

The Evergreen State College
Master of Public Administration Program
Nonprofit Theory & Practice
Spring 2017 draft 2 1 17

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Office Hours: By appointment.

Meeting Dates: April 29-30, May 27-28, June 10, 9a-5p Sat/Sun
9a to 5p, Seminar II, TBD

Course Description: Compared to most “developed” countries, US law and civic practice encourage people to band together to try to solve public problems themselves, rather than rely on formal government action. As a result, our society relies heavily on nonprofit entities to deliver social and health services, support the arts, and assist with many other important tasks. Although interest in nonprofits has exploded in recent years, the sector largely remains an enigma. We still tend to define the sector based on what it isn’t (profit-seeking), other ways of defining it have not gained traction (third sector, civil sector, voluntary sector...), and the reality that nonprofits can’t be run like either businesses or government agencies is poorly appreciated. So it is critical for us to try to better understand the sector, and continue exploring how to run them so as to take advantage of their unique status as “mission-driven” entities.

This course will focus on the characteristics and topics of the nonprofit sector and aims to provide an introduction to what it takes to manage a nonprofit effectively. Nonprofits exist symbiotically with the philanthropic sector and often depend extensively on foundation and government funding. Nonprofit organizations also have unusual governance structures, rely heavily on volunteers, and are mission-driven in more fundamental ways than public organizations. They must also manage the tension between their mission and funders' demands, which often conflict. Nonprofits also are increasingly involved in policy making at the local and international level. They provide critical social and health services and so have insights into public problems and solutions that are essential to managing chronic issues such as homelessness. Finally, funders in the sector are demanding increased professionalism, which in turn is being supported as more people enter the sector with a background in nonprofit management education.

For this course we will read 4 texts plus a variety of articles, governmental reports, and research studies, and discuss these in class. Lectures, films, guest presentations and workshops will be featured during our class sessions. Students will write four short papers, and prepare one longer paper, on which they will deliver a presentation the last day of class.

Learning Objectives: In this course, students will gain

1. Knowledge about the nature of the nonprofit sector and its context, including its relationship to the philanthropic sector;
2. An understanding of the uniqueness of the nonprofit sector in relation to the public and private sectors;
3. An understanding of issues specifically relevant to nonprofit organizations;
4. An understanding of management skills related to nonprofit organizations including strategy, board development and management, human resources, financial management & fund raising;
5. Insights into what it is like working inside a nonprofit organization;
6. Improved analytical and writing skills.

Expectations, Credit & Evaluation:

Credit and Evaluation: Students will receive 4 credits at the completion of the course if all course requirements have been successfully completed. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own without acknowledging the source), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late (without having made arrangements before the due date), or multiple absences may be grounds for denial of credit. Partial credit will be awarded only under unusual circumstances. Consistent with MPA program requirements, a self-evaluation will be required for credit. A faculty evaluation is strongly advised. An evaluation conference is optional.

Expectations: All students are expected to contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. Evergreen e-mail will be used for communication about class work; course documents will be available on the course Canvas site. Faculty will be prepared for class, responsive to questions and provide prompt feedback on completed assignments.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus.

Texts

LeRoux, Kelly and Mary K. Feeney (2014). *Nonprofit Organizations and Civil Society in the United States*. New York: Routledge. ISBN-10: 0415661455. ISBN-13: 978-0415661454

Reckhow, Sarah. (2013). *Follow the money: How foundation dollars change public school politics*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-022734-0. Paperback.

Salamon, Lester A. (2015). *The Resilient Sector Revisited*. Brookings Institution Press. ISBN: 978-0-8157-2425-4. Paperback.

Worth, Michael J. (2013). *Nonprofit Management: Principles and Practice, Third Edition or Fourth Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. ISBN: 1452243093. Paperback.

Readings (Posted to Canvas)

Burton and Barnes (2017). "Shifting Philanthropy From Charity to Justice." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, January.

Grumet and Gates (2016). "How Philanthropy Can Help Bridge America's Political Divide." *SSIR*, September 30th.

Other readings, TBD.

Assignments. (Papers should be double-spaced in 11 or 12 pt. font).

