

**Syllabus for
Sociology 3920 – Philanthropy Lab**

Spring 2022

Meeting time: Tue. Thurs. 1:30 – 3:50 PM

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Office Hours: [Calendly](#)

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Course Overview and Learning Objectives

How do societies take action to address social issues of moral concern? If we are interested in addressing social problems, what are the avenues that we engage to make social change? If our current institutions are not effectively address social problems (either locally or more broadly), how might we engage the problem in a productive way? Many moral and religious frameworks engage questions of equity and support some form of benevolence and charity. But societies have different ways of thinking about the appropriate actors for addressing social problems. In this class we will consider the roles of philanthropy and nonprofit organizations. This course investigates the nature of philanthropy and nonprofit organizations, as well as their influence on civil society. We will consider different sociological approaches to charitable giving and apply them to substantive topics, such as competing philosophies of giving and the relationship between philanthropic and state-sponsored programs. We will also address issues of social responsibility that arise when billionaire and corporate actors engage in philanthropic work.

This course is interactive. Over the course of the semester, students will use the theory and skills they are learning to research, solicit funding proposals from, critically review, and select a nonprofit or group of nonprofits to fund. Through the generous support of the Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement and the Department of Sociology, the class will have up to \$40,000 to grant to one or more nonprofit (501c3) organizations. Students will be expected to “visit” (e.g., conduct phone calls, learn more information about different organizations) nonprofits outside of class time.

Throughout the course, assignments will build on each other to lead to the final project. While giving away money may appear easy, doing it well is not. Being strategic about how one gives and to whom is critical. Those who engage in philanthropy sit in a privileged position, however, and the power dynamics between philanthropist (institutional or individual) and grantee creates challenges. Core to this class is the recognition that as “difficult” as it is to give money away, it is far more difficult for the nonprofit organizations that are on the ground serving people and communities and raising the funds that allow them to do so. As we move through the course, students will be active in research on many of the topics examined. Individual and group projects will allow students to apply what we learn from the readings and will become the foundation for interesting seminar discussions. For example, as we examine the historical context of migration to the United States, each student will conduct a historical analysis of the migration history of his or her own family. Students will also track national, regional, and local attitudes about immigration by following public opinion through local media sources.

Classes will meet remotely through Friday, 1/28 (pending changes to the university COVID19 response plan). The Zoom meeting ID is 997 745 7429 and the password is sociology

Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- (a) recognize key sociological approaches to the study of nonprofits and philanthropy as a social activity.
- (b) employ sociological concepts and theories to analyze the key issues nonprofits and donors face.
- (c) examine nonprofits for financial health, transparency, and efficiency in order to make donation decisions.

(d) evaluate the short and long-term impact of a donation on a nonprofit organization.

Please be flexible and patient. This is a gigantic social experiment. Students, staff, and faculty are still adapting to the shifting demands of education in a pandemic. I know that you all are dealing with a lot right now. We don't know what the near future will bring as we move through this pandemic, but I will do my best to work with each of you, should difficulties arise. Be aware that I might make changes to these plans as we learn what works well and what works less well.

- If something isn't working, just notify me and be patient and I will see what I can do!
- I will keep this document up to date if anything changes (which is why I am sending it to you as a DropBox link instead of as a .doc)

Keep in contact with me. If you are having issues, please reach out. If you get sick and need to check out for a bit, let me know. If you have any other concerns or ideas on how to make this work better, let me know. If you have a family member that is sick and impeding your ability to keep up, let me know.

Let's keep this fun. Please feel free to engage with me in a relatively informal way. We all need a bit of levity as we all stay in relative isolation and with an increasingly dire situation happening around us.

Don't worry, I will work with you. I vow to make sure that the assignments and assessments are reasonable. I will do whatever I can to make sure you don't fall behind.

Readings

All readings are available on Canvas

Reading is a crucial component of this class. You are expected to complete all readings by the date on which they are assigned and to be prepared to participate in discussions, raise additional questions, and answer questions about the readings in class. The style of reading materials is varied. Some are journalistic accounts of particular people and places, while others are more analytical or abstract scholarly materials. In either case, it will require real time and investment to absorb the readings and consider their implications.

