

Graduate Module — Organizational Theory & Governance (GC 520)

The session-by-session teaching plan for GC 520. Follows the module contract in `modules/module-template.md`, extended to the 14-week graduate arc. The governance and integrity canon is always at concept altitude (`doctrine/08`).

Audience: graduate students in the MS program. **Prerequisites:** program foundations. **Readings:** the doctrine and literacy folders, plus the course reader. **Case object:** Ravonics and real organizations, solicitations, and published governance failures.

Session 1 — Organizations as governance structures

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) explain why a firm, not a market, for pursuit work; (2) read the ORBITAL as a governance skeleton; (3) identify which ORBITAL axes are governance mechanisms.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “Why is a pursuit run by an organization and not by a freelancer?” - Teach (25 min): doctrine/06 + the course reader on organizational theory. The boundary of the firm; the ORBITAL as a skeleton with governance built in. - Apply (25 min): classify the seven ORBITAL axes as governance mechanisms or resource commitments. - Discuss (15 min): “Which ORBITAL axis is the most governance-heavy, and which is the most resource-heavy?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. What does the ORBITAL skeleton force an organization to decide before it spends? 2. When does a pursuit outgrow its skeleton?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/06. Deliverable: a one-page analysis classifying the ORBITAL axes.

Comprehension check. Why is a pursuit run by an organization? Which ORBITAL axes are governance mechanisms?

Session 2 — The principal–agent problem

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) explain adverse selection and moral hazard in the buyer-seller relationship; (2) locate the agency problem in a real solicitation; (3) describe how the rules force disclosure.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “The buyer knows less than the seller. What can go wrong?” - Teach (25 min): the course reader on agency theory + doctrine/04. Principal, agent, asymmetric information, the mechanisms that

make the relationship survivable. - Apply (25 min): in a real RFP, find the places where the rules force the seller to reveal what the buyer cannot see. - Discuss (15 min): “Which is the deeper problem in federal procurement: adverse selection or moral hazard?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. How does competition address adverse selection — and when does it fail? 2. What clauses address moral hazard after award?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/04 and literacy/how-to-read-an-rfp. Deliverable: a memo locating the agency problem and its remedies in a real solicitation.

Comprehension check. What is the principal-agent problem in procurement? How do the rules mitigate it?

Session 3 — The FAR as governance technology

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) explain the rulebook as a fairness machine; (2) state what the rules protect and who pays for them; (3) argue both sides of the burden-fairness trade-off.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “Why does the government need a 2,000-page rulebook to buy things?” - Teach (25 min): doctrine/02 + doctrine/04. The FAR as governance technology: disclosure, competition, accountability. - Apply (25 min): the debate — one side defends the rulebook as a fairness machine, the other as a burden. Use a real RFP’s compliance load as the object. - Discuss (15 min): “Who bears the cost of following the rules — and is that cost fair?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. What would a federal market without the rulebook look like? 2. How do the rules create trust between strangers?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/02 and doctrine/04. Deliverable: a short paper defending or attacking the rulebook as governance technology.

Comprehension check. How is the FAR a governance technology? What do the rules protect, and who pays?

Session 4 — Gates as decision systems

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) name the four parts of a gate; (2) distinguish owner-with-standing from owner-with-process; (3) design a gate charter.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “Why does excitement make gates necessary?” - Teach (25 min): doctrine/04 + the gate canon at concept altitude. Trigger, criteria, decision, owner; the two ownership modes. - Apply (25 min):

write the gate charter for a case pursuit — all four parts for each gate the pursuit will cross. - Discuss (15 min): “Which gate would fail first under pressure, and how do you make it boring?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. What makes a gate a rubber stamp, and how do you prevent it? 2. Who should own the bid/no-bid gate — and why?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/04. Deliverable: a gate charter for a case pursuit.

Comprehension check. What are the four parts of a gate? What is the difference between the two ownership modes?

Session 5 — Procurement integrity

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) explain why the integrity regime is structural, not personal; (2) map a pursuit org’s integrity exposure; (3) design the controls that contain it.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “Is integrity a personal virtue or a structural design?” - Teach (25 min): doctrine/04 + the course reader on procurement integrity. What the rules prohibit, why the system treats integrity structurally, the professional’s obligation. - Apply (25 min): map the integrity exposure of a typical pursuit org (relationships, gifts, information flows) and the controls that contain it. - Discuss (15 min): “Where is the integrity exposure greatest in a real capture org?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. Why is a rule against a specific behavior not enough? 2. What does a structural integrity program look like in a small firm?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/04. Deliverable: an integrity-exposure and controls map for a pursuit org.

Comprehension check. Why is the integrity regime structural? What are the controls that contain exposure?

Session 6 — Ethical walls and ethical firewalls

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) explain when an information barrier is structural, not a matter of trust; (2) design an ethical wall; (3) identify where walls are required.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “Your firm primes one pursuit and subs on a competitor’s team for another. What information can cross?” - Teach (25 min): doctrine/04 + the course reader on ethical walls. Information barriers; structural walls vs. trust; the wall as a governance artifact. - Apply (25 min): design the ethical wall for a firm with competing interests; specify what crosses

and what does not. - Discuss (15 min): “When is a wall overkill — and when is trust a trap?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. What is the difference between a wall and a promise?
2. Who polices the wall, and how?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/04. Deliverable: an ethical-wall design for a competing-interests case firm.

Comprehension check. When is a wall structural, not personal? What does a well-designed wall specify?