Assignment 1. What is your conception of the current role of the nonprofit sector, and nonprofit organizations, in relation to US civil society? What limits, if any, should be placed on nonprofit action? Do you feel their role in the US is appropriate? 2-3 pages. **Due April 29th.**

Assignment 2. The philanthropic sector and nonprofit sector are arguably symbiotic. But the power relationship is clearly asymmetric: powerful foundations that provide funding hold the power, and call the shots. How would you change this relationship, or the way that philanthropies are structured and operate in the US, if you could? 2-3 pages. **Due April 30th.**

Assignment 3. Budget Assignment. The American Red Cross is one of the world's largest nonprofit organizations. Prepare a simplified, unified budget for the organization for 2017 using the most recent data available from their website:<http://www.redcross.org/about-us/publications> The tax form and annual report will be particularly helpful. Show major sources of revenue and expenses. Don't be concerned about getting it exactly right—the goal is to give you experience budgeting and creating a spreadsheet. **Due May 27th.**

Assignment 4. Read the case posted to Canvas. Jot down some notes: what would you do in response to this case? How would you handle the situation? We will hold a workshop on this. No written paper required. **Due May 27th.**

Assignment 5. Seminar paper on *Follow the Money*. (2-3 pages). Follow seminar paper guidelines from Learning through Discussion used in MPA Core. 2-3 pages. **Due May 28th.**

Assignment 6. Read *Revisiting the Resilient Sector* for the last day of class. What do you see as the future of the nonprofit sector in the US? How might it change under the Trump Administration? Jot down a few notes; we will workshop on this topic. **Due June 10th.**

Assignment 7. Organizational analysis. Each student will complete an organizational analysis of a nonprofit organization. This may be an agency for which you are an intern or volunteer, but please choose a different organization than one for which you are on staff or the board. It could also be a foundation or place of worship. **Interview the executive director or someone else with organizational decision making authority.** You will not need to complete a Human Subject Review application if you follow the parameters outlined in class.

Your paper should be about 8-10 pages (double-spaced), and provide recommendations on how the organization could improve its performance. Provide citations and references and be prepared to deliver a 10-minute **presentation** on your analysis the last day of class (June 10th). **Due June 10th.**

The paper will need to include a description and analysis of the organization's

- Size (personnel and budget), structure, revenue sources & overall finances, board;
- History, mission, vision, strategy;
- Services or goods provided, statistics describing those services/goods, and any data on effectiveness/efficiency and overall reputation;
- Challenges and/or lessons learned; innovations implemented; future pursuits;
- Relationship to other sectors and/or non-profit organizations;
- Relationship to issues and topics discussed in the course.

We will discuss this assignment in class in much more detail.

Tentative Schedule: Subject to Change

Saturday	Sunday
<p>Weekend 1. Saturday, April 29th</p> <p><i>Role, Context & State of the Nonprofit Sector</i> <i>Theories of the Nonprofit Sector</i> <i>On Civil Society</i> <i>Legal and Political Environment</i></p> <p>Readings: Worth: Part I LeRoux and Feeney, Ch. 1-5, 7 Salamon, Ch. 1, 2</p> <p>Assignments Due: Assignment 1</p>	<p>Sunday, April 30th</p> <p><i>Philanthropy & Partnerships</i> <i>Governance—Boards & EDs</i> <i>“Leadership” in the nonprofit sector</i></p> <p>Readings: Worth: Ch. 4, 5, 11 LeRoux and Feeney, Ch.6, 8, 9</p> <p>Assignments Due: Assignment 2</p>
<p>Weekend 2. Saturday, May 27th</p> <p><i>Management—People, Money/Finances, Technology, Image</i> <i>Strategy for nonprofits</i></p> <p>Readings: Worth, Part III</p> <p>Assignments Due: Assignment 3 Assignment 4</p>	<p>Sunday, May 28th</p> <p><i>Fundraising</i> <i>Marketing</i> <i>Capacity Building in Nonprofits</i> <i>Performance & Accountability</i></p> <p>Readings: Reckhow: All Worth, Part IV, Ch. 17</p> <p>Assignments Due: Assignment 5.</p>
<p>Weekend 3 Saturday, June 10th.</p> <p><i>The Future of the Nonprofit Sector</i></p> <p>Student presentations</p> <p>Readings: LeRoux and Feeney, Ch. 10 Salamon, Ch. 3-8</p> <p>Assignments Due: Assignment 6. Assignment 7: Final Paper</p>	<p>NO CLASS SESSION.</p>