

# Theories of Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Nonprofit Sector

Political Science 236/EthicSoc 232T

Spring 2011-12

M, W 11-12:30 5 units

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ENROLL IN 236S FOR WIM, 236 FOR NON WIM.

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## Course Description:

The theory and structure of civil society, with special attention to philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. A special feature of the course this year will be an opportunity for the class to apply theoretical knowledge to a real world decision-making process by determining how to allocate up to \$100,000 in grant funds to nonprofit organizations that they will select. Committees of the class will develop funding priorities and award grant funds. In the process of choosing recipients, the class will reflect on several key questions: What criteria should be used to select grant recipients? How do non-governmental organizations operate domestically and globally? How should charitable dollars be distributed and what role do nonprofit organizations and philanthropic dollars play in a modern democracy? What is the basis of private action for the public good?

This course will provide an in-depth understanding of the nonprofit sector, including its historical development, structural elements, and modern operation as a driver of social change. By the end of the course, students will have knowledge of the history and structure of civil society, comprehension of the modern nonprofit sector and its relationship to government and for-profit arenas, as well as key challenges facing nonprofit organizations today both nationally and globally. Ultimately, they will apply this knowledge to a practical exercise in philanthropic grantmaking. Readings in political philosophy, history of ideas, civil society studies, public policy, and philanthropic strategy.

**Reading Assignments:**

A Course Reader will be available for purchase <sup>UR</sup> ~~in class or at Copy America~~, located on California Avenue in Palo Alto. Other required texts are available at the Stanford Bookstore:

Julie Salamon, *Rambam's Ladder: A Meditation on Generosity and Why It Is Necessary to Give* (Workman Publishing, 2003)

George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara* (Penguin Classics, 2000).

Bruce R. Sievers, *Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Fate of the Commons* (University Press of New England, 2010)

**Format and Grading:**

The course will feature a mixed lecture and seminar format, allowing for maximum student interaction and probing of the ideas contained in the readings and presented by the instructors.

**Course Requirements and Assignments:**

Class participation [25% of grade]

Class participation can take a variety of forms, ranging from the obvious (e.g., talking intelligently in class) to the less obvious (e.g., volunteering to co-teach). Also required will be active participation in one section each week at which students will develop priorities for grantmaking and, at the end of the term, award a grant to a chosen nonprofit organization. At a minimum, it is crucial that you come to class on time, having done the reading, and prepared to talk and engage your fellow classmates. Because the classes will facilitate discussion every week, adequate preparation, willingness to contribute, and capacity for empathetic listening are all required. A portion of your grade will be based on your participation.

Writing [75% of grade]

The writing requirements of the course differ for undergraduates and graduate students. Undergraduates with significant background in political theory (and especially those currently writing a senior thesis in political theory) may choose to fulfill the graduate student writing requirement, but only with permission of the instructor.

The class may also be used to fulfill the Writing in the Major (WIM) requirement. Those wishing to fulfill the WIM requirement should enroll in PoliSci 132S.

Undergraduate writing requirement

For undergraduates, each student is expected to complete three papers, two 2-3 pagers and a larger paper of 12-15 pages. The two short papers (one due April 30 and one due May 21) will have assigned questions and ask you to explicate and interpret some particularly important concept or reading passage. The longer paper is a seminar paper that applies your thinking about themes in the class to an argument for supporting a selected nonprofit organization. For those choosing the WIM requirement, the first draft

the long paper will be due on May 25 and in final form on June 4. For all others, the long paper will be due on June 4.

Graduate student writing requirement

One long seminar paper (20-25 pages) required, on a topic of your own choosing. The guidelines are purposefully minimal so as to allow you to write on a topic relevant to your own scholarly interests. It is expected only that the paper will incorporate perspectives from theoretical readings we have addressed in the course.

*Both undergraduates and graduate students are expected to submit paper proposals for the long paper. For both undergraduates and graduate students, please note that late assignments will only be accepted if prior arrangements have been made with the instructors. There will be no exceptions to this policy, barring absolute emergencies. Late assignments will be penalized one grade per day.*

**Grading**

Participation: [25%] On time attendance, adequate preparation, perceptive oral participation, and empathetic listening. Contributions to a blog discussion.

