

1/24/2018

ENGL UN3738: Philanthropy and Social Difference
Wednesday 2:10-4 PM
612 Philosophy Hall

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Philanthropy is a practice deeply rooted in American society and culture, dating back to the founding of the United States and practiced today by individuals and institutions alike. The study of philanthropy is the study of what binds us together as a community and a nation, but requires an understanding of structures that hold some people in positions of disadvantage. Informed and effective philanthropy rests on an understanding of global and local structures of inequality and social difference – that is, on an understanding of the systemic forces that perpetuate poverty, discrimination, and disenfranchisement. To practice philanthropy that allows people access to the opportunities they need to achieve their potential, it is crucial to understand how and why those opportunities have not been made available on an equal basis to all. *Philanthropy and Social Difference* will allow Columbia undergraduate students to learn about the history of philanthropy, to become exposed to its best practices, to understand the role of social difference in perpetuating inequality, and to become informed actors in the practice of philanthropy themselves.

Philanthropy and Social Difference will introduce students to the history of American philanthropy, as described in both historical and literary texts by writers including Jane Addams, Virginia Woolf, and Andrew Carnegie. Through reading these texts, students will receive an experiential perspective on the social problems that philanthropy seeks to ameliorate. The course will also focus on best practices in contemporary philanthropy, including an introduction to evaluative practices that will teach students how to make informed decisions in making grants to nonprofit organizations.

Thanks to a grant from The Philanthropy Lab, students will also be able to have the experience of participating in philanthropy themselves. The class will have at least \$50,000 to give away by the end of the term to nonprofit organizations, and one of our chief objectives will be deciding as a group how to distribute these funds as productively as possible. Students will work in groups to research potential grantees, recommend to their fellow students how and where class funds should be invested, and construct a reporting system for assessing the efficacy of grants awarded.

The course will also have a group service component. As a class, we will make trips to a local soup kitchen and serve a meal to its clients. We will also spend a weekend afternoon at a fitness program for children with disabilities and work one-on-one with the athletes.

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Guest speakers will include representatives of nonprofit organizations and practicing philanthropists.

Course texts:

Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1935)

Carnegie, Andrew. *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays* (1889)

Eighner, Lars. *Travels with Lizbeth* (1993)

Poppendieck, Janet. *Sweet Charity: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement* (1999)

Rapp, Emily. *Poster Child: A Memoir* (2006)

Singer, Peter. *The Most Good You Can Do* (2016)

Woolf, Virginia. *Three Guineas*. (1938)

Grading rubric:

Assignment 1: 10%

Assignment 2: 10%

Assignment 3: 10%

Assignment 4: 15%

Assignment 5: 10%

Assignment 6: 20%

Assignment 7: 15%

Class participation/committee work: 10%

Assignments:

Assignment 1: Identification of needs. In 2-3 pages, what are the most important needs that philanthropy should address and why? What is your criteria for identifying those needs? How can and should philanthropy address them? You must draw on 3-5 sources, which can include course readings, news stories, academic essays and books, or interviews with professors or other experts. Due January 31 in class.

Assignment 2 (group): After discussion of each group member's version of Assignment 1, produce a collaborative document of 2-3 pages outlining your group's goals and philosophy. This document will be your roadmap as you proceed to select and research organizations to potentially receive class funds. Recognizing the many different kinds of organizations and approaches to addressing needs, you will need to make priorities that are practical and attainable within the parameters of the course. Due February 14 in class.

Assignment 3: In a memo of at least two pages, discuss three organizations that meet your group's goals and philosophy based on review of RFPs distributed to your group. Compile basic information about each group that includes the agency's mission and goals, key activities and programs, and contact information for its leadership. Be sure to explain each agency's history, mission and goals, as well as the community it serves; you should also highlight some of each agency's key activities and programs. Identify ONE organization for a site visit and explain why you chose it above the other two nominees. Due February 21 in class. During this time, your group should also be making plans for site visits between Feb. 21 and March 14.

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Assignment 4 (individual): Philanthropic autobiography. In 3-5 pages, write the story of your life as a giver and, if relevant, a recipient of philanthropic gifts. What kinds of giving/receiving experiences have you had? How have these shaped your goals as a giver? What kinds of organizations are most important to you and why? Are there philanthropists that serve as models for you? Who are they and why? Your essay should also look to the future. What will the role of giving be in your future life, as you conceive it 1-5 years following your graduation from college? How do you understand your relationship to your community? Do you see philanthropy as playing a role in your adult life? Note: this statement does not require you to make any specific commitment about giving; it is an exercise in personal reflection. Your paper should make reference to at least three of the assigned readings. Due March 21.

Assignment 5 (group): Final memo. In a collaborative memo of at least 5 double-spaced pages, each group should describe the criteria used to finalize the decision on your organization, including a discussion of the agencies that were not selected as finalists, the specific merits of the finalist, and how it aligns with the giving goals and philosophy described in the first group memo. The memo should reflect serious study of your selected organization, identifying mission, program effectiveness, capacity of management and board to lead the organization, fiscal strength, etc. must be considered. Students will need to interview a representative from the charity (face-to-face or over skype). The memo should identify the amount needed to make an impact at the organization, and make a convincing case for why it deserves that portion of our class's giving dollars. At least 3 of the reading items should be included substantially in the discussion.

