



# Philanthropy & the Common Good

Fall 2023

Mondays 6:00-8:30pm / Room B062 Jenkins & Nanovic Hall  
HESB 30348 / POLS 30142 / CNST 30423

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“Very little good can be accomplished, or evil avoided, without the aid of money.” – Catherine McAuley

“This college cannot fail to succeed. Before long, it will develop on a large scale. It will be one of the most powerful means for good in this country.” – Edward Sorin

## Course Description:

The primary objectives of this course are to learn about the role philanthropy plays in society, and to make real philanthropic grants to local Michiana nonprofit organizations. The funding comes from our partner organization, The Philanthropy Lab, generous individual benefactors, Notre Dame’s Office of Public Affairs and Communications, the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, The Sheedy Family Program in Economy, Enterprise and Society, and the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government. The total sum of our awarded grants will depend on a few factors discussed on the first day of class, and will likely fall somewhere between \$50,000 and \$60,000. This is a serious responsibility and students are expected to conduct thoughtful analysis in the decision making process.

The grant funding decisions will ultimately be made by the students. Each student will be a member of the Board of Directors, and each student will have equal weight when voting. I, as instructor, serve as Advisor to the Board and have no voting authority or privilege concerning the board.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I reserve the right to veto any nomination or award to a nonprofit organization that blatantly disrespects the mission of Notre Dame and our Catholic character. The class may not award grants to the University of Notre Dame or nonprofit organizations where there is a conflict of interest, such as familial employment. Additionally, the class may not award grants to the five nonprofits selected by the 2022 class. All recipients must be 501(c)3 organizations.

In order to execute this grant-making process, each student will have two team based responsibilities. First, each student will be placed on a site visit group team that consists of two to three members. Second, each student will sign up to be on a programmatic team that carries unique opportunities. The programmatic teams are (1) Board of Directors Leadership Team, (2) Social Media & Stewardship Team, (3) Awards Ceremony Team, (4) In-House Counsel Team, (5) Development Team, (6) Evaluation Team, (7) Annual Report Team, (8) In-Kind Donation Team, (9) Volunteer Experience Team, and the (10) Notre Dame Philanthropy History Team. Instructions regarding the responsibilities for site visit teams and programmatic teams will be outlined in a separate document and distributed on the first day of class.

Site visit teams are expected to conduct one site visit with a local nonprofit. All nonprofits visited by site visit teams will then be invited to submit a proposal for funding. All nonprofits must be in the Michiana area, defined as Elkhart, La Porte, Marshall, St. Joseph, and Stark counties in Indiana, plus Berrien and Cass counties in Michigan. Teams are highly encouraged to conduct site visits in person. Virtual site visits may be permitted under special circumstances, including distance from campus.

All nonprofits engaged must have certified nonprofit status and accessible 990 forms submitted to the IRS. As a class we will use the semester to explore local nonprofits and then carefully and systematically award between three and five grants. The minimum grant award will be \$5,000, and the maximum will be \$25,000. Some classes in this syllabus are labeled as Board Meetings and will serve as the venue for these decisions.

At some point during the semester, students are also expected to volunteer at a local nonprofit organization for a few hours. Students will write a brief reflection paper about this experience and how volunteering their time compares to giving monetarily.

During other class days we will gather and discuss how philanthropy shapes society. We will look at philanthropy and charity first through the lens of the founders and early Americans, and then from different religious and philosophical traditions. We will then examine how philanthropy evolved throughout American history and how it works today. This will allow us to discuss serious questions as a class. What is the role of philanthropy in 21<sup>st</sup> century America? Why are nonprofits needed today? How do nonprofits function in relation to each other and the layers of government?

### **Reading Assignments:**

Most reading assignments will be timely articles related to philanthropy or the Common Good. The readings in this syllabus are the required primary readings. Most weeks, the instructor will email the class with a few hypothetical questions to think about while completing the readings, as well as some additional short and timely readings on the subject. Students are expected to read the following book and submit a review paper.

David Callahan, *The Givers: Wealth, Power, and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age* (Knopf, 2017)

### **Grading:**

Students will be graded as follows:

Class participation and site visits	20%	200 possible points
Programmatic assignment	15%	150 possible points
Book Review (5 pages, 10/4)	20%	200 possible points
Common Good essay (4 pages, 10/13)	15%	150 possible points
Volunteering reflection (2 pages, 12/10)	5%	50 possible points
Research Paper (8 pages, 12/10)	25%	<u>250 possible points</u>
		<b>1,000 possible points</b>

### **Grading Scale**

A 1000-930	A- 929-900	B+ 899-885	B- 829-800
C+ 799-785	C 784-730	C- 729-700	D+ 699-685
D 684-630	D- 629-600	F 599-000	

No extra credit will be given.

