

PPS 4310/SOC 4312
Baylor University
Spring 2026
Wednesdays 12:20-3:05 PM
Truett 114

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“No, no, we are not satisfied and will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

—**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

“It is one thing to say with the prophet Amos [and Dr. King], ‘Let justice roll down like mighty waters,’ and quite another to work out the irrigation system.”

—**William Sloane Coffin**

“It is not that we should abandon, neglect, or deny our inner self, but we should learn to work precisely in it, with it, and from it in such a way that interiority turns into effective action and effective action leads back to interiority, and we become used to acting without any compulsion.”

—**Meister Eckhart**

We respectfully acknowledge that Baylor University in Waco and its original campus in Independence are on the land and territories originally occupied by Indigenous peoples including the Waco and Tawakoni of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, the Tonkawa, the ~~Numunuu~~ (Comanche), Karankawa, and Lipan Apache. These Indigenous peoples were dispossessed of and removed from their lands over centuries by European colonization and American expansionism. In recognition that these Native Nations are the original stewards of Baylor's campus locations, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

The basic premise of this class is that, thanks to some very generous donors, you are now the stewards of tens of thousands of dollars, and your job is to give it all away. The decisions about where that money will go reside with you, not us. So welcome aboard. You're in charge of the decisions. You're the Board of Directors.

If this is your task, then how on earth do we proceed? Although you'll quickly discover that there are millions of ways we could do good with these funds, and there are many deserving places we could direct them, this is, in fact, not going to be easy. Should we focus attention on homelessness? Hunger? Health? Education? Human achievement in the arts or research? Refugees? Legal assistance? Something else? Should we look upstream, to the causes of problems? Or downstream, to their symptoms and effects? Should we consider big organizations, where we might fuel successful initiatives already afoot? Or small organizations and startups, where the effects will be felt more acutely within the organization? Is it wise to give all the money to one place or to break it up and spread it around? Should we focus on an organization's past, its present, or its future?

Believe it or not, there is a simple answer to every one of these questions: *yes*.

Yes, we should attend to homelessness and hunger and health and all the rest—or at least consider them. Yes, we should consider these big thorny problems, both upstream and downstream. Yes, there is advantage to supporting successful ongoing work, just as there is merit to supporting new and small organizations. Yes, it might be wise to give all the money to one organization. Yes, it might also be wise to spread it around. And yes, we need to know what an organization has done, even if that's not any sort of guarantee for what an organization *can* do and *aspires* to do.

The problem, of course, is that the money is far more finite than the possible ways we might use it—or even the possible ways we *should* use it. If there are many ways to do good, how might we decide what good we want to do? There are more than twenty of you, and chances are, there are just as many ways to reckon with these questions. Clearly, then, we have some hard work and difficult choices ahead of us.

So if the money—as extravagant as it is—is finite, what if we began with the belief that money is not our only resource this semester? What if we added to the money a dose of imagination? What about a measure of knowledge? And love. And time. And talent. And influence. What if we began to understand our callings, our purpose in this class and on this earth, in a grander way—not just as people who can direct money to combat problems, but as people who can promote, in myriad ways, the flourishing of others? What if, to quote Richard Gunderman, “the greatest gifts any human being could ever share with us, or any of us could ever share with another, is assistance in becoming the best persons, families, and communities we are capable of being”? What if we followed the guidance of Robin Wall Kimmerer in believing that all flourishing is mutual?

Suddenly, doesn’t the basic premise of the class—to steward money and give it away—seem like only part of the equation? Suddenly now, aren’t we asking bigger and deeper questions?

If we do it right, the work you do in this class will change you, and it will change others. That’s the thing about philanthropy. It’s ostensibly about “voluntary action for the public good”—a solid definition we’ll work from this semester—but philanthropy can achieve far more than some abstract “public good.” When we set out with the flourishing of someone else in mind; when we attempt to see the world from someone else’s perspective; when we probe at deep questions about why and how and where to give of ourselves; when we hold thoughtful conversations with thoughtful people; when we encounter new ideas and broaden our understandings about how the world works and how we operate in it—these things change the world . . . in fact might be the *only* things that can change the world. “Interiority turns into effective action and effective action leads back to interiority,” to borrow Meister Eckhart’s words from above.

That, friends, gets to the heart of our shared work this semester: we set out to promote someone else’s flourishing, and in so doing, we, too, become better versions of ourselves. And the world, one hopes, is better for it.

This semester, there are things we will learn, things we will do, and, in turn, people we will become. We’ll continually attend to four questions: **What am I learning? What am I doing? Who am I becoming? And toward what ends?** To attend well to these questions requires perpetual reflection, perhaps more than you’re accustomed to. And that’s where the magic will happen—not just this semester, but beyond. Our unapologetic hope is that you will finish the semester a better person than you are today.