Assignment 1 [15%]                      Short essay 1

Assignment 2: [15%] Short essay 2

Assignment 3: [45%] Long Essay

**A Note about Class and Section Participation**

This course explores the ideal of civil society and the role of philanthropy and nonprofits in contemporary life. Our goal is to facilitate your own explorations using the historical, conceptual, and legal tools we shall discuss in class. Successful exploration on your own will require dialogue and discussion. In order to be prepared for discussion, it is essential that you come to each class session having read intelligently the materials assigned and having given some thought as to how the readings relate to the course in general.

You should come to class with considered views about (1) what the main claims offered in the texts or cases are; (2) the arguments offered in favor of these claims; (3) whether these are good or plausible arguments; (4) whether the claim is, all things considered, strong or plausible; (5) what alternatives to the claims and arguments exist; and (6) whether some alternative is superior to the claim under discussion.

Objections are important. But keep in mind that raising puzzles and problems (even interesting puzzles and problems) for a view is *easy*: we can be certain in advance that every view will face some problems. But we are trying to decide what to think about important issues of enormous consequence, not playing a game or showing off debater's skills. The really hard part is to figure out what to think -- what we should think -- once we understand the range of theoretical options and competing arguments.

**Students with documented disabilities**

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an *Accommodation Letter* for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, 723-1067 TTY).

## Course Schedule

Monday, April 2

Introduction to the class

No required readings for the first session

### **I. WHY PHILANTHROPY?**

What is the rationale for giving to society? How do personal philosophies intersect with ideas about improving society? What are your initial instincts about giving to particular causes or organizations?

Wednesday, April 4

Perspectives on Philanthropy

Reading

Salamon, *Rambam's Ladder*

Preston, "Steve Jobs Found Much to Dislike About Philanthropy"

<https://philanthropy.com/blogs/the-giveaway/steve-jobs-found-much-to-dislike-about-philanthropy/909>

Soros, "My Philanthropy" [www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jun/23/my-philanthropy](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jun/23/my-philanthropy)

Zunz "Philanthropy by the Rest of Us"

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/23/opinion/christmas-seals-and-mass-philanthropy.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/23/opinion/christmas-seals-and-mass-philanthropy.html?_r=1)

**Guest Speaker: Steve Toben, President, Flora Family Foundation**

### **II. HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND PHILANTHROPY**

What are the defining elements of civil society? Both contemporary and historical theorists have posited a wide range of features defining what we know today as civil society--the world comprising nonprofit organizations, the "third" or "voluntary" sector, and nongovernmental organizations. Following this development through a range of traditions and perspectives, we can begin to discern several key normative and institutional elements that constitute civil society – a coherent framework of a public sphere operating between the individual and the state. In this framework, what should be the purpose of philanthropy?

Monday, April 9

What is civil society? Nonprofits, for-profits, and the state

Reading

Sievers, *Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Fate of the Commons*

Introduction and Chs. 1-3, (pp. xiii-xvii and 1-44)

**Guest Speaker: Perla Ni, CEO, GreatNonprofits**

Wednesday, April 11

## Historical Development of Civil Society in the West

## Reading

Sievers, *Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Fate of the Commons*, Ch. 4, 5 (pp. 45-83)  
 “The Statute of Charitable Uses” **(Reader)**

Frumkin, "Introduction" (from *Strategic Giving: The Art and Science of Philanthropy*)  
**(Reader)**

Monday, April 16

## Emergence of Civil Society and Philanthropy in the United States

## Reading

Sievers, *Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Fate of the Commons*, Ch. 6, pp. 84-106

Alexis de Tocqueville, “Political Associations in the United States” **(Reader)**

Orosz, Ch. 2, Ch. 4, Ch. 15 from *The Insider's Guide to Grantmaking* **(Reader)**

Wednesday, April 18

## Legal Foundation for Civil Society in American Law

## Reading

Mark McGarvie, “The *Dartmouth College Case* and the Legal Design of Civil Society”  
**(Reader)**

Evelyn Brody, “The Legal Framework for Nonprofit Organizations” **(Reader)**

Monday, April 23

## Emergence of the Private Foundation in the United States

A key component of the nonprofit sector is the foundation community. We will examine how the unprecedented growth of wealth at the turn of the 20th century led to the emergence of a new form of philanthropy: the huge, general purpose, private foundation. This week we will examine the aspirations and the challenges represented by these new players in civil society.

**Guest Speaker: Lucy Bernholz, Visiting Practitioner, Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society**

## Reading

Andrew Carnegie, “The Gospel of Wealth” **(Reader)**

Kenneth Prewitt, “Foundations” **(Reader)**

Wednesday, April 25

## Melinda and William Gates Foundation case study

## Reading

Bill Gates, "Annual Report of the Gates Foundation" (to be distributed before class)  
Gates Foundation case study (**Reader**)

**\*\*\*Questions distributed for Short Paper #1\*\*\***

Peter Singer, "What Should a Billionaire Give?"

