

NBA 5035 – Philanthropic Leadership

3 credits

Prerequisites – none

Breazzano 323

We make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give. Unknown

Charity is just writing checks and not being engaged. Philanthropy, to me, is being engaged, not only with your resources but getting people and yourself really involved and doing things that haven't been done before. Eli Broad

The best philanthropy is not just about giving money but giving leadership. The best philanthropists bring the gifts that made them successful – the drive, the determination, the refusal to accept that something can't be done. Tony Blair

Course Description, Fall 2026

This course provides students with instruction and experience in philanthropic leadership with emphasis on philanthropic leadership through personal giving, collective giving, and non-profit board membership. If you are taking this course because you are interested in leading a non-profit organization, you will gain insight into your future philanthropic supporters and how you, as a leader, can position a non-profit for fundraising and other successes. The five pillars of the course are:

1. Articulate giving motivations, define criteria for giving, and set contribution commitments
2. Reflect critically on the purpose of philanthropy and non-profit organizations in society
3. Understand expectations of non-profit board members
4. Conduct due diligence on organizational need and impact
5. Experience giving

Throughout the course you will learn and practice the following leadership skills:

- Presence
- Listening
- Advocating

Students will make grants to Tompkins County non-profit organizations. Funding for these grants comes from our partner organization, [The Philanthropy Lab](#) and fundraising by previous classes. The total amount of funding available depends on course enrollment and an incentive structure. Anticipating an enrollment of ~25 with full participation by the students in the course incentive structure, the class should have ~ \$80,000 to donate within Tompkins County.

August 24, 2026

Each student will be a member of the NBA 5035 Foundation Board of Directors (if more than 30 students enroll, there will be two boards of directors), and each student, given that they meet course attendance and participation requirements, will have equal weight when voting. As the instructor, I set three guideposts for giving: (1) All grant recipients must be 501(c)3 organizations working in Tompkins County, NY with at least two years of activity; (2) 20% of our total grant amount will be split evenly among the non-profits with whom you conduct site visits or otherwise substantially supported our learning in the course; (3) grants will be for general operating support. Beyond setting these guideposts, the instructor serves as an advisor to the board but is not a voting member.

To execute this grant-making process, each student will have individual responsibilities and team-based responsibilities. Individual responsibilities/deliverables include: class attendance and participation, two \$10 challenges, one at the beginning and one at the end of class and developing a personal giving goal.

Team responsibilities include: research and site visits; board practicum; and the class Giving Ceremony.

Class dates and location

Fridays, 10:10 AM – 12:50 PM in Breazzano 323

Giving Ceremony – Tuesday, December 1, 2026, 5-6:15 p.m., location TBD

Course Instructor

Carla Ingrando

Major Gift Officer, Alumni Affairs and Development, Cornell SC Johnson College of Business

Visiting Instructor, Johnson Graduate School of Management

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Office Hours: by appointment, contact via email

Readings and other instructive materials (e.g., podcasts, short videos) will be assigned weekly, with most of the assigned reading frontloaded to the first half of the semester. Readings are intended to inform and educate, not overwhelm, and are good practice in terms of how to prepare for board meetings. Two primary texts for the course are:

The Everyday Philanthropist: A Better Way to Make a Better World, Dan Pallotta

“No One Left Behind.” Harvard Business School Case Study. Lynn S. Paine, Herman B. “Dutch” Leonard, Max Hancock, and David Lane.

The primary texts are available via the Sage Management Library, the Cornell Bookstore, and other vendors.

All other readings are available through Canvas.

Course materials posted on Canvas are intellectual property belonging to the author. Students are not permitted to buy or sell any course materials without the express permission of the instructor. Such unauthorized behavior constitutes academic misconduct.

Date	Learning Objectives	Deliverable
August 28	Understand course learning objectives and activities designed to facilitate them; discuss Philanthropy Lab support for course	Values exercise review NBA 503 [5] Foundation Board Charter (in Canvas) access to Phil Lab portal (in class); complete pre-course survey (in class)
September 4	Introduction to philosophies of doing good and practical ways to give of your time, talent, and financial resources; reflect on the purpose of philanthropy in society. Guest speakers: Melinda Oakes, Triad Foundation (first half of class - confirmed); Gloria Coicou, '19, MPA, Community Foundation of Tompkins County (second half of class - confirmed)	Read: <i>The Everyday Philanthropist</i> (entire book should take 45 minutes – 1 hour); read Melinda's and Gloria's bios (links in Canvas). CFTC Site Visit Guidelines (in Canvas); Site Visit Evaluation Guide (in Canvas); Submit \$10 exercise
September 11 <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	Develop awareness of depth and breadth of non-profit organizations in Tompkins County	Open Doors English (confirmed) Women's Opportunity Center (confirmed) Optional: lunch for further discussion
September 17 – special opportunity to meet with Jon Moeller, '86, '88 MBA and Lisa Sauer, '87, '88 MBA	Learn how an alumni couple approaches and accomplishes their philanthropic goals.	