Here are our goals a little more specifically:

- I. “Learning” goals
 1. To understand the nature of philanthropy the social sector, including many of its complex philosophical and practical questions.
 2. To understand more about complex social challenges and strategies for addressing them.
 3. To discover what makes an effective nonprofit organization and healthy community.
- II. “Doing” goals
 1. To participate in the grantmaking process: establishing goals, performing due diligence, writing and vetting proposals, deliberating over priorities, reaching collective decisions, and awarding real money.
 2. To present complex information clearly and persuasively, in both written and oral form, with and without the assistance of generative artificial intelligence.
 3. To navigate diverse opinions and forge ways to collaborate with others on behalf of shared goals.
- III. “Becoming” goals
 1. To become people who concern ourselves with the needs of others, the health of the community, and the ways in which we might use our own resources to promote human flourishing.
 2. To become people who are generous, hopeful, curious, loving, grateful, collaborative, and a little wiser than we are today.

Finally, that fourth question: toward what ends? All of this toward a mutual flourishing—of ourselves, our neighbor, and our community.

POLICIES, CUSTOMS, EXPECTATIONS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Know your syllabus. This syllabus is your *sine qua non* guide for the course, and it is expected that you have read and understood it in its entirety. This represents our current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, specific plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunities. We will always communicate changes clearly and early.

Be prepared. We expect every person to read *all* the assigned texts in advance of class and prepare for discussion via Critical Reflection assignments. Given that our class meets only once a week and given that the important practical work you'll be doing in each class period will often build on the week's readings, it is imperative that you come to class prepared to engage in discussion. It is also imperative that you show up each week having completed the other assigned tasks.

Honor your colleagues. Your role in this class is probably different from other classes. In other classes, you show up, do your work, and get your grade, largely independent of how others in the course perform. Not so here. You are all members of one Board of Directors, so you must work collaboratively. This means, at minimum, affording one another respect. Always treat seriously any comment offered in earnest, and please respect the person who offers it. Please also challenge ideas with which you disagree, something we all owe to one another since we are working collaboratively and making decisions together. Our ideas, and our challenges to one another's ideas, should be generous offerings that aim to make us better.

Always act in good faith. This course is designed to be *collaborative*, but there will always be a temptation for it to become *competitive*. Please, for everyone's sake, do all that you can to avoid a competitive mindset. No one is supposed to "win" or "lose" in this process. Just because you have a deep encounter with an organization, it is not "your" organization. Just because someone else worked with another organization, it is not "their" organization. These are all *our* organizations; we simply have varying levels of expertise. Please trust your classmates and the work they do, as you hope and expect they will trust you and your work. Please resist any urge to trade votes, form alliances, or take advantage of others' good faith. We will be open and candid with one another, and we will challenge one another. But please, always, act in good faith, with **the Board's interests above your own**. Failure to act in good faith can result in severe consequences, including the loss of voting status and failure in the course. Moreover, it will reflect the opposite of the kind of character we hope to form together in this course.

Phones and computers. Only in rare circumstances will we need phones or computers for the work we will do in class together this semester. When we need them, we will absolutely use them! But most of the time, these devices will remain silent and put away. Philanthropy is human work, and it's important for us to look at one another, listen to one another, and learn from one another without the distractions of electronic devices. If that sounds dreadful to you, embrace it as an opportunity—a liberation to focus on what most needs your attention for three hours each week (don't worry; you can look at it during our break if you need a fix). The work you do in this class will have tangible, positive effects on the lives of others; let's honor our neighbors by giving that work the undistracted attention it deserves.

Attendance. Given the nature of our work together, you simply shouldn't miss class. If you are going to be absent, it should be for compelling, excusable reasons. Please let us know in advance. Pursuant to the policies of the College of Arts & Sciences, a student must attend at least 75% of all scheduled class meetings (which include site visits and our grant awards reception) to earn course credit. Any student who does not meet this minimum standard will automatically receive a grade of "F" in the course. However, missing classes without good reasons and prior notification can also adversely impact your grade.

Make-up work. Except for university-approved absences, students are not allowed to make up missed assignments. This includes activities missed by being late for class or leaving early.

Academic Integrity. Academic dishonesty and any form of cheating involves a breach of student-teacher trust. Instances of plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will be reported to Office of Academic Integrity, may be referred to the Honor Council for action, and may result in failure of the course. We expect you, as a Baylor student, to be intimately familiar with the Honor Code. Academic and creative work submitted under your name is expected to be your own, neither composed by anyone else as a whole or in part, nor handed over to another party for complete or partial revision. Be sure to document all ideas that are not your own. Furthermore, in your completion of course work and assignments you must not use technologies which give you an unfair academic advantage for this course unless they have been explicitly permitted by us. In addition, providing course materials to other students, whether individually or generally (such as online) that would enable them to gain an unfair academic advantage is an act of academic dishonesty. If you have questions about what constitutes academic integrity in this course, please contact us.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI is awesome. It is also limited in what it can do, and that is nowhere truer than in a field like philanthropy, where our focus is humanity and where human judgment defines our work. So, while we will utilize it, be keenly aware of its limitations. In this course, the use of artificial intelligence (for example, ChatGPT, Grammarly, Claude, Midjourney, Co-Pilot, or some other resource) is generally acceptable, but only to a point. You will need to provide information about the tool(s) and the specific nature of your use of the tools so as to inform those who are reading/seeing/hearing/observing the work about content contributed by the tools, as well as to make clear the nature and extent of your own contribution to assignments. **It should never be used in your Reading Reflections, Goal Reflections, or Exploratory Reflections.** Failure to observe these requirements could constitute a violation of the Honor Code.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Learning Assistance and Accommodations. If you need any help throughout the semester, please know that I am available as a resource, and I am glad to help. Also, we have many resources available to you on campus. [The Paul L. Foster Success Center](#) offers a wide variety of academic assistance. Additionally, any student with a documented disability needing classroom accommodations should contact the [Office of Access and Learning Accommodation](#) as soon as possible.

Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Interpersonal Violence Policy: Baylor University does not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, disability, national origin, ancestry, age, citizenship, genetic information or the refusal to submit to a genetic test, past, current, or prospective service in the uniformed services, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, Texas, or local law (collectively referred to as Protected Characteristics). These policies also prohibit discrimination and harassment based on pregnancy or related conditions. If you or someone you know would like help related to an experience involving:

1. Sexual assault, sex-based harassment or discrimination, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, or retaliation for reporting one of these types of prohibited conduct, please visit www.baylor.edu/titleix, or contact (254) 710-8454 or TitleIX_Coordinator@baylor.edu.
2. Harassment or discrimination (excluding those issues listed in #1) based on Protected Characteristics, please visit www.baylor.edu/civilrights, or contact (254) 710-8454 or Civil_Rights@baylor.edu.

First-Generation Students. Baylor University defines a first-generation college student as a student whose parents did not complete a four-year college degree. The First in Line program is a support office for first-generation college students to utilize if they have any questions or concerns. Please check out [First in Line](#), visit the program in Sid Richardson, or email fristinline@baylor.edu.

Crisis & Emergency Numbers: Please make a note of the following numbers for crises or emergencies:

- Counseling Center Crisis Line: (254) 710-2467 (Business Hours/Non-Business Hours/Weekends)
- Baylor Police Department: (254) 710-2222
- MHMR Crisis Center: (254) 867-6550
- MHMR 24-Hour Emergency/Crisis Number: (254) 752-3451
- When home during academic breaks, when the counseling center is closed, please call your local resources and/or national hotlines:
 - National Hope Network Hotline: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

Success Center: We believe every student who has been admitted to Baylor can be successful, and we want to partner with you to help you thrive academically. Be sure to take advantage of the many resources available for academic success, including coming to see me during our office hours. Students who regularly utilize the great resources in the Paul L. Foster Success Center such as tutoring, Learning Lab, and Academic Mentoring are among our most successful students. If your academic performance in this class is substandard, we will submit an Academic Progress Report to the Success Center so that the team of coordinated care professionals can ensure that you get the help you need.

Undergraduate Research Opportunities: Baylor University is strongly committed to providing meaningful research opportunities for undergraduates. To make connecting with faculty mentors easier, Baylor uses [ForagerOne](#), an innovative platform designed to streamline and enhance the student- faculty match process. Students interested in research should create a ForagerOne profile, which allows you to explore research opportunities across disciplines, connect directly with faculty mentors, and showcase your interests and skills.

OUR GRANTMAKING: AN OVERVIEW

This course is complex. There are a lot of moving pieces, so it is imperative for you always to keep the big picture in view.

Objective

To award \$100,000 in grants that promote the flourishing of our neighbors and our community in ways that align with our Board Statement of Values & Purpose.

Approach

In the Baylor Philanthropy Lab, we practice something called **trust-based philanthropy**, an approach that emphasizes strong, equitable relationships between funders and grantees. One of the core principles of trust-based philanthropy is to acknowledge the work required of an organization, and, through that work, the costs incurred. In doing that, we will compensate organizations for their efforts in submitting proposals. For that reason, as we move through the phases of our semester, any organization that moves to Phase II will receive a \$500 award for time spent preparing a pitch. Any organization moving to Phase III will receive an additional \$500 award for time spent hosting a site visit in Phase III. If you ultimately award the organization a grant, those dollars will be folded into the overall grant amount.

Your Roles

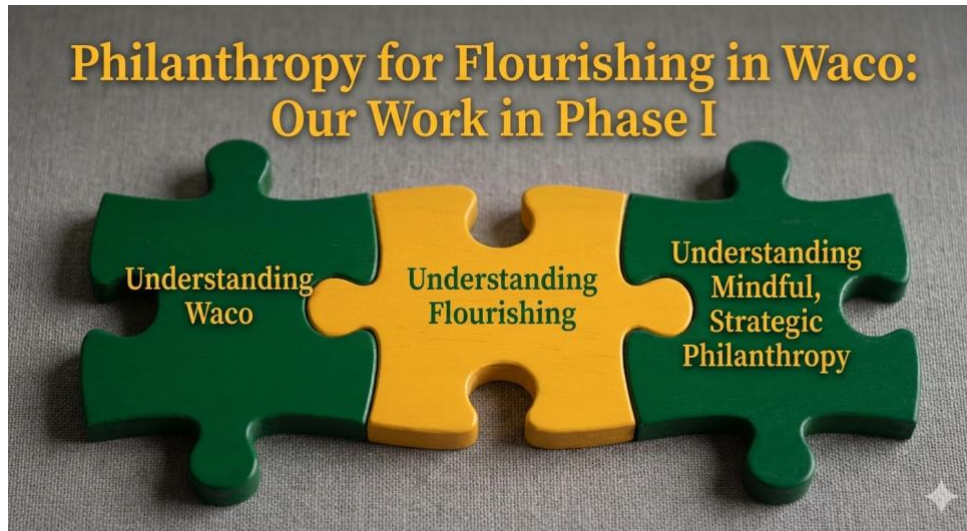
Throughout the course you will wear different “hats,” often swapping them from moment to moment, a process that can be challenging. Understanding each role is therefore important. Your roles are:

