

 Yukon University	Division of Applied Science and Management School of Indigenous Governance
	FNDS 103 Foundations in Indigenous Governance
	Term: Fall 2026 Number of Credits: 3
Course Outline	

INSTRUCTORS: Hillarie Zimmermann, Peter Johnston, Nina Bolton
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CLASS TIME: 9:00 AM to 11:50 AM
DATE: September 4 to December 4, 2026, Fridays
CLASSROOM: A2317 or online (Zoom link provided on course Moodle site)

In the Pit with Peter Johnston events: September 11, October 9, November 6, November 27 (11:30 am to 1:00 pm)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Graduates from the Indigenous Governance Degree (IGD) will be makers of change, space, innovation, harmony, and relationships. They will be leaders and practitioners in land, community, family, scholarship, culture, and government. Given the importance and grounding of these elements throughout the IGD, this foundations course provides an opportunity for all first-year IGD students to meet and begin building relationships and community with one another. Students will also meet and engage with Indigenous Elders, leaders and change-makers.

The course builds confidence and familiarity with academic systems while providing strategies for bridging academic and Indigenous ways of knowing. Through a series of workshops and guest speakers, this course focuses on building student resiliency in culturally and trauma informed ways. Students will be connected to YukonU support staff to learn about YukonU programs, services, resources, and how to access these services. Throughout the course, students are invited to begin thinking through, shaping, and enacting their leadership qualities and values, rooted in their cultural practices and ethics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisite(s): Admission into the Indigenous Governance Degree Program.

Note: Students must obtain a 70% final grade to pass this course. The final grade will be awarded as pass/fail.

EQUIVALENCY OR TRANSFERABILITY

This is a new course and its transferability is still being evaluated. Receiving institutions determine course transferability. Find further information at: <https://www.yukonu.ca/admissions/transfer-credit>

LEARNING OUTCOMES

www.yukonu.ca

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to

- Explore the different pathways through the program and feel empowered to pursue their own unique path through their studies utilizing a holistic set of internal and external resources;
- Recognize and reflect on the impacts of trauma on individuals, communities and employees;
- Apply the interconnected principles, values and ethics of Indigenous leadership to their own ways of knowing, being, doing and communicating;
- Identify the power dynamics between Indigenous and Western ways of knowing and being and examine how they influence collaborative work and cross-cultural understanding;
- Identify and practice strategies for respectful and effective communication and relationship-building with people from a diversity of backgrounds;
- Build a logical argument by constructively and creatively integrating the ideas of others into your academic writing, while maintaining academic integrity; and
- Reflect on the role and importance personal responsibility in academia and leadership

COURSE FORMAT

This course is offered in a combination of synchronous and asynchronous formats during the semester. Students will be required to attend synchronous sessions every other week (specific dates will be given in the first class) and complete asynchronous activities in the other weeks.

EVALUATION

Active participation	50%
Reflection papers (10%x4)	50%
Total	100% (final mark is given as a P/F)

ASSESSMENTS

Active participation: The purpose of the synchronous sessions is to hone academic and personal communication skills; to engage with Elders, Indigenous leaders and change-makers; and to spend time with the IGD cohort. Therefore, it is expected that students attend each class in its entirety. The participation grade will be based on attendance, active and engaged participation, and completion of activities. You will also be required to complete a series of online activities and exercises during the course. These activities/exercises will count towards your active participation grade.

Reflection papers: After some of the synchronous sessions, students will write a reflection in response to questions or prompts provided by the instructor. Each reflection will be worth 10% each for a total of 50% of the overall course grade. More information, including marking rubrics, will be provided on the course Moodle page.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

Refer to the YukonU website for important dates.

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TEXTBOOKS & LEARNING MATERIALS

There is no textbook for this course. Any required readings or materials will be available on Moodle.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to contribute toward a positive and supportive environment and are required to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. Academic misconduct includes all forms of academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, deceit, using the work of others without their permission, aiding other students in committing academic offences, misrepresenting academic assignments prepared by others as one's own, or any other forms of academic dishonesty including falsification of any information on any Yukon University document.

Please refer to Academic Regulations & Procedures for further details about academic standing and student rights and responsibilities.

Note on the use of AI (e.g. ChatGPT): Students are welcome to use AI tools to support their learning in this course, provided they are transparent about how and where AI was used. Any use of AI should be acknowledged and should not replace the student's own thinking, analysis, or voice. Much of this course involves personal reflection, lived experience, and connections to your own learning and experiences; AI cannot meaningfully substitute for this work. For reflection-based activities and assignments, students are expected to engage directly and authentically with their own experiences and perspectives.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodations are available for students requiring an academic accommodation to fully participate in this class. These accommodations are available for students with a documented disability, chronic condition or any other grounds specified in section 8.0 of the Yukon University Academic Regulations (available on the Yukon University website). It is the student's responsibility to seek these accommodations by contacting the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC):

LearningAssistanceCentre@yukonu.ca.

Topic Outline

Date	Topics/Activities
September 4	Introductions
September 11	In the Pit event
September 18	Debrief on Pit event
September 25 (Zoom class only)	Academic skills presentations (APA, writing center, library)
October 2	Preparing for Pit event
October 9	In the Pit event

October 16	Reading week – no class
October 23	Hold class in the Elders Lounge Debrief/preparing for Pit event
October 30	Lateral Kindness Workshop
November 6	In the Pit event
November 13	Lateral Kindness Workshop
November 20	Lateral Kindness Workshop
November 27	In the Pit event
December 4	Debrief on Pit event Final debrief