You should take notes on the readings—not by trying to jot down every detail but rather by doing two key things:

1. As you read, write a few summary statements at the end of major sections (or at the end of the reading, for shorter pieces). If you have just read a long section and find yourself struggling to write a 1-2 sentence summary, that is a sign that you need to go back and re-read that section.
2. Once you've finished the readings for the day, write down 1-2 questions or comments that you'd like to raise in class. In addition to our normal discussions, I will occasionally ask what other questions/comments you wanted to raise.

Interacting with Me, and Classmates

I value the interaction with students in class, and I know that many (but not all) students also value these interactions. I strongly encourage people to continue to participate. It is especially important that you all come to class prepared to engage with course material and ideas.

Respect: The readings in this course will, I hope, show you that there are many ways to interpret the topics we will discuss. Because of that, I hope that we will be able to have fruitful debates that will challenge all of us to compare different viewpoints. Please keep in mind that our goal should be to debate ideas, not each other as individuals.

Office Hours, Contacting Me

Office hours are TBD. I will try to schedule office hours during times that are as convenient as possible. During these hours you can stop by my office and I will also reply quickly to emails. I will also be holding Zoom video meetings that can be scheduled via [Calendly](#).

I welcome all questions, comments, suggestions on how to improve the class.

- Feel free to either email your suggestions, or to come to me during office hours.

Assessments

Reflection Journal. Five hardcopy 200 – 500 word reflections on readings, lectures, and class discussions OR five 5 – 8 minute recorded reflections. Reflections should focus on course material covered on either the day of submission or the course directly preceding it (although you are welcome to draw connections to material covered throughout the course). Your first journal/recording will be due on January 25th. The other four may be submitted at the beginning of four class periods of your choosing. Reflections should answer questions such as, “why is this important? What surprises me about this? What do I agree with and why? What do I disagree with and why? Present analytic thinking with a touch of personal reaction to the course material. Reflections should be submitted via assignments on Canvas. Your reflection journal is worth 15% of your final grade.

Understanding the Problem: Identify two scholarly, evidence-based articles that support the social need that you propose to address with funding. Submit two to three paragraphs on each article outlining why it was selected and what information in the article will be important as you consider the social problem being addressed. These articles, and your discussions of them are worth 10% of your final grade and are due Tuesday, February 1st.

Group Assignment – Needs Assessment: Groups submit one 1250-2000 word paper that contains the primary elements of a needs assessment: understanding of the problem, data to support the need, description of who else is providing services, and external trends that are creating need. Papers are due Tuesday, February 8th. Groups will also deliver a 10 – 15 minute in-class group presentation of the needs assessment on Tuesday, February 8th. The Needs Assessment paper is worth 15% of your final grade. The group presentation is worth 5% of your final grade.

List of Potential Grantees: Five nonprofit organizations in the St. Louis area that address the identified need. List must include name, mission, website, CEO/EDs name, budget, description of program(s) that address the need, and a paragraph outlining the reasons for including this organization. Lists are due Tuesday, February 15th and are worth 10% of your course grade.

Group Assignment – Request for Proposal: Each group must draft and submit the letter and document that groups will send to nonprofits to ask them to submit proposals for funding. This document is due Tuesday, February 22nd and is worth 5% of your course grade.

Remote “site visit” reports: One-page description for each site “visit”, including a description of the organization, analysis of organization’s strengths and weaknesses, what initial perceptions you had that were confirmed, and initial perceptions that were challenged. Reports are due Tuesday, March 29th and are worth 5% of your course grade.

Group Presentation of Recommended Organization for Funding: Groups will deliver a 15 minute in-class presentation on the organization they are recommending to the class with reasoning for the recommendation. Presentation should include a summary of need including relevant data, a description of the organization and their programs, comparison to other organizations considered, report on the site visit, and criteria used for selection. These presentations will be given on Tuesday, April 26th and are worth 10% of your grade.

Final Group Project: Groups will submit a written document that outlines the social problem/need they are trying to address, the approach they selected to address it, the organization(s) they invited to apply and the reasons for choosing those organizations, a

comparison of organizations based on site visits and organization's grant proposal, and reasons for selecting the organization they recommended for funding. This document is due Thursday, April 28th and is worth 15% of your course grade.

Class Participation: including classroom discussion, discussion questions, and role in planning the award ceremony on the last day of class. Each student will be asked to submit a short assessment of his/her/their contributions to group assignments. Participation is worth 10% of your course grade.