- **Board Member:** This is your primary—and most important—role. Our ultimate decisions about what to do with the money belong to the overall Board of Directors. Each person, as a member of that Board, has one vote. Although we will always strive toward consensus in our decisions, we will ultimately make them democratically. Certain procedural questions will belong to the Board as well, and we will decide these throughout the semester (such as what to do in the event of a tie, or how much consensus is required for a decision).
- **Board Chair:** You will also serve alongside a group of students in a Board Chair role, specializing in one area for various dimensions of our board work. There are three types of chairs, and you will serve in one of these roles:
 - *Board Business Chairs:* This group will be tasked with setting our Executive Session agendas, conducting those meetings, and organizing the work of the board as *ad hoc* needs arise. This group will be smaller than the others (approx. 3-4).
 - *Data & Presentation Chairs:* Before each Executive Session, we will collect data that will inform the meeting, and that data will need to be presented back to the board in a concise and digestible way. Roles within this chair group might be sub-divided, with some focused on data *gathering* (creating surveys, etc.), some focused on data *visualization* (charts, slides, etc.), and some on data *presentation* in Executive session.
 - *Logistics & Liaison Chairs:* This group of chairs will run logistics to prepare for and execute Pitch Day. They will also coordinate site visits, distributed across Program Officer groups to coordinate the group and communicate with organizations about site visit logistics.
- **Program Officer:** As a Program Officer, you will specialize in due diligence of particular nonprofit organizations, researching and developing expertise, which you will report back to the Board for its consideration. Ordinarily, you will do this as part of a team. One important note about the Program Officer role: the temptation will always be for you to consider the organizations you’ve researched to be “your” organizations. Please always avoid this temptation, remembering that your primary responsibility is to be a Board Member. Your job, when wearing the Program Officer hat, is to be an expert, not a partisan.
- **Student:** It is incumbent upon you to develop the requisite academic expertise in order to do this work well. Learning—about philanthropy, grantmaking, social challenges, etc.—is essential.

Phase I: The Landscape of Challenges & Resources

Phase I begins by putting together a puzzle of sorts, orienting ourselves to the work at hand this semester. We’ll begin by gaining some level of understanding of Waco. We’ll follow that by attempting to understand what it means to flourish. We’ll then think about what it means to practice mindful, strategic philanthropy. And we’ll round out that puzzle by beginning to think about what it means to practice philanthropy for flourishing in Waco. There are several important dimensions to this.

Expert guests and former students of this course will join us for dimensions of Phase I to help us gain our bearings. We will also work together to develop a guiding statement for the semester, which we'll call a Board Statement of Values and Purpose. Additionally, dozens of local nonprofit organizations will be submitting information to help orient you to their work. We'll assemble all these pieces in advance of Executive Session I, where we'll decide which organizations will be invited to move on toward Phase II of our semester. Every organization that moves to Phase II will receive at least \$500. Logistics & Liaison Chairs will finish Phase I by inviting Phase II organization to Pitch Day.



*Image created using Gemini

Summary of key dates in Phase I:

- **February 11** (in class): Approve Board Statement of Values & Purpose
- **February 23** (outside of class): Submit tiered rankings by 5:00 pm
- **February 25** (in class): Decide which organizations to move to Phase II
- **March 4** (in class): You will turn in your Semester Notebook for a midpoint grade

Phase II: Organizations Making Impact

In Phase II, the organizations you have chosen will be invited for a short in-person presentation on **March 18**. The Logistics & Liaison Chairs will be responsible for inviting organizations, preparing them for the presentation, and organizing the day of activities in our class.

After all organizations have shared, you will reflect on what you've heard, and our Data & Presentation Chairs will facilitate a feedback process to move us into Executive Session II, guided by our Board Business Chairs. In Executive Session II, the Board will determine which organizations will move to Phase III. If an organization moves on to Phase III, it will receive at least \$1,000. Logistics & Liaison Chairs will conclude Phase II by coordinating with Phase III organizations to host us for a site visit.

