p>Theory U and Systems Thinking</p> <p>Facilitative and Agile Leadership in Social Systems</p> <p>Adaptive Leadership in Social Systems</p> <p>Problem Solving and Polarity Management</p> <p>Group Work</p>	<p>Please come prepared to discuss: Kingdom of God scriptures and videos</p> <p>Scharmer, Otto. <i>Essentials of Theory U</i></p> <p>Silsbee, Doug. <i>Presence Based Leadership</i></p>
Day 2	<p>Diverse Domains of Society</p> <p>Culture Shaping in Social Systems</p> <p>Change and Transformation in Social Systems</p> <p>Group Work</p>	<p>Gladwell, Malcolm. <i>Revenge of the Tipping Point</i></p> <p>Kahane, Adam. <i>Collaborating with the Enemy</i></p> <p>Kahane, Adam, <i>Facilitating Breakthrough</i></p>
Day 3	<p>Reflecting Theologically on Change and Transformation</p> <p>Strategic Planning Tools and Processes</p> <p>Ethical and Justice Issues</p> <p>Group Work</p>	<p>Hirsch, Allen with Kelly, Rob. <i>Metanoia</i></p>
Day 4	<p>Trend Projection and Futures Research</p> <p>Scenario Development</p> <p>Indicators of System Wellbeing</p> <p>Group Work</p>	
Day 5	<p>Course Integration and Group Presentations</p>	

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

***Pre-Course Assignments:***

1. Biblical Reflections (Seminary Wide Outcomes 1,2, Program Outcome 1,5, Course Outcome 1,3)

Read the required biblical texts, watch the NT Wright video clips and read Hirsch's *Metanoia*. Reflect biblically and theologically on living and leading in your context in light of God's Kingdom principles. What do these readings suggest regarding a theology of personal and organizational transformation? What leadership and management principles and practices do they suggest that are important in your context?

Assignment Length: 3 pages

Due Date: 8pm Friday, May 22, 2026

Assignment Value: 10%

Marking Rubric: Marks will be assigned according to the depth and breadth of thoughtful reflection on the biblical texts and Hirsch's reflections and application in your leadership and management context. Be sure to include a short introduction with thesis statement and concluding paragraph that summarizes your paper. Grammar, spelling, and careful citations are important parts of academic writing; please edit your paper carefully. Generative AI may not be used in any capacity for any part of this assignment.

2. Reading Reflections: (Seminary Wide Outcome 3, Program Outcome 1,5, Course Outcome 1, 2)

Read Gladwell's *Tipping Point* book summary and pp. 13-233 of his more recent *Revenge of the Tipping Point* book; Adam Kahane's *Facilitating Breakthrough*; Scharmer's *Essentials of Theory U* and Silsbee's *Presence Based Leadership* and listen to the 8-minute-long podcast with Zhiying Ren about listening. Reflect on the factors that lead to changes in people's thinking and action, the implications of this for your context and calling, and the ethical considerations that should be taken into consideration. What assumptions are these authors making and do you agree with these assumptions? How does widescale change happen? What is the role of personal growth, 'presence' and insight?

Assignment Length: 8 pages

Due Date: 8pm Friday, May 29, 2026

Assignment Value: 25%

Marking Rubric: Marks will be assigned according to the depth and breadth of thoughtful reflection on the texts and podcast and the insights given regarding implications for your leadership and management context. Be sure to include a short introduction with thesis statement and concluding paragraph that summarizes your paper. Grammar, spelling, and careful citations are important parts of academic writing; please edit your paper carefully. Generative AI may not be used in any capacity for any part of this assignment.

***Mid-Course Assignments:***

3. Group Assignment (Seminary Wide Outcomes 2, Program Outcome 2, Course Outcome 1,2,3,4)

Your assigned team will be given a theoretical context that will serve as a test case for applying the concepts learned in class. Working together you will wrestle through the challenges, opportunities and polarities of the case study and present your plan and recommendations to the class on the Friday morning of the course. Pay attention to the role you played on your team and the system dynamics at work throughout the week. How does this shape your team and its thinking? What hidden forces were at work and in what ways did they surface? What competing priorities did you notice?

Due Date: 9am Friday, June 5, 2026

Assignment Value: 15%

Marking Rubric: Individual marks will be assigned according to the depth and breadth of thoughtful reflection on the course and application to your case study and effectiveness of group presentation as well as personal engagement during class. Generative AI *may not* be used in any capacity for any part of this assignment.

### ***Post-Course Assignments:***

4. Reflection Paper (Seminary Wide Outcomes 1,2, Program Outcomes 1,2, Course Outcomes 1,3,4,5)

Submit an 8-page paper that describes, critiques, and offers insights into underlying themes of our weeklong class system. In what ways did we act in predictable or unpredictable ways and why? What role did power and personalities play? What levers were most effective to elicit change? How aware were you of your own and other's assumptions and theories of change? Were there any unintended consequences? Include a thoughtful, Christ-centered, theologically informed understanding of system change and transformation that builds on the readings for, conversations in, and experience of the class.

Due Date: 8pm, Friday, June 26, 2026

Assignment Value: 20%

Marking Rubric: Marks will be assigned according to the depth and breadth of thoughtful reflection on the course; development of a personal theology of change and transformation; and indicators of personal growth. Generative AI *may not* be used in any capacity for any part of this assignment.

5. Research Paper (Seminary Wide Outcomes 2, Program Outcome 2, Course Outcomes 2,3,4)

Thinking and leading at the level of large-scale social systems is complex and challenging. Research a large-scale social change of your choice and summarize the context, situation it sought to address, methodologies and tools used, effectiveness, and areas for potential improvement. Be sure to include insights about the role of personal transformation, and effective strategies for social transformation, managing polarities, systems theory, and trend projection. What role did power, language, media, and personalities play in this scenario? What levers were used most effectively to elicit change? Were there any unintended consequences and if so, how were they addressed? Present your findings in an 8-page paper that includes possible application as you consider the domains where God has or may give you influence.

Due Date: 9am Friday, July 31, 2026

Assignment Value: 30%

Marking Rubric: Marks will be assigned according to the depth and breadth of research and thoughtful reflection on the social change, effectiveness of writing, and personal application. Generative AI *may* be used for the research phase of this project but not for writing up your findings.

## 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.

### ***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 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](mailto: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).