Session 7 — Organizational conflicts of interest

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) name the OCI categories; (2) explain why OCI is a knockout; (3) run an OCI screening.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “You helped write the requirement. Can you bid on it?” - Teach (25 min): the OCI canon at concept altitude + doctrine/04. Biased ground rules, unequal access to information, impaired objectivity; the knockout logic. - Apply (25 min): run a real solicitation and a case firm through the OCI categories; state the disposition. - Discuss (15 min): “Why is an unmitigable OCI a no-bid, not a risk?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. What is the difference between an OCI and a mere conflict of interest? 2. When can an OCI be mitigated rather than avoided?

Homework / reading. Read the OCI canon and doctrine/04. Deliverable: an OCI screening memo for a case situation.

Comprehension check. What are the OCI categories? Why is OCI a knockout?

Session 8 — Governance of the pursuit organization

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) map decision rights across the pipeline; (2) name who can say yes, who can say no, who can escalate; (3) draw the governance map of an org.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “In your organization, who can actually stop a pursuit?” - Teach (25 min): doctrine/03 + doctrine/04. Decision rights, RACI, the accountability loop. - Apply (25 min): draw the governance map of a pursuit organization — gates, owners, escalation, accountability. - Discuss (15 min): “Where does authority concentrate, and where should it?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. What happens when decision rights are unclear at a gate? 2. How does a small firm govern without a big org chart?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/03 and doctrine/04. Deliverable: the governance map of a pursuit org.

Comprehension check. What is a decision right? What is the accountability loop?

Session 9 — Midterm

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students demonstrate: (1) analysis of a real governance situation; (2) governance precision; (3) integrity discipline.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): exam logistics. - Exam (65 min): a real governance situation is distributed. Students analyze the organization, its decision rights, its integrity exposure, and its OCI posture — and redesign it. - Close (5 min): what to review for the second half.

Discussion prompts. n/a (examination).

Homework / reading. Review weeks 1–8. Deliverable: midterm submission.

Comprehension check. n/a.

Session 10 — Multi-organizational forms

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) describe prime/sub, JV, mentor-protege, and consortium as governance structures; (2) compare their decision rights; (3) identify each form’s failure modes.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “Who decides — the prime or the team?” - Teach (25 min): the teaming/JV canon at concept altitude + doctrine/07. The forms as governance structures; decision rights; seams. - Apply (25 min): compare two organizational forms for a case pursuit — decision rights, risk, seams. - Discuss (15 min): “Where does a team’s governance break first?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. Which form concentrates decision rights, and which distributes them? 2. What is the governance seam that most often breaks a JV?

Homework / reading. Read the teaming canon and doctrine/07. Deliverable: a comparison memo for two organizational forms.

Comprehension check. How do multi-organizational forms allocate decision rights? What are their failure modes?

Session 11 — Incentive design inside the firm

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) explain how internal incentives align with market incentives; (2) design an incentive structure; (3) use B&P budgets as governance.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “How do you pay a capture team to chase the right things?” - Teach (25 min): doctrine/05 + the course reader on organizational incentives. Compensation, authority, information; B&P budgets as governance. - Apply (25 min): design an incentive structure for a capture team that rewards disciplined pursuit, not volume of chasing. - Discuss (15 min): “What does a bonus for wins do to the threshold discipline?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. How does an incentive for wins distort the portfolio?
2. What should a capture team be measured on?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/05. Deliverable: an incentive-design memo for a capture team.

Comprehension check. How do internal incentives shape pursuit behavior? How is a B&P budget a governance tool?

Session 12 — Governance failures

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) analyze a procurement scandal structurally; (2) identify the missing control; (3) design the prevention.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “Name a procurement scandal. What was the missing control?” - Teach (25 min): the course reader on procurement failures + doctrine/04. The anatomy of governance failure: incentives, walls, information, accountability. - Apply (25 min): take a published scandal and write the control that would have prevented it. - Discuss (15 min): “Is the failure a bad actor or a bad system?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. Which governance failure is most common, and why?
2. How do you design a control that survives a determined insider?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/04. Deliverable: a post-mortem memo with the preventive control.

Comprehension check. What is the anatomy of a governance failure? What control prevents it?

Session 13 — The learning organization

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) design a debrief-and-retrospective system; (2) write honest-post-mortem rules; (3) connect the learning loop to organizational capability.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “How does an organization learn from a loss without blaming anyone?” - Teach (25 min): doctrine/03 + doctrine/07. Debriefs, retrospectives, the learning loop (analyze → sequence → evolve). - Apply (25 min): build a retrospective system for a pursuit org with the honest-post-mortem rules stated. - Discuss (15 min): “What makes a retrospective a learning event rather than a blame exercise?” - Close (5 min): assignment.

Discussion prompts. 1. What must a debrief capture to be worth the meeting? 2. How does an org make the learning loop a habit?

Homework / reading. Read doctrine/03 and doctrine/07. Deliverable: a retrospective-system design.

Comprehension check. What is the learning loop, and how is it an organizational capability? What are honest-post-mortem rules?

Session 14 — Synthesis: the governed pursuit organization

Learning objectives. By the end of this session, students can: (1) integrate the course into one governance frame; (2) defend a complete governance design; (3) connect governance to the rest of the degree.

Session plan (75 min). - Open (5 min): “A pursuit organization is a governance system — gates, walls, decision rights, and a learning loop. Defend or attack.” - Teach (15 min): course synthesis. - Apply (35 min): panel defense of the final governance designs; the panel probes the seams. - Discuss (15 min): “Which governance idea will you apply first in your own organization?” - Close (5 min): bridge to GE 620 and the capstone.

Discussion prompts. 1. What is the single most important governance control in a pursuit org? 2. How does good governance change the market’s trust in a firm?

Homework / reading. Course synthesis. Deliverable: final paper, “The governance of [your] pursuit organization,” 2,500 words.

Comprehension check. How are gates, walls, decision rights, and the learning loop one system? What is the one idea you will carry forward?