September 18	Reflect on different ways of doing good; introduction to non-profit governance; deepen awareness of depth and breadth of non-profit organizations in Tompkins County. Guest speakers: George Ferrari, '84 (Human Ecology), President, Community Foundation of Tompkins County (confirmed) (second half of class)	Read: <i>Ten Basic Responsibilities of Non-profit Boards</i> (in Canvas); <i>Good Governance for Non-profits</i> (in Canvas) Make updates to NBA 503 [5] Foundation Board Charter (in Canvas)
September 25 <i>Yom Kippur</i>	Selecting and working with non-profit partners Guest speakers: Elizabeth Sun, MBA '24 and Vera Yeh, MBA '24	Approve class charter Form groups/time for groups to work together in class
October 2	Individual Board Service and Philanthropic Leadership Guest Speakers: Andrew Karolyi, Charles Field Knight Dean, Cornell SC Johnson College	Read: speaker bio In-class group work: groups identify 3 organizations to research and begin research
October 9 <i>Friday before fall break</i>	Two philosophies of doing good: effective altruism and trust-based philanthropy	Watch: Peter Singer, The Why and How of Effective Altruism Watch: In the Right Hands – Trusting Community to Guide Philanthropy
October 12-13		Fall Break
October 16	The Joy of Giving/Fundraising as a Board Member Guest: Dan Mansoor, '79 ENG, '80MBA (confirmed); Nell Cady Kruse '84, '85 MBA (confirmed)	Work on crowdfunding campaign Preview No One Left Behind Case Study
October 23	Board Governance No One Left Behind Case Study	Read: "No One Left Behind." Havard Business School Case Study. Lynn S. Paine, Herman B.

	Guest Speakers: Andrew Sullivan, Executive Director, NOLB + additional team members (first half of class); Philanthropy Lab staff (second half of class)	"Dutch" Leonard, Max Hancock, and David Lane. Speaker bios (in Canvas)
October 30	Develop an understanding of tax form 990, especially the information you can glean to help you understand and question a non-profit organization's financial stability. Guest speaker: Steven Bronfenbrenner, '79 (A&S), '81 MBA (pending confirmation – first half of class)	Read: speaker bio + sample 990s (in Canvas) Finalize group presentations
November 6	Deepen awareness of breadth and depth of non-profit organizations in Tompkins County and their impact	Group presentations
November 13	Align values and class charter with giving decisions; implement group decision making	Board Practicum/Grant award deliberation
November 20	Bringing recognition to and celebrate non-profit work	Plan Giving Ceremony
November 25-November 27		Thanksgiving Holiday
December 1 5-6:15 p.m. Location TBD	Raise awareness of the good work of non-profit organizations in Tompkins County	Giving Ceremony
December 4	Motivations for and Practicalities of Giving	Giving Goals uploaded to Phil Lab portal; post-course survey; session on impact investing?
December 11 <i>Final assignment due</i>	Assess your personal growth as a philanthropic leader over the course of the semester	\$10 Challenge #2

Individual Components

Class Attendance and Participation (20%)

90% of life is showing up (thank you, Woody Allen), which sounds simple, but showing up prepared and being fully present is hard work. This is one reason

why attendance and participation are graded in this course. For each class missed beyond the three permitted (I understand that you have interviews, family events, illness, etc. that will necessitate missing some classes), a deduction will be made from your grade per the schedule below.

11-14 classes attended with full participation = full credit

10 classes attended with full participation = 10% deduction

9 classes attended with full participation = 20% deduction

8 classes attended with full participation = 30% deduction

7 classes attended with full participation = 40% deduction

Failure to attend at least 50% of classes will result in 0% credit for class attendance and participation

\$10 Challenge 1: Your current, personal approach to philanthropy (10%) (due on Friday, September 4)

You will receive \$10 on the second day of class. You will be asked to use the \$10 to make whatever impact you wish. Reflecting on your \$10 experience, write a one-page essay (single or double-spaced) reflecting on why you did what you did. As a part of your reflection, please consider the question, “what change did you want to effect with your \$10?”

\$10 Challenge 2: Letter to Future You (10%) (due on Friday, December 11)

At the end of the course, you will reflect on what you learned and write a letter to your future self of key lessons learned this semester (or earlier) with any key commitments/goals that you have for yourself. Your letter should be 2-3 pages (single or double-spaced) and should identify a specific philanthropist that you would like to emulate and at least three specific advice statements for your future self along with any giving goals that you want to remind yourself to remain committed to in the future.