Summary of key dates in Phase II:

- **March 19** (in class): "Pitch Day" Presentations
- **By March 23** (by 5:00 pm): Complete survey provided by Data & Presentation Chairs
- **March 25** (in class): Decide which organizations move to Phase III

Phase III: Deep Due Diligence & Grant Awards

In Phase III, everyone will do deep dives on the remaining organizations as we move toward making decisions about which grants to award. You will form into teams of Program Officers, with each team focusing their research on one organization to conduct a site visit and prepare a presentation on the organization. Each person will be a Program Officer for more than one team, conducting one site visit during class time in each of the two weeks set aside (**April 8 & 15**). Research is thorough at this phase, as we ask important questions about an organization's leadership, structure, funding, and proposed grant idea(s). We will also reflect deeply as we make projections about whether those grants will be successful. You will attempt to turn over every stone of an organization so that the Board can make an informed decision.

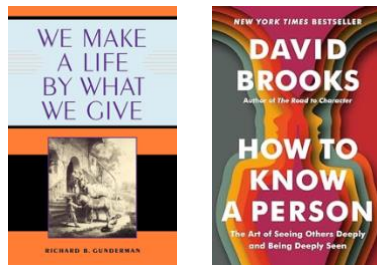
In class on April 22, each group of Program Officers will present to the Board with something called **A Presentation in 3 Charts**. Following these presentations, we will enter Executive Session, guided by Board Business Chairs. Once class ends, Data & Presentation Chairs will develop a survey for each Board member to complete before 5:00 pm. We will re-convene at 6:30 for dinner and the remainder of Executive Session III, remaining in session until all decisions are made.

On **May 6**, we will throw a party, inviting each grant recipient to an event where we will present them with checks and celebrate their work.

Summary of Key Dates in Phase III:

- **April 8** (in class): Site visits
- **April 15** (in class): Site visits
- **April 22** (in class): Presentation in 3 Charts + Executive Session
- **April 22** (post-class): Submit survey by 5:00 pm
- **April 22** (post-class): Executive Session and dinner starting at 6:30 pm
- **May 6** (in class): Grant Awards Reception

REQUIRED MATERIALS*



Richard B. Gunderman, *We Make a Life by What We Give* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008).

David Brooks, *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen* (New York: Random House, 2023).

Semester notebook—a hardbound Moleskine journal you'll use for reflective assignments all semester

*Each item will be supplied to you free of charge by the generosity of our donors

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Board Contribution (20 points): Your informed participation is vital to the success of this class and, more importantly, to the success of this entire philanthropic venture. This portion of your grade hinges on a couple of measures, particularly the extent to which you are a thoughtful, reliable, collegial, and informed member of our classroom/boardroom community. This includes a few things. For one, it means you are a leader and active participant in discussions surrounding our texts. These texts are essential in helping us become imaginative, mindful, and strategic philanthropists, and that happens when the texts come alive in our discussion. It is essential that you read well and participate actively in our discussions. Being a good Board member also means offering collaboration and input as we work together on our grantmaking decisions. And finally, it means performing well in your duties as a Board Committee Chair. Receiving a good grade means demonstrating your full engagement with this process.

Mid-term (20 points): Throughout the semester you will log various handwritten reflections in your Semester Notebook. We'll collect these on **March 4**, read them over spring break, and assign grades based on the quality of your reflections. At mid-term, this will include five Reading Reflections (see below for prompt), four Exploratory Reflections (see course calendar

for prompt each time), and two Goal Reflections (see course calendar for prompt each time). Grades will reflect the accuracy, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness of your reflections over the course of the first half of the course.

Final (20 points): We'll collect your Semester Notebook again on **April 29** and evaluate your work in them over the second half of the course. This will include six Reading Reflections (see below for prompt), four Exploratory Reflections (see course calendar for prompt each time), and one Goal Reflection (see course calendar for prompt). Grades will reflect the accuracy, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness of your reflections over the course of the second half of the course.

A Note on Reading Reflections:

Each Reading Reflection should respond in some way to three questions: What? So what? Now what? Here's what that means.

- **What:** What were the main ideas of the reading? What did the author argue? How well is it argued?
- **So what:** What challenged, surprised, or inspired you? What concepts feel most relevant? What do we need to discuss (you should always address this in your reflections, offering at least 3 questions for class discussion because we'll likely ask you to pose questions when we discuss readings)?
- **Now what:** What feels most relevant to the work at hand in this course? How might these concepts inform or enhance our work as philanthropists this semester and going forward.

Though they should address most of these questions, your Reading Reflections need not follow this precise format (i.e., you don't have to say: here's the *what* section, here's the *so what* section; here's the *now what* section). In fact, the best reflections will likely weave these concepts together in a coherent narrative that clearly reflects your voice and your reflective thinking. The main point is this: make it clear that you read and thought deeply about each text.

Also, when there is more than one text in a week, you can address each text separately or weave it all together in one reflection. The best reflections will likely do the latter, although some weeks, this might be difficult if texts are disparate in theme.

A Note on Goal Reflections:

At the beginning of the semester, we will set goals—not just for the course but for our lives—that we will reflect on throughout the semester. These are not just goals for the sake of goals; they are instead about forming habits that form character. Your course calendar will contain the prompt for each handwritten Goal Reflection.