Laptop computers and tablets may be used in the classroom for the purposes of research and notetaking. Please keep phones turned off during class.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. I shall follow and enforce the university's policies regarding academic integrity.

Honor Code: Class members are expected to understand the principles and procedures set forth in the University of Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor (<http://www.nd.edu/~hnr/code/>) and abide by its pledge: "As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty."

Students with disabilities will be accommodated as extensively as possible. Please talk directly with the instructor regarding any necessary arrangements.

### **Tentative Class Readings and Schedule**

*Note: This Schedule is subject to change. Because this course incorporates guest speakers, site visits, and entails an organized grant-making component, the schedule will most likely have some adjustments throughout the semester.*

Class 1 (August 28)

#### **Introduction & Overview**

We will review the syllabus, talk about expectations for the course, and discuss the partnership with the Philanthropy Lab. We will also have a brief conversation about the role of philanthropy in society. Students should come to class prepared to discuss societal problems they have noticed, and have a conversation about ways philanthropy might help solve those problems.

Students should acquire a copy of *The Givers* and finish reading the book by late September.

#### **Origins of Philanthropy**

## Assigned Readings

Alexis de Tocqueville, "[Political Associations in the United States](#)"

Alana Semuels, "[The Founding Fathers Weren't Concerned With Inequality](#)," The Atlantic, April 25, 2016.

George Washington, "[Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1789](#)"

Browse [A History of Modern Philanthropy](#) timeline from the National Philanthropic Trust

Note: We will also review the grant agreement from the Philanthropy Lab. Site visit teams of 2-3 students will be assigned. Students must send the instructor their preferred programmatic team assignments by 9am on 9/1.

Class 2 (September 4)

### **Individuals & Philanthropy**

## Assigned Readings

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, "[Two Kinds of People](#)"

Peter Singer, "[What Should a Billionaire Give – And What Should You?](#)," The New York Times Magazine, December 17, 2006

USCCB, [Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching](#)

Arthur C. Brooks, "[Why Giving Matters](#)," Speech delivered at Brigham Young University, February 24, 2009

## Recommended Reading

Robert D. Putnam & David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (Simon & Schuster, 2010). Required: Chapter 13, Religion and Good Neighborliness (will be provided in a PDF document)

Note: Students will receive programmatic team assignments during this class.

### **Site Visit Discussions**

We will discuss the various nonprofits that students are interested in visiting and have a conversation about what we hope to achieve with our philanthropy.

Class 3 (September 11)

### **Rise of the Foundations**

## Assigned Readings

Andrew Carnegie, "[The Gospel of Wealth](#)," The Century Co. (Digitized by Cornell University)

Bill Gates, "[Harvard Commencement 2007](#)," The Harvard Gazette

By this date, students should have started reading *The Givers: Wealth, Power, and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age* (Knopf, 2017). Expect to have a discussion about what you have read so far.

## **Is Philanthropy Fair?**

### Assigned Readings

Alana Semuels, "[The Problem with Modern Philanthropy](#)," The Atlantic, March 28, 2017  
Annika Neklason, "[Philanthropy Serves the Status Quo](#)," The Atlantic, July 1, 2019  
Malcolm Gladwell, "[My Little Hundred Million](#)," Revisionist History Podcast Season 1 Episode 6, July 21, 2016

## **Site Visit Discussions**

We will discuss the various nonprofits that students are interested in visiting and have a conversation about what we hope to achieve with our philanthropy.

Class 4 (September 18)

## **Government & Philanthropy**

### Assigned Readings

James Madison, "[The Federalist Papers No. 10](#)"  
Adam Smith, "[The Theory of Moral Sentiments \(Part VI\)](#)"  
Marco Rubio, "[Common Good Capitalism and the Dignity of Work](#)," Public Discourse, November 5, 2019

### Recommended Reading

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "[The Social Contract and Discourses, Book IV, Chapter 1](#)"

## **What is the Common Good?**

The term *The Common Good* has origins in Christian and Catholic thought. It is now used, often interchangeably, with terms such as *The Public Good* or *The Greater Good*. During this class, we will explore the roots of *The Common Good*, and see how it has evolved over time. Questions to think about for our discussion: Is there a universal definition of the Common Good? Does it matter if people disagree about how to define the Common Good? How do we promote the Common Good? Is Philanthropy an efficient vehicle to promote the Common Good?