Upload Giving Goal to Philanthropy Lab Website (10%) (in class or before on Friday, December 4) Modeled after the Warren Buffet and Bill Gates Giving Pledge, the purpose of The Philanthropy Lab Giving Goal is to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate philanthropic leadership to others and to form personal philanthropic goals for the future. To complete the challenge, you should take an excerpt from your “Letter to a Future You” (e.g., one or more of your advice statements) and upload it to the Philanthropy Lab website. You can choose to be anonymous or attach your name to your giving goal. Examples can be found here: <https://thephilanthropylab.org/giving-goals/> **You must complete this assignment in order to pass the course. If you feel like you cannot complete this assignment, please schedule time to discuss with the instructor or course assistant.** There is no grading rubric for this assignment as your giving goals very personal. You will receive 100% credit for completing the assignment.

Team Components

Students in the course will build and function as their own foundation board – one type of non-profit board service that they may be invited to pursue as they advance in their careers – and which also mimics the individual decision-making process you might go through as an individual philanthropist. If class enrollment exceeds 30 students, we will create two foundation boards.

The NBA 5035 Foundation Board will have an allocated pool of funds available (final amount to be confirmed after post-test and giving goals are submitted through the Philanthropy Lab portal) to invest in registered 501(c)3 organizations in Tompkins County, New York. In this way, students will experience giving of their time, talent, and treasure.

Research and site visits (15%)

You will self-select into groups to research an important social issue and research a minimum of 3 local non-profit organizations that are addressing this issue in Tompkins County. You may want to consider work styles in addition to interest areas as you form your groups. Team size should be 4-5. You will then conduct a site visit with 1-2 of these organizations. Site visits should be 1- 1 ½ hours in length. Your interaction with local non-profits will focus on understanding their mission, goals and strategy, organization structure, including board structure, and funding model. Each group will: (1) summarize their visit using the instructions provided; (2) present on one organization from your visits as candidates for NBA 5035 Foundation funding. Presentations should be 5-10 slides.

Crowd Fundraising Campaign (10%)

An important skill for non-profit board members is fundraising, and yet, it is the activity in which non-profit board members have the least desire and aptitude to participate. In the class, you will have the opportunity to participate in a crowd fundraising campaign that will raise money to support next year's Philanthropic Leadership class. You will have the opportunity to creatively ask 10+ people to contribute to the campaign. The funds you raise will go directly to non-profit organizations in Tompkins County through the Fall 2027 class's grantmaking.

Board Practicum (15%)

Once you have reviewed the NBA 5035 Foundation Board's giving philosophy and charter, conducted site visits, made presentations about the organizations you visited, the board will meet to make funding decisions. Grading is based on constructive participation in the conversation and decision-making processes of the board. **You must attend and participate in the Board Practicum to receive full credit for this assignment. Please note that per the board charter, students who miss more than 4 classes (including site visits) are *not* eligible to be full**

voting members of the board, but they are encouraged to attend and participate in the Board Practicum and will receive credit for doing so. If you are unable to attend the board practicum, please contact the instructor or course assistant by October 2, 2026.

Giving Ceremony (10%)

The giving ceremony builds awareness for the organization(s) you have chosen to support. This can be done through an in-person celebration event, a press release, solicited articles in local news publications, and/or other creative means.

You must attend and participate in the Giving Ceremony to receive full credit for this assignment. If you are unable to attend the Giving Ceremony, please contact the instructor by October 2, 2026.

Grading is by letter grade.

One reason for this is that we pay attention to what we measure. Another reason the course is graded is that each person's success in the course is dependent on your individual work and your work in collaboration with others in the course. This is because the nature of philanthropy is *collaborative*. Each one of you needs the help of the other students in the course to make good decisions about giving. The stakes in the course are very real for the organizations with which you are working. That is, collectively, you as the NBA 5035 Foundation Board make grant decisions that affect an organization's ability to meet their objectives, create change, alleviate suffering, etc. in our local community. As such, we need everyone to give it their all (most of the time) to be successful together.

The grading scale is:

100-90 points = A
89-80 points = B
79-70 points = C
69-60 points = D
Below 60 points = F

Per Johnson policy, grades in Johnson School elective courses are expected not to average above 3.50.

Bibliography - an "*" by the text means that it is assigned reading. All other items are for your reference. I'd welcome additions that you may find throughout the semester.

Brest, Paul and Hal Harvey. *Money Well Spent: A Strategic Plan for Smart Philanthropy*, 2nd Ed. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018.