Late Work : Assignments should be submitted on Canvas on their due dates. In case of extenuating circumstances that prevent you from handing in your work on time, please email me in advance. Otherwise, you will lose a third of a letter grade per day that your homework is late (i.e. A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, etc.).

Inclusive Learning Environment:

The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. I encourage you to speak with me about any suggestions or concerns you have about the inclusivity of this course. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants—including faculty, staff, and students—who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online Bias Report and Support System (brss.wustl.edu).

Academic Integrity:

Effective learning, teaching and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or conducted in the wider arena of scholarly research. Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at Washington University in St. Louis.

Additional details on the university-wide Undergraduate Academic Integrity policy can be found [here](#). I recommend using the [American Sociological Association's guide for citations](#) in your written work.

COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols:

While I value your presence and engagement in this class, it is imperative that we all follow all public health guidelines established to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within our community. We are in the midst of a public health crisis. I will work with you if illness impacts your ability to meet the requirements of this course. **If you feel any of the symptoms detailed in the COVID screening process, even if they are mild, do not come to class until you receive clearance from campus health. Contact me as soon as possible to let me know that you must miss class. And keep me updated so that I can work with you to make sure you are successful in this course.** The full set of University protocols can be found at <https://covid19.wustl.edu/health-safety> This includes:

- Completing a self-screening using the [WashU COVID-19 Screening app](#) every day before coming to campus or leaving your residence hall room. If you do not receive a green check and pass the screening, you are not permitted to come to campus or leave your residence hall room. You must contact the COVID Call Center (314-362-5056) or the Habif Health and Wellness Center (314 935-6666) immediately. Note: In addition to the symptoms listed in the screening tool, everyone also should pay attention to symptoms that are new or different for you, including things like headache and congestion, particularly in combination with diarrhea. These can also be signs of COVID-19. Call the COVID Call Center or Habif to report these symptoms.
- Complying with universal masking. All students are required to wear masks covering their mouth and nose while in class, and during in-person office hours. Students with disabilities for whom masked instructors or classmates create a communication barrier are encouraged to contact [Disability Resources](#) or talk to me for assistance in determining reasonable adjustments.

Student Accommodations:

At Washington University we strive to make the academic experience accessible and inclusive. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact Disability Resources at 314.935.5970, disabilityresources@wustl.edu, or visit our website for information about requesting academic accommodations. See: <https://students.wustl.edu/disability-resources/>

Mental Health Services:

Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect a student's academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide. See: <https://students.wustl.edu/mental-health-services/>. Additionally, see the mental health services offered through the RSVP Center.

Center for Diversity and Inclusion:

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI): The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) supports and advocates for undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students from underrepresented and/or marginalized populations, collaborates with campus and community partners, and promotes dialogue and social change to cultivate and foster a supportive campus climate for students of all backgrounds, cultures, and identities. See: <https://diversityinclusion.wustl.edu>

Writing Center:

The Writing Center, located in Olin Library, offers free one-on-one writing tutorials to WashU students, as well as workshops designed to help students become better writers. The Writing Center staff can assist you in improving your writing by providing feedback on the strength of an argument, clarity, and organization. Contact them at 935-4981 or writing@wustl.edu. [Visit them here.](#)

Gephardt Institute:

State and local elections can have direct and immediate impacts on our communities and will be happening here in St. Louis and around the country this year. Make sure you stay current on upcoming elections at all levels by registering as a voter, requesting an absentee ballot, or getting election day reminders. You can do all this for any of the 50 states and Washington D.C. [here](#). If you are ineligible to vDote, you can still participate by referring your friends who are eligible to the TurboVote link to register and by engaging your peers in local issues. If you have any questions about the voting process [visit this link](#).

Grades:

Note that the weighting of components of your final course grade have changed.