<http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/20061217.htm>

David Rieff, "The Gates Foundation's Delusional Techno-Messianism"

<http://www.tnr.com/blog/foreign-policy/78784/the-gates-foundations-delusional-foreign-aid>

Joel Orosz, (**Reader**)

Monday, April 30

Size and scope of the nonprofit sector

**\*\*\*Short Paper #1 due Monday, April 30 at the beginning of class\*\*\***

Reading

Elizabeth Boris and Eugene Steuerle, "Scope and Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector" (**Reader**).

John Havens, Mary O'Herlihy and Paul Schervish, "Charitable Giving: How Much, By Whom, to What, and How?" (**Reader**)

Reich, Sutton, Dorn, "Anything Goes: Approval of Nonprofit Status by the IRS"

<http://www.stanford.edu/~sdsachs/AnythingGoesPACS1109.pdf>

### **Part III: THEORIES OF THE SECTOR**

Contemporary theorists have analyzed the nonprofit sector through the disciplinary perspectives of economics and political science. From the view of economists, the nonprofit sector fills gaps where the market does not perform well. From the perspective of political science, nonprofits compensate for failures in government performance or supplements what government can do. This section will view the modern nonprofit sector functionally through a range of disciplinary perspectives.

Wednesday, May 2

Economic Theories of the Nonprofit Sector

Reading

Richard Steinberg, "Economic Theories of the Nonprofit Sector" (**Reader**)

Monday, May 7

Political Theories of the Nonprofit Sector

**\*\*\*Paragraph summary proposal for long paper due Monday, May 7\*\*\***

Reading

Elisabeth Clemens, "The Constitution of Citizens: Political Theories of Nonprofit Organizations" (**Reader**)

James Douglas, "Political Theories of Nonprofit Organizations" (**Reader**)

Wednesday, May 9

Charity versus Justice

Reading

Will Kymlicka, "Altruism in Philosophical and Ethical Traditions: Two Views" from  
*Between State and Market* (McGill-Queens University Press 2001) (**Reader**)

Rob Reich, "A Failure of Philanthropy" *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2005

Monday, May 14

Pluralism and Civil Society

Reading

Michael Walzer, "Socialism and the Gift Relationship," *Dissent*, Fall 1982 (**Reader**)

George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara* (Bantam Classics, 1992).

Wednesday, May 16

Case Study: Civil Society Organizations and Nondiscrimination

**\*\*\* Short Paper #2 questions to be distributed, Wednesday, May 16\*\*\***

Reading

*Boy Scouts of America et al. v. Dale*, 530 U.S. 640 (2000) (**Reader**)

*Bob Jones University v. United States*, 461 U.S. 574 (1983) (**Reader**)

#### **PART IV: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND CASES**

Monday, May 21

Civil Society, Nonprofits, and Social Capital

**\*\*\*Short Paper #2 due Monday, May 21 at the beginning of class\*\*\***

Reading

Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone"

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/detoc/assoc/bowling.html> E.J. Dionne, Jr. "Service, Citizenship, and the New Generation" (**Reader**)

Wednesday, May 23

New Forms of Philanthropy

Reading

Christine Letts, "Virtuous Capital," *Harvard Business Review* (Vol. 72, No. 2, 1997)  
(**Reader**)



Sievers, "If Pigs Had Wings: The Appeals and Limits of Venture Philanthropy"  
(Reader)

**\*\*\*WIM Long Paper draft due Friday, May 25\*\*\***

Monday, May 28

No class, Memorial Day

Wednesday, May 30

Philanthropy and Public Policy

What public policy framework should structure the creation and operation of philanthropy and nonprofit organizations?

Reading

Rob Reich, "Toward a Political Theory of Philanthropy" (Reader)

John Simon, Harvey Dale, and Laura Chisholm, "Federal Tax Treatment of Charitable Organizations" (Reader)

## **PART V. GRANT AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

Monday, June 4

Four teams present conclusions on grant awards, including background analysis, selection criteria, selection process, and anticipated results

Class critique and discussion drawing upon class themes

**\*\*\*Final Seminar and WIM papers due at beginning of class, Monday, June 4\*\*\***

Wednesday, June 6

Concluding Thoughts