A Note on Exploratory Reflections:

Learning—real learning, deep learning—rarely takes root without reflection. For that reason, we will pause to reflect at various points throughout the semester, with prompts aimed at sensemaking and reflection on the work we've been doing. Your course calendar contains the prompt for each handwritten Exploratory Reflection.

Who Am I Becoming Conversations (8 points): As you will note from our semester learning goals, an important part of this class involves asking yourself the question: Who am I becoming? This class is not just a chance to *learn*, and not just a chance to *do*, but also a chance to grow and evolve and reflect. It's a class about philanthropy, but as students tell us repeatedly, it is also a class about life. One of the ways you are going to reflect on who you are becoming is to reflect on a sequence of questions in a sustained, semester-long conversation with a partner. Throughout the semester, we will be reading David Brooks's book, *How to Know A Person*, which guides readers toward an "ability to see someone else deeply and to make them feel seen—to accurately know another person, to let them feel valued, heard, and understood." At four points this semester, you and your partner will engage in a conversation that offers you the chance to reflect on what you are learning, what you are doing, and who you are becoming as:

- A professional
- A friend and family member
- A neighbor and citizen
- A giver

You will record these conversations and upload them to Canvas. This is designed as a rich opportunity for you to practice empathy, understand others, and reflect on your own life, all of which will make you a better philanthropist. This is also really fun and rewarding!

A Presentation in 3 Charts (2x10 points = 20 points): You'll be part of two Program Officer teams conducting site visits to organizations. Each team will make a 10-minute presentation back to the Board, offering thorough research to the Board so it can make effective decisions. Here's the catch: you will do this by creating three charts and offering thorough narrative analysis of those three charts. The first will be a **logic model**. The second will be a **radar chart**. And the third will be an **arrow plot**. These charts should be really good, but they will only tell part of the story. The rest of the story is up to you. We will explain more to help you prepare as the assignment approaches.

Capstone Assignment (12 points): You will finish the course with a Capstone Assignment, which has two parts: First, you will write an essay exploring your own philanthropic ethic: how do you intend to approach philanthropy going forward? This essay will draw heavily from your reading and reflection throughout the semester, bringing those readings and reflections to bear on your own thinking about philanthropy. We will provide more details and a writing prompt as the time approaches. The second part of the assignment is a hand-written "thank you" note to our donors. The essay will be due via Canvas by **6:30 PM on May 12**. The notes are to be handed in at our Grant Awards Reception.

Summary:

Board Contribution:	20 points
Mid-term:	20 points
Final:	20 points
Who Am I Becoming? Conversations:	4 x 2 = 8 points
A Presentation in 3 Charts:	10 x 2 = 20 points
Capstone Essay:	12 points
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	100 points

Grading Scale:

- 93-100 = A
- 90-92 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 83-86 = B
- 80-82 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 73-76 = C
- 70-72 = C-
- 60-69 = D
- 0-59 = F

COURSE SCHEDULE

Phase	Week	Date	Session Title	Pre-Class Work		In-Class Work		
				Read	Do	Seminar (Learning)	Lab (Doing)	Reflection (Becoming)
Phase I: The Landscape of Challenges and Resources	Week 1	Wed, Jan 21, 2026	<i>Orienting to the work</i>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today we'll introduce the course, situate ourselves within our own philanthropic autobiographies, and discuss the poem "Okay." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We'll orient to the grantmaking process for the semester. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your professors will talk a bit about their reasons for teaching this course and their own perspectives on philanthropy.
	Week 2	Wed, Jan 28, 2026	<i>Understanding Philanthropy, Understanding Waco</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payton & Moody, <i>Understanding Philanthropy</i>, pp. 1-26 (available on Canvas) • Craig Dykstra, "What is a Grant?" excerpt from <i>Giving Well, Doing Good</i> (available on Canvas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete \$10 Challenge • Submit your Board Committee Chair preferences by 11:59 pm on Sunday, January 25 (descriptions available in syllabus) • Complete Reading Reflection #1 • Complete all Philanthropy Lab Portal items • Complete Goal Reflection #1: What are your goals for this semester, not just in this class, but in your life? As you reflect on those goals, begin by reflecting on the virtues or traits you most value (for example, generosity, kindness, curiosity, etc.). Then think about what you hope to learn and what you hope to do to become the kind of person who is marked by those virtues/traits. Then, get as specific as you are willing to get about what kinds of practices or habits will help you learn and do the things you believe will help you become that kind of person. As you do this, also reflect on the ends toward which all of this is aimed: why do you want to learn and do and become these things? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This might sound simple, but what is philanthropy? And what is a grant? We'll start with the basics as we set a frame for the semester. We'll also be joined by Josh Caballero of the City of Waco to provide some context on our community. Even as we think we know Waco because we live here, there are many textured layers to our community and our history. Mr. Caballero will help us understand that as we prepare for the work before us this semester. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We'll discuss what we did with our \$10 as a way to begin thinking well about effective philanthropy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploratory Reflection #1: We'll spend a bit of time taking stock of what we've learned about the nature of philanthropy, the contexts of our community, and the challenges of effective giving as we orient to the work ahead.

