

**Syllabus for**  
**Sociology 3920 – Philanthropy Lab**  
Spring 2023  
Meeting time: Thurs. 2:30 – 5:20 pm  
Room: Seigle 106

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## Course Overview and Learning Objectives

How do societies take action to address social issues of moral concern? If we are interested in addressing social problems, what avenues do we engage in to make social change? If our current institutions are not effectively addressing social issues (either locally or more broadly), how might we productively engage the problem? Many moral and religious frameworks engage questions of equity and support some form of benevolence and charity. But societies have different ways of thinking about the appropriate actors for addressing social problems. In this class, we will consider the roles of philanthropy and nonprofit organizations. This course investigates the nature of philanthropy and nonprofit organizations and their influence on civil society. We will consider different sociological approaches to charitable giving and apply them to substantive topics, such as competing philosophies of giving and the relationship between philanthropic and state-sponsored programs. We will also address issues of social responsibility that arise when billionaires and corporate actors engage in philanthropic work.

This course is interactive. Over the semester, students will use the theory and skills they are learning to research, solicit funding proposals from, critically review, and select a nonprofit or group of nonprofits to fund. Through the generous support of the Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement and the Department of Sociology, the class will have up to \$40,000 to grant to one or more nonprofit (501c3) organizations. In addition, students will be expected to “visit” (e.g., conduct phone calls and learn more about different organizations) nonprofits outside class time.

Throughout the course, assignments will build on each other to lead to the final project. While giving away money may appear straightforward, doing it well is not. Being strategic about how one gives and to whom is critical. However, those who engage in philanthropy sit in a privileged position, and the power dynamics between philanthropist (institutional or individual) and grantee creates challenges. Core to this class is the recognition that as “difficult” as it is to give money away, it is far more difficult for the nonprofit organizations that are on the ground serving people and communities and raising the funds that allow them to do so. As we move through the course, students will actively research many of the topics examined. Individual and group projects will allow students to apply what we learn from the readings and become the foundation for interesting seminar discussions.

### Course Objectives:

After this course, students will be able to:

- (a) recognize key sociological approaches to studying nonprofits and philanthropy as a social activity.
- (b) use sociological concepts and theories to analyze the key issues nonprofits and donors face.
- (c) apply sociological theory to think about the role of philanthropy in society.
- (d) analyze the roles, relationships, and tensions between different actors in the philanthropic process.
- (e) examine nonprofits’ financial health, transparency, and efficiency in making donation decisions.
- (f) evaluate the short and long-term impact of a donation on a nonprofit organization.
- (g) develop a vision for and see themselves as future philanthropists.

Please be flexible and patient. We will do our best to work with each of you should difficulties arise. Be aware that we might change these plans as we learn what works and works less well.

- If something isn't working, notify us and be patient, and we will see what we can do!
- We will keep this document up to date if anything changes (which is why we are sending it to you as a Dropbox link instead of as a .doc)

Keep in contact with us. If you are having issues, please reach out. Let us know if you get sick and need to check out for a bit or if you have any other concerns or ideas on making this work better. If you have a sick family member that is impeding your ability to keep up.

Let's keep this fun. Please feel free to engage with us in a relatively informal way. We all need a bit of levity as we all stay in relative isolation with a dire and uncertain situation happening around us.

Don't worry; we will work with you. We vow to make sure that the assignments and assessments are reasonable. We will do whatever we can to ensure you don't fall behind.

## Readings

**All readings are available on Canvas.**

Reading is a crucial component of this class. You are expected to complete all readings by the date they are assigned and be prepared to participate in discussions, raise additional questions, and answer questions about the readings in class. The style of reading materials is varied. Some are journalistic accounts of particular people and places, while others are more analytical or abstract scholarly materials. In either case, absorbing the readings and considering their implications will require time and investment.

It would be best if you took notes on the readings—not by trying to jot down every detail but rather by doing two key things:

1. As you read, write a few summary statements at the end of major sections (or at the end of the reading for shorter pieces). For example, if you have just read a long passage and are struggling to write a 1-2 sentence summary, that is a sign that you should go back and re-read that section.
2. Once you've finished the readings for the day, write down 1-2 questions or comments that you'd like to raise in class. In addition to our regular discussions, I will occasionally ask what other questions/comments you want to raise.

## Interacting with Us and Classmates

We value student interaction in class and know that many (but not all) students also value these interactions. Therefore, we strongly encourage people to participate. In addition, it is important that you all come to class prepared to engage with course material and ideas. Finally, we recognize that scheduling group projects can be challenging. Therefore, we will use some class time for group meetings.

**Respect:** The readings in this course will show you that there are many ways to interpret the topics we will discuss. Because of that, we hope that we will be able to have fruitful debates that will challenge all of us to compare different viewpoints. Please remember that our goal should be to debate ideas, not each other as individuals.