Participation	10%
Reflection Journal	15%
Understanding the Problem	10%
Needs Assessment	20%
Grantee List	10%
Request for Proposal	5%
Site Visit Report	5%
Funding Presentation	10%
<u>Final Project</u>	<u>15%</u>
Total	100%

Summary of Important Dates

- Reflection Journal – Starting – Tuesday 1/25
- Understanding the Problem – Tuesday 2/1
- Group Needs Assessment – Tuesday 2/8
- List of Grantees – Tuesday 2/15
- Request for Proposal – Tuesday 2/22
- Site Visit Report – Tuesday 3/29
- Group Funding Presentation – Tuesday 4/26
- Final Group Project – Thursday 4/28
- Funder/Grantee Celebration – Wednesday 5/11 3:30 PM-5:30 PM

Classes will meet remotely through Friday, 1/28 (pending changes to the university COVID19 response plan). The Zoom meeting ID is **997 745 7429** and the password is **sociology**

Sociology 3920 -- Class Schedule and Due Dates*

Date		Day	Class topic	Reading due <i>before</i> class	Special notes
January	18	Tue	Introductions & review of syllabus/expectations	syllabus	
	20	Thurs	The Social Meaning of Giving	<i>The Gift</i> (Introduction Ch1 Pp. 1-23); “Culture, Generosity, and Power;” CAF Global Generosity Report	
	25	Tue	Gifts with Strings	Listen This American Life: act one “Money for nothing and your recows for free” Read “With Strings Attached;” “Donated Money”	First Reflection Journal Entry Due
	27	Thurs	Finding Partners	Overview of RFP Process; How to write a RFP for best results	
February	1	Tue	Philosophies of Giving/ Determining Community Need	“The Gospel of Wealth;” “But How is the World Changed?” “Four traditions of philanthropy”	Scholarly Articles and Discussion Due
	3	Thurs	Continued	Watch “The Why and How of Effective Altruism” Read “What Should a Billionaire Give;” “Resources and social movement	

				mobilization”	
	8	Tue	Needs Assessment Presentations		Needs assessment Paper and Presentation Due
	10	Thur	Motives for Giving	“Major Donors, Major Motives;” <i>Sex Cells</i> Ch. 4 “Being a Paid Donor”	
	15	Tue	Continued	“Philanthropic Choice and Donor Intent;” “The Transience of American Wealth;” Elon Musk and Troll Philanthropy	List of Potential Grantees Due
	17	Thur	Ethics and Accountability in Philanthropy	“A Failure of Philanthropy;” “Tackling Today’s Poverty with Yesterday’s Philanthropy”	
	22	Tue	Continued	“The Many Faces of Nonprofit Accountability;” “How did a Billionaire in Seattle Gain so Much Power over Global Public Health?;” “The Shortcomings of Billionaire Philanthropy”	RFP Due
	24	Thur	Nonprofits and Public Disclosure	“They are all Organizations;” Familiarize yourself with IRS form 990	
March	1	Tue	Continued	“Anything Goes: Approval of Nonprofit Status by the IRS;” “The Paucity of Useful Information”	
	3	Thur	Evaluating Nonprofits	“In the Public Benefit”	
	8	Tue	Continued	“Choosing a Charity”	
	10	Thur	Regulating Philanthropy	Selections from <i>Uncharitable: How Restraints on Nonprofits Undermine their Potential</i>	
	12-18	SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS			
	22	Tue	Continued	“ Can Government Play Moneyball? ”	
	24	Thur	Race, Ethnicity, and Philanthropy	Read “The Price of Civil Rights;” “Training the Apostles of Liberal Culture.” Listen Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums	
	29	Tue	Continued	<i>Caring Capitalism</i> chapters. 4 and 6	Site Reports Due
	31	Thur	Volunteering	<i>Making Volunteers</i> , chapters 2 and 5	
April	5	Tue	Continued	“More than a Little Act of Kindness;” “Volunteering and other Ways of Donating Yourself”	
	7	Thur	Nonprofits, Advocacy, and Activism	“Does Government Funding Suppress Political Advocacy?” “The Growth of Climate Change Misinformation”	
	12	Tue	Continued	“Advocacy, Civic Engagement, and Social Change”	

	14	Thur	Final Project Workday		
	19	Tue	“New” Forms of Philanthropy	“Creating Digital Civil Society;” “ The Future of Giving ”	
	21	Thur	Continued	Watch “ You are the future of philanthropy ” Read “ Silicon Valley’s New Philanthropy ”	
	26	Tue	Who Will We Fund?		Group Presentations Due
	28	Thur	Who Will We Fund?		Final Project Due
May	11	Wed	Funder/Grantee celebration!	3:30 PM – 5:30 PM in Seigle 106	

*Throughout the semester it may be necessary to make changes to the course schedule—including assignment due dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible in class and with email reminders.