Phase	Week	Date	Session Title	Pre-Class Work		In-Class Work		
				Read	Do	Seminar (<i>Learning</i>)	Lab (<i>Doing</i>)	Reflection (<i>Becoming</i>)
	Week 3	Wed, Feb 4, 2026	<i>Understanding Flourishing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthew T. Lee, James L. Ritchie-Dunham, Alexander Moreira-Almeida, Meetu Khosia, Byron R. Johnson, and Tyler J. VanderWeele, “Complete Well-Being Throughout the World: Lessons from the First Wave of the Global Flourishing Study” (Read Part I & Part II.) • “Beyond Money: Martha Nussbaum on Living a Flourishing Human Life” • “Ubuntu Philosophy: Wealth Resides in the Health of the Community” • Cale Dowell, Benjamin Pascut, & Matthew T. Lee, “Flourishing Performance Indicators: A New Framework for Wealth and Legacy” (As you read this, focus less on the parts about wealth transfer and more on the framework the authors provide for thinking about flourishing.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Reading Reflection #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We'll be joined by Dr. Byron Johnson, Director of the Institute for Global Human Flourishing, who will offer us a rich, holistic framework to understand what it means to flourish. Connecting to last week's discussion, we will also consider what it means for a community to flourish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by our Board Business Chairs, we will work together to draft our Board Statement of Values & Purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploratory Reflection #2: What might it mean to help our neighbors and our community flourish with our philanthropic activity?

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	Week 4	Wed, Feb 11, 2026	Mindful, strategic philanthropy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payton & Moody, <i>Understanding Philanthropy</i>, pp. 46-61 (available on Canvas) • Sievers, “Civil Society, Philanthropy, & the Fate of the Commons,” excerpt from <i>Philanthropy, Civil Society, & the Fate of the Commons</i>, pp. 122-144 (available on Canvas) • Lynn & Wisely, “The Four Traditions of Philanthropy” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Reading Reflection #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As we discuss the social sector vis-a-vis the private and public sectors, we will begin to think about what strategic philanthropy can achieve and what it should aim to address. • We’ll discuss the reading, after which Prof. Richards & Dr. Hogue will model a conversation based on insights from Brooks, previewing the conversation you’ll have next week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work to ratify our Board Statement of Values & Purpose. We will also work through some test cases in particular issue areas to consider how philanthropy is or isn't positioned to address challenges in that area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploratory Reflection #3: How might these frameworks inform the kind of citizen I ought to be?
	Week 5	Wed, Feb 18, 2026	Philanthropy for flourishing in Waco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Airtable database of past grants from this course • Waco Tribune-Herald, “Several Waco nonprofits see 2025 giving buck nationwide slide, amid uncertainty in public funding” (available on Canvas) • Brooks, <i>How to Know a Person</i>, pp. 3-54 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Reading Reflection #4 (for today, focus one part of your reflections on the past grants and another part on the Brooks reading) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to bring strategy to our giving? How might that strategy inform the kinds of grants we award and the ways we think about impact? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We'll be joined by a group of former students who will offer their wisdom on this process, having been in your seat not long ago. We will also spend time beginning our preparations for Executive Session I by working in our Board Chair groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You'll engage in Who Am I Becoming Conversation #1 with your partner, reflecting on who you are becoming as a professional.

Phase	Week	Date	Session Title	Pre-Class Work		In-Class Work		
				Read	Do	Seminar (Learning)	Lab (Doing)	Reflection (Becoming)
	Week 6	Wed, Feb 25, 2026	Executive Session I: Which organizations will move to Phase II?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read all Organization Primers before Monday, February 23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit your tiered rankings before 5:00 pm on Monday, February 23 Complete Goal Reflection #2: Take stock of each of the goals you set for yourself at the beginning of the semester. How are you doing just over one month in. What adjustments might you consider making—perhaps to the goals, but more likely to your practices and habits? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Session I: Our Data & Presentation Chairs will share survey results of your rankings, then, led by our Business & Communication Chairs, we will determine which organizations move to Phase II. Logistics Chairs will work on Pitch Day logistics following the Executive Session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploratory Reflection #4: How did our meeting go from our perspective? What was your most important contribution? Why does democratic decision-making matter? What did you consider that you hadn't thought about before the meeting? Did your thinking evolve as a result of others? And how do you feel about the decisions the board made today?
Phase II: Organizations Making Impact	Week 7	Wed, Mar 4, 2026	Orienting to Phase II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brooks, <i>How to Know a Person</i>, pp. 55-93 Richard Gunderman, "The Potential to Share," Excerpt from <i>We Make a Life by What We Give</i>, pp. 30-36. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Reading Reflection #5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is our posture as we engage in philanthropy? We'll spend some time in self-reflection and consider our tone and intentions as we enter the critical phase of our semester. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final preparations for Pitch Day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You'll engage in Who Am I Becoming Conversation #2 with your partner, reflecting on who you are becoming as a friend and family member.
	Spring Break	Wed, Mar 11, 2026	SPRING BREAK					
	Week 8	Wed, Mar 18, 2026	Pitch Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh your memory on each of our Phase II organizations by re-reading their Organization Primer info Brooks, <i>How to Know a Person</i>, pp. 97-159 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Reading Reflection #6 (on Brooks) Complete Who Am I Becoming Conversation #3 (Neighbor & Citizen) before you come to class. Record the conversation and upload it to Canvas. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitch Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploratory Reflection #5: Reflect on each of the organizations you heard from today. What are their best strengths as far as you can tell. What questions do you have before you're ready to award them a grant? Do you think, based on your current knowledge, that they should move forward to Phase III?