## Office Hours, Contacting Us

Office hours are TBD. We will schedule office hours during times that are as convenient as possible. You can stop by our offices during these hours, and we will also reply quickly to emails. Office meetings can be scheduled via Calendly ([Levin](#); [Rigby](#)).

We welcome all questions, comments, and suggestions on how to improve the class.

- Feel free to email your suggestions or come to us during office hours.

## Assessments

**Reflection Journals.** Two 200 – 500-word reflections on readings, lectures, and class discussions OR two 5 – 8-minute recorded reflections. The reflections should focus on the course material and your values and ideas about philanthropy. Your first journal/recording will be due on **January 26<sup>th</sup>**. This reflection should answer questions such as, "what is my experience with philanthropy, "charity", giving, and volunteering up to now?" and "what are some values I have related to supporting people, animals, or the planet?"

The second journal entry is due on April 1, allowing you time to reflect on how your views or values are impacted by the readings, course discussions, research, guests, or site visits. What surprises me about this? What do I agree with and why? What do I disagree with and why? Present analytic thinking with a touch of personal reaction to the course material. The reflection is submitted via assignments on Canvas. Your reflection journal is worth 10% of your final grade.

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**Understanding the Problem:** Identify two scholarly, evidence-based articles that analyze evidence of the social need that you propose to address with funding (e.g., articles that use data to establish the scope of the problem, analyze the causes of the problem, or study interventions designed to address the problem). Submit two to three paragraphs on each article outlining why it was selected and what information in the report will be important as you consider the social problem being addressed. These articles and your discussions of them are worth 10% of your final grade and are due on **February 2<sup>nd</sup>**.

**Needs Assessment** (Group Assignment): Groups submit one 1250–2000-word paper that contains the primary elements of a needs assessment: understanding of the problem, data to support the need, description of who else is providing services, and external trends that are creating demand. Papers are due **February 16<sup>th</sup>**; Groups will also deliver a 10 – 15 minute in-class group presentation of the needs assessment on **February 16<sup>th</sup>**. The Needs Assessment paper is worth 15% of your final grade. The group presentation is worth 5% of your final grade. Total 20% of the grade.

**List of Potential Grantees:** Five nonprofit organizations in the St. Louis area that address the identified need. The list must include the name, mission, website, CEO/EDs name, budget, description of the program(s) that address the need, and a paragraph outlining the reasons for including this organization. Lists are due March 9th and are worth 10% of your course grade.

**Request for Proposal** (Group Assignment): Each group must draft and submit the letter and document that groups will send to nonprofits to ask them to submit funding proposals. This document is due Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, and is worth 5% of your course grade.

**Site visit reports** One-page description for each site "visit," including a description of the organization, analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses, what initial perceptions you had that were confirmed, and initial perceptions that were challenged. After discussion with faculty, students will use the class on March 30th to conduct the site visits in person or remotely. Reports are due April 6<sup>th</sup> and are worth 5% of your course grade.

**Group Presentation of Recommended Organization for Funding:** Groups will deliver a 15-minute in-class presentation on the organization they recommend to the class with the reasoning for the recommendation. The presentation should include a summary of the need, including relevant data, a description of the organization and its

programs, a comparison to other organizations considered a report on the site visit, and the criteria used for selection. These presentations will be given on April 27<sup>th</sup> and are worth 10% of your grade.

**Final Group Report:** Groups will submit a written document that outlines the social problem/need they are trying to address, the approach they selected to address it, the organization(s) they invited to apply and the reasons for choosing those organizations, a comparison of organizations based on site visits and organization's grant proposal, and reasons for selecting the organization they recommended for funding. This document is due Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup> and is worth 15% of your course grade.

**Class Participation:** including classroom discussion, discussion questions, and role in planning the award ceremony on the last day of class. Each student will be asked to submit a short assessment of his/her/their contributions to group assignments. Participation is worth 10% of your course grade.

### **Philanthropy Lab Assignments:**

The following assignments will provide the current and future class with additional money to grant to local organizations and provide opportunities for students to become involved in philanthropic efforts. Completion of all the assignments is 5% of your course grade.

1. Read and Sign the Grant letters – in a class by Week 2
2. Complete the pre and post surveys
3. Write and Post Giving Goal

**Late Work:** Assignments should be submitted on Canvas on their due dates. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from handing in your work on time, please email us in advance. Otherwise, you will lose a third of a letter grade per day that your homework is late (i.e., A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, etc.).

### **Inclusive Learning Environment:**

The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere where all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their ideas and those of others. Every participant is responsible for fostering a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. However, instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. We encourage you to speak with me about any suggestions or concerns about this course's inclusivity. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants—including faculty, staff, and students—who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online Bias Report and Support System ([brss.wustl.edu](https://brss.wustl.edu)).