Due April 4 electronically, to be posted on Courseworks.

To accompany your memo, your group should design a Powerpoint presentation to share with the rest of the class on April 11. This will be your final opportunity to pitch your organization and the gift amount you think they need.

Assignment 6 (group): prepare a letter to recipient of the gift, a letter to justify the gift to the foundation, and a letter of declination to non-funded organizations. Due April 18.

Assignment 7 (individual): write a letter to next year's class of students. What were the most important things you learned about philanthropy this semester? What readings were most meaningful and why? What advice would you give to your predecessors? What do you wish you had known in January? Due April 25.

Site visits. Site visits are a required, though ungraded, element of this course. Working in groups of at least two students, students will visit each of the organizations selected by the groups. Each student should visit at least two organizations. Site visits will be conducted between February 21 and March 12. Be sure to arrange your visits in advance with the organizations.

Committees: In addition to formal assignments, students will participate on one of following three committees.

1. RFP: produces a draft of RFP, circulate RFPs to nominated organizations, serve as a clearinghouse for RFP distribution to groups

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2. Giving ceremony: helps instructors plan and organize giving ceremony, and produces a pamphlet to be distributed at the ceremony
3. Evaluations: works with professors to come up with a rubric for evaluating nominated organizations and a process for making final decisions about division of funds

Each committee will also be responsible for writing a thank-you note to one of our guest speakers.

Class schedule:

January 17

Introductions

January 24

Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays*

Gates, Bill. Harvard Commencement Address 2007

Come to class with a list of at least 10 organizations to solicit for RFPs (must be 503c but no foundations and no religious organizations)

Students receive group assignments and meet to discuss overall goals for giving
RFP committee submits draft RFP to be distributed by January 26

January 31

Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, chps. IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, XIV.

Addams, "The Subtle Problems of Charity"

McGoey, Linsey, Introduction to *No Such Thing as a Free Gift*

Assignment 1 due

Evaluation committee submits draft of criteria for evaluating RFPs

February 7

Guest speaker: Rachel Barnard, Executive Director of Young New Yorkers

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (selection)

Oliver Zunz, *Philanthropy in America* (selections)

Distribution in class of Philanthropy Lab grant letter

February 14

Woolf, *Three Guineas*

Gunderman, Richard, chapters 1 (Imagining) and 3 (Four Gifts) from *We Make A Life by What We Give*

Assignment 2 due

February 21

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Guest speaker: Geoffrey Raynor, Philanthropy Lab
Singer, *The Most Good You Can Do*
Singer, "What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?"
A.J. Jacobs, "The Maximum Good"

Site visits in groups of 2-3 students

Assignment 3 due in class.

February 28

Foote, C. J., & Collins, B. "You know, Eunice, the world will never be the same after this"

Storey, K. "The case against the Special Olympics"

Rapp, *Poster Child*

Site visits continue

March 7:

Visit from philanthropist Ann Tisch

Reading tba

Site visits continue

March 14

No class – spring break

March 21:

<http://givingpledge.org>

Tracy Gary, *Inspired Philanthropy*, Chapter 7 (Creating a Personal Giving Plan)

Gunderman, chapters 17 (How Much) and 19 (Rules and Aspirations)

Nussbaum, "Giving It Away"

Assignment 4 due

March 28:

Visit from author A.J. Jacobs

Reading tba

April 4:

Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity*, Introduction and chs. 1, 2, 7, 8, Conclusion

Walls, Jeanette, *The Glass Castle* (selections)

Watch *A Place at the Table*

Assignment 5 is due electronically to be posted on Courseworks

April 11:

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Read other groups' final memos
Presentations by each group
Vote on amounts to be given to each organization

April 18:

Eighner, *Travels with Lizbeth*

Assignment 6 due

April 25

Possible visit by philanthropist Andrew Tisch

Reading tba

Assignment 7 due

May 2

Giving ceremony, 2-4 PM

POLICIES

Academic integrity

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

Attendance and participation.

You are expected to attend each seminar meeting and to arrive promptly. Excessive absence will result in a lowered or failing grade. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for turning in any assignment due that day, and for notifying us about the absence.

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You are expected to complete the assigned reading for the day prior to the start of class, and to have questions, ideas, and provocations to share with the rest of the class in discussion.

Disability policy

Columbia University is dedicated to facilitating equal access for students with disabilities and to cultivating a campus culture that is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students. Please let us know, either through the Office of Disability Services, or by contacting us individually, if you need special accommodations because of a disability.

Electronic devices in class

We do not ban the use of laptops and other electronic devices because some students need them as a disability accommodation. However, there is strong evidence that the use of laptops impedes learning in many typical students. The use of email, texting, and social media during class is strictly prohibited.

Preferred gender pronoun

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let us know. Feel free to correct us on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.