Buchanan, Phil. *Giving Done Right: Effective Philanthropy and Making Every Dollar Count*. New York: Hachette, 2019.

Clifford, Stephanie. "The Inside Story of Mackenzie Scott, 60-Billion-Dollar Woman." Online @ medium.com

Giridharadas, Anand. *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*. Penguin Random House, 2018.

Gunderman, Richard B. "Imagining Philanthropy," in *Make a Life By What We Give*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008, pp. 1-12.

*Ingram, Richard T. "Appendix I," in *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*. Washington, D.C.: BoardSource, 2015, pp. 91-95.

*Laughlin, Fredric L. and Robert C. Andringa. "Got Good Governance?" in *Good Governance for Nonprofits: Developing Principles and Policies for an Effective Board*. New York: AMACOM, 2007, pp. 1-14.

Lewis-Kraus, Gideon. "Do Better." *The New Yorker*. August 15, 2022 (print edition). Published online as "The Reluctant Prophet of Effective Altruism."

*Paine, Lynn S. and Herman B. "Dutch" Leonard, Max Hancock, and David Lane. "No One Left Behind." Harvard Business School Case Study.

*Pallotta, Dan. *The Everyday Philanthropist: A Better Way to Make a Better World*. New Jersey: Wiley, 2023.

Payton, Robert L. and Michael P. Moody. *Understanding Philanthropy: It's Meaning and Mission*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Reading, Amy. "On Gifts." <https://openbooksb.substack.com/p/chapter-4-on-gifts>

Reich, Rob. *Just Giving: Why Philanthropy is Failing Democracy and How it Can do Better*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019.

Singer, Peter. *The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*. New Have and London: Yale University Press, 2015.

The Bridgespan Group. "Quick Guide to Conducting a Nonprofit Site Visit." www.GiveSmart.Org

The Bridgespan Group. "Philanthropic Sourcing, Diligence, and Decision-Making: An Equity-Oriented Approach. <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/philanthropic-sourcing-diligence-and-decision-making-an-equity-oriented-approach>

Tierney, Thomas J. and Joel L. Fleishman. *Give Smart: Philanthropy that Gets Results*. New York: Perseus Books Group, 2011.

Wagner, David. *What's Love Got to Do with It? A Critical Look at American Charity*. New York: The New Press, 2000.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to abide by the Johnson School Honor Code and the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work you submit must be your own or your fair share of a team project. It is a violation of the Honor Code to seek or use case or problem-specific help from others (online or in person) who have previously studied the same case or problem. Individuals who provide case or problem-specific help to current students are also in violation of the Honor Code.

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to **Turnitin.com** for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers may be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

The Johnson Honor Code can be found on the Johnson Launchpad at <https://launchpad.johnson.cornell.edu>.

The Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity and related resources can be found at <http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/academic-integrity/>

Students are encouraged to use Claude, ChatGPT or other generative AI when completing assignments. It is important to learn how to use AI while you are a student, so that you will be able to take advantage of this technology when you depart Johnson. I will suggest appropriate uses of AI for each assignment. I look forward to learning with you how to use generative AI to enhance your education.

Access to Learning

Cornell University is committed to ensuring access to learning opportunities for all students. Student Disability Services (SDS) is the Cornell office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

Students with Disabilities: Your access in this course is important to me. Please request your accommodation letter early in the semester, or as soon as you become registered with SDS, so that we have adequate time to arrange your approved academic accommodations.

- Once SDS approves your accommodation letter, it will be emailed to both you and me. *[Optional, if applicable to your course: It is your responsibility to also email your accommodation letter to [insert name and title].]* Please follow up with [me, TA, etc.] to discuss the necessary logistics of your accommodations.
- If you are approved for exam accommodations, please consult with [me, TA, course staff, etc.] at least two weeks before the scheduled exam date to confirm the testing arrangements.
- If you experience any access barriers in this course, such as with printed content, graphics, online materials, or any communication barriers; reach out to me or SDS right away.
- If you need an immediate accommodation, please speak with me after class or send an email message to me and SDS at sds_cu@cornell.edu.

If you have, or think you may have a disability, please contact Student Disability Services for a confidential discussion: sds_cu@cornell.edu, 607-254-4545, sds.cornell.edu.

Intellectual Property

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Caring Community

At Johnson, you are part of a diverse, caring community of students, faculty, and staff that takes its responsibility to look out for one another very seriously. Please remember that your mental health and emotional well-being are just as important as your physical health. If you need help, or if you believe a classmate needs help, please reach out to the course instructor or to any member of the Johnson [Student Services](#) staff. You can also find a comprehensive list of consultation and support services available to meet the emotional, physical, social, and spiritual needs of the entire university community at <https://caringcommunity.cornell.edu/>.