Phase	Week	Date	Session Title	Pre-Class Work		In-Class Work		
				Read	Do	Seminar (Learning)	Lab (Doing)	Reflection (Becoming)
	Week 9	Wed, Mar 25, 2026	Executive Session II: Determine who moves to Phase III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brooks, <i>How to Know a Person</i>, pp. 160-189, OR Gunderman, <i>We Make a Life by What We Give</i>, 1-12, 19-29, and 63-72 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read your notes as you prepare to submit your reflections and engage in discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Reading Reflection #7 (on Brooks or Gunderman) Complete ranking survey by March 23 at 5:00 pm 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Session II: Led by our Phase II Committee of class in Executive Session to determine which organizations will move to Phase III. At the end of class, we will form Program Officer groups for site visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploratory Reflection #6: Reflect on how today's board meeting went. What was your most important contribution? What did you consider that you hadn't thought about before? Did your thinking evolve as a result of others? How do you feel about our decisions?
Phase III: Deep Due Diligence & Grant Awards	Week 10	Wed, Apr 1, 2026	Theories of change and nonprofit due diligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frumkin, "Logic Models: Theories of Change, Leverage, and Scale," from <i>The Essence of Strategic Giving</i> (available on Canvas) Guidebook for Evaluating Nonprofit Organizations (available on Canvas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Reading Reflection #8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are we trying to do with these grants? What is the logic of our intervention? And how will we know if the nonprofits will deliver? Additionally, Dr. Hogue will lecture on Theories of Change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site visit preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection on why it matters to do a thorough due diligence of nonprofits before we award grants.
	Week 11	Wed, Apr 8, 2026	Site Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brooks, <i>How to Know a Person</i>, pp. 190-211, OR Gunderman, <i>We Make a Life by What We Give</i>, 114-124 and 132-139 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Reading Reflection #9 (on Brooks or Gunderman) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site visits (go straight to the site in coordination with your group). Make your plans to meet before the next site visit to work on your April 22nd presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploratory Reflection #7: Reflect on what you learned and saw on your site visit. How are you feeling about the prospect of this organization receiving a grant?
	Week 12	Wed, Apr 15, 2026	Site Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brooks, <i>How to Know a Person</i>, pp. 212-245, OR Gunderman, <i>We Make a Life by What We Give</i>, 37-62 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Reading Reflection #10 (on Brooks or Gunderman) Before Site Visit #2, meet in your Program Officer group from Site Visit #1 to begin work on your April 22nd presentation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site visits (go straight to the site in coordination with your group). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploratory Reflection #8: Reflect on what you learned and saw on your site visit. How are you feeling about the prospect of this organization receiving a grant?
	Week 13	Wed, Apr 22, 2026	Considering our Options: A Presentation in Three Charts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet in Program Officer groups to work on and finalize your presentations for both organizations you visited. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Session III (part one): A Presentation in 3 Charts, followed by preliminary discussion about our final decisions. 	

Phase	Week	Date	Session Title	Pre-Class Work		In-Class Work			
				Read	Do	Seminar (Learning)	Lab (Doing)	Reflection (Becoming)	
			6:30pm: Executive Session III: Making our Final Decisions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete surveys before 5:00 pm to prepare for final deliberation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Session III (part two): We will meet in the Beckham Room of the SUB (202) at 6:30 PM and stay until we've reached our final conclusions 		
	Week 14	Wed, Apr 29, 2026	Who are we becoming?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard Gundenman, <i>We Make a Life by What We Give</i>, pp. 191-197 AND David Brooks, <i>How to Know a Person</i>, pp. 246-271 (everyone reads both selections this week) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Reading Reflection #11 (on both readings) Complete Who Am I Becoming Conversation #4 (Giver) and upload the recording before class. Complete Goal Reflection #3: Take stock of each of the goals you set for yourself at the beginning of the semester. How are you doing at the end of the semester? What adjustments might you consider making—perhaps to the goals, but more likely to your practices and habits? And what role has this process played in helping you become more like the person you want to be? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate to create evaluation instruments; designate evaluation leaders; reflect on our grants and our experience; complete end-of-semester Philanthropy Lab items in the portal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of people are we becoming as a result of our work and our thinking together this semester? How might that matter for our lives going forward? 	
	Week 15	Wed, May 6, 2026	Grant Awards Ceremony				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details forthcoming 		
	Week 16	Tue, May 12, 2026	Final Exam						