### Assigned Readings

Michael Novak, "[Three Precisions: Common Good](#)," First Things, December 2, 2009  
Robert Reich, "[Why the common good disappeared \(and how we get it back\)](#)," Salon, February 26, 2018

V. Bradley Lewis, "[Is the Common Good an Ensemble of Conditions?](#)," Archives of Philosophy, 2016  
Michael Sandel, "[What Happens to the Common Good in a Culture of Winners and Losers?](#)," Literary Hub, September 30, 2020

Class 5 (September 25)

### **Philanthropy & Taxes**

#### Assigned Reading

Jonathan Hannah, "[A tax policy for the common good: renew the CARES Act's charitable tax deduction permanently](#)," Public Discourse, December 13, 2020

#### Recommended Reading

Theodore Lechterman, *The Tyranny of Generosity: Why Philanthropy Corrupts Our Politics and How We Can Fix It* (Oxford University Press, 2021). Required: Chapter 3, A Farewell to Alms (accessible online via Hesburgh Libraries)

### **The Future of Philanthropy**

We will discuss the future of philanthropy. How will courts, laws, and tax policy continue to shape philanthropy? Will your generation fundamentally change philanthropy?

#### Assigned Reading

Robert D. Putnam & Jonah C. Hahn, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster 2020 paperback edition). Required: Afterword, Has the Internet Reversed the Decline of Social Capital? (will be provided in a PDF document)

Class 6 (October 2)

### **Commerce & Philanthropy**

#### Assigned Readings

Milton Friedman, John Mackey & T.J. Rodgers, "[Rethinking the Social Responsibility of Business](#)," Reason, October 2005

Michael E. Porter & Mark R. Kramer, "[The Competitive Advantage of Corporate Philanthropy](#)," Harvard Business Review, December 2002

Suntae Kim, Matthew J. Karlesky, Christopher G. Myers & Todd Schifeling, "[Why Companies Are Becoming B Corporations](#)," Harvard Business Review, June 2016

### **Common Good Roundtable Discussion**

Essays on the common good are due October 13th. Come to class prepared to discuss the central idea of your essay.

## Assigned Readings

Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster 2020 paperback edition). Required: Chapter 7, Altruism, Volunteering, and Philanthropy (will be provided in a PDF document)

Class 7 (October 9)

### **Philanthropy and the Constitution**

#### Assigned Reading

[\*Americans for Prosperity Foundation v. Bonta\*](#)

### **Board of Directors Meeting**

We will spend this class session discussing the various nonprofits we have visited, give general overviews of our visits, and talk about how these organizations serve our community.

### **Early Site Visit Presentations**

Should a site visit team choose, we may have time for one or two teams to deliver their presentations before we enter the Mid-term break.

### **Mid-term break, October 14-22**

Class 8 (October 23)

### **Site Visit Presentations and Discussion**

Each site visit team should be prepared to deliver a twenty minute presentation (including Q&A) between 10/23 and 10/30.

Class 9 (October 30)

### **Site Visit Presentations and Discussion**

Each site visit team should be prepared to deliver a twenty minute presentation (including Q&A) between 10/23 and 10/30.

### **Philanthropy Gone Wrong**

We will discuss instances where philanthropy failed to some extent. Examples include situations where nonprofits disregarded the intention of their donors. Readings to be assigned.

Class 10 (November 6)

### **Proposal Review Week**

Full proposals from nonprofits seeking funding will be due by November 3rd at the very latest. Students are expected to thoroughly read all the proposals the week of November 6th.

Class 11 (November 13)

**Board of Directors Meeting**

Class 12 (November 20)

**Board of Directors Meeting**

The class will confirm the grant awards and ensure that award letters are sent to recipients. We will also make sure that other outstanding programmatic tasks are completed before the Thanksgiving holiday.

Class 13 (November 27)

**Reflection Class & Final Preparation for Awards Ceremony**

We will discuss what we learned during the semester and how we might participate in philanthropy moving forward. We must also make sure that all awards ceremony plans are completed.

Class 14 (December 4)

**Awards Ceremony**

We will aim to host our awards ceremony on campus the evening of December 4th at 6pm. Please note that this time and date may change due to availability of university leadership. I kindly ask that you do your best to keep your calendar open this week in the event that we need to hold our ceremony on a different date.

Note: Research papers are due on December 10th at 11:59pm.