

Theories of Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Nonprofit Sector

Political Science 236/EthicSoc 232T

Spring 2014

M, W 11-12:30 5 units

Room 100-101K

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 between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in actual grant funds to nonprofit organizations. Committees of the class will develop funding priorities and award grants. In the process of choosing recipients, the class will reflect on several key questions: What is the basis of private action for the public good? 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 criteria should be used to select grant recipients?

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, the modern nonprofit sector and its relationship to government and for-profit arenas, and key challenges facing nonprofit organizations today 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 at University Readers. The first third is available immediately on-line when purchased; the hard copy will be sent to you. 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 grants to chosen nonprofit organizations. 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 236S.

Undergraduate writing requirement

For undergraduates, each student is expected to complete three papers, two 4 pagers and a larger paper of 12-15 pages. The two short papers (one due April 29 and one due May 20) will have assigned questions and ask you to explicate and interpret some particularly important concepts or reading passages. The longer paper is a seminar paper that applies your thinking about themes in the class to your reflection on the process of supporting the selected nonprofit organizations. For those choosing the WIM requirement, the first draft

the long paper will be due on May 23 and in final form on June 2. For all others, the long paper will be due on June 2.

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. Possible 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 serious consequence, not 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, March 31

Introduction to the class--theory and practice

Team self-selection among 3 to 4 topics:

Education

Policy/Advocacy

Environment

(International Development)

Sections: Convene teams; determine meeting days and times; discuss general granting objectives

No required readings for the first session

I. CIVIL SOCIETY AND PHILANTHROPY

The nature of civil society. 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 2

Approaches to 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

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 7

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

Guest Speaker: Perla Ni, CEO, GreatNonprofits

Reading: Sievers, *Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Fate of the Commons*, Introduction and Chs. 1-3, (pp. xiii-xvii and 1-44)

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

Peter Singer, "What Should a Billionaire Give?"
<http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/20061217.htm>

Sections: Develop list of nonprofit organizations for consideration

Discuss philanthropic strategy; development of a list of potential nonprofit applicants

Wednesday, April 9

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)
 David Hammack, "Established Churches" and "The Statute of Charitable Uses" **(Reader)**

Monday, April 14

Emergence of Civil Society and Philanthropy in the United States

Guest Speaker: Steve Toben, President, Flora Family Foundation

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

Sections: Prioritize potential applicant organizations and send RFP to top 12

Wednesday, April 16

Legal Foundation for Civil Society in modern 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)**

III. THE ROLE OF FOUNDATIONS

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.

Monday, April 21

Emergence of the Private Foundation in the United States

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

Reading:

Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth" (**Reader**)

Kenneth Prewitt, "Foundations" (**Reader**)

Sections: Review general course material; discuss approaches to decision-making

Wednesday, April 23

Philanthropy and Democracy: Melinda and William Gates Foundation case study

Reading:

Megan Tompkins, Gates Foundation case study (**Reader**)

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

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

Beryl Radin, "The Performance Mindset" from *Challenging the Performance Movement: Accountability, Complexity, and Democratic Values* (**Reader**)

Joel Orosz, "Epilogue" (**Reader**)

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

Monday, April 28

Size and scope of the nonprofit sector

*****Short Paper #1 due Monday, April 28 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>

Sections: Review proposals and other materials from candidate organizations, conduct interviews, and winnow to 3 final candidates

IV: 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, April 30

Economic Theories of the Nonprofit Sector

Reading:

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

Monday, May 5

Political Theories of the Nonprofit Sector

*****Paragraph summary proposal for long paper due Monday, May 5*****

Reading:

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

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

Sections: Review proposals and other materials from candidate organizations, conduct site visits, and winnow to 3 final candidates

Wednesday, May 7

Charity versus Justice

Guest speaker: (Rob Reich)

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 12

Pluralism and Civil Society

Reading:

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

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

Sections: Deliberation and selection of final 1-3 grant awardees

Wednesday, May 14

Case Studies: Civil Society Organizations and Nondiscrimination

***** Short Paper #2 questions to be distributed, Wednesday, May 15*****

Reading:

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

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

V: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND CASES

Monday, May 19

Civil Society, Nonprofits, and Social Capital

Guest Speaker: Geoffrey Raynor, One Upon a Time Foundation

*****Short Paper #2 due Monday, May 19 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**)"

Sections: Final grant decisions and preparation of class presentations

Wednesday, May 21

New Forms of Philanthropy

Reading:

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

(on-line)

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

(Reader)

*****WIM Long Paper draft due Friday, May 23*****

Monday, May 26

No class, Memorial Day

Sections: Preparation of presentations and defense of grant allocations

Wednesday, May 28

Philanthropy and Public Policy

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

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

Reading:

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

VI: GRANT AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Monday, June 2

Second two teams present their results to class; class deliberation on final allocations

Class critique and discussion drawing upon class themes

*****Final Seminar and WIM papers due at beginning of class, Monday, June 2*****

Wednesday, June 4

Concluding Thoughts

Presentation of checks to grant awardees