### **Academic Integrity:**

Effective learning, teaching, and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work submitted for academic credit or conducted in the broader arena of scholarly research. Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all community members to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged, and work presented as original must be, in fact, original. Therefore, faculty, students, and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at Washington University in St. Louis.

Additional details on the university-wide Undergraduate Academic Integrity policy can be found [here](#). I recommend using the [American Sociological Association's guide for citations](#) in your written work.

## COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols:

While we value your presence and engagement in this class, we all must follow all public health guidelines established to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within our community. We are in an ongoing public health crisis. We will work with you if illness impacts your ability to meet the requirements of this course. **If you feel any symptoms detailed in the COVID screening process, even if they are mild, do not come to class until you receive clearance from campus health. Contact us as soon as possible to inform us that you must miss class. And keep us updated so that we can work with you to ensure you are successful in this course.** The complete set of University protocols can be found at <https://covid19.wustl.edu/health-safety> This includes:

- **Self-screening:** All Danforth Campus students, faculty and staff are encouraged to complete and pass a daily health self-screening prior coming to campus or leaving their residence hall room each day through the end of the spring semester. **Stay home if you don't feel well.** Contact the COVID Call Center at 314-362-5056 for guidance and to arrange for testing as needed. In addition to the symptoms listed in the screening tool, everyone also should pay attention to milder symptoms such as a new headache or a stuffy nose. These can also be signs of COVID-19. Contact the COVID Call Center to report even mild symptoms.
- **Masking:** Masking is *strongly recommended* in all Danforth Campus spaces. There is no limit on gathering sizes. WashU is a community that cares for each other. Please keep the following in mind:
  - Don't question someone or make assumptions about them because of their choice to wear or not wear a mask. Some may choose to wear a mask, say no to a social engagement, or otherwise exercise more caution than others.
  - If a classmate or colleague asks you to wear a mask, please consider doing so to be supportive, even if the rules don't require it. Remember that they may be at a higher risk, caring for others at a higher risk, or feeling less comfortable in a mask-optional environment.

## Student Accommodations:

At Washington University, we strive to make the academic experience accessible and inclusive. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact Disability Resources at 314.935.5970, [disabilityresources@wustl.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@wustl.edu), or visit our website for information about requesting academic accommodations. See: <https://students.wustl.edu/disability-resources/>

## Mental Health Services:

Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties which can affect a student's academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide. See: <https://students.wustl.edu/mental-health-services/>. Additionally, see the mental health services offered through the RSVP Center.

## Center for Diversity and Inclusion:

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI): The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) supports and advocates for undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students from underrepresented and/or marginalized populations, collaborates with campus and community partners, and promotes dialogue and social change to cultivate and foster a

supportive campus climate for students of all backgrounds, cultures, and identities. See: <https://diversityinclusion.wustl.edu>

## Writing Center:

The Writing Center, located in Olin Library, offers free one-on-one writing tutorials to WashU students, as well as workshops designed to help students become better writers. The Writing Center staff can assist you in improving your writing by providing feedback on the strength of an argument, clarity, and organization. Contact them at 935-4981 or [writing@wustl.edu](mailto:writing@wustl.edu). [Visit them here.](#)

## Gephardt Institute:

State and local elections can have direct and immediate impacts on our communities and will be happening here in St. Louis and around the country this year. Make sure you stay current on upcoming elections at all levels by registering as a voter, requesting an absentee ballot, or getting election day reminders. You can do all this for any of the 50 states and Washington D.C. [here](#). If you are ineligible to vote, you can still participate by referring your friends who are eligible to the TurboVote link to register and by engaging your peers in local issues. If you have any questions about the voting process [visit this link](#).

## Grades:

Note that the weighting of components of your final course grade have changed.

Participation (individual)	10%
Phil. Lab Requirements (individual)	5%
Reflection Journal (individual)	10%
Understanding the Problem (individual)	10%
Needs Assessment (group)	20%
Grantee List (group)	10%
Request for Proposal (group)	5%
Site Visit Report (group)	5%
Funding Presentation (group)	10%
<u>Final Report (group)</u>	<u>15%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Summary of Important Dates

Reflection Journal – Starting – Thursday 1/26  
 Understanding the Problem – Thursday, 2/2  
 Group Needs Assessment – Thursday, 2/16  
 Request for Proposal – Thursday, 3/2  
 List of Grantees – Thursday, 3/9  
 Site Visit Report – Thursday, 4/6  
 Group Funding Presentation – Thursday, 4/27  
 Final Group Report – Thursday, 5/4  
 Funder/Grantee Celebration – Thursday, May 4

Sociology 3920 -- Class Schedule and Due Dates*				
Date		Class topic	Reading due <i>before</i> class	Special notes

January Class 1	19 Thurs	Introductions & Review, of course, / Get Started	<p style="text-align: center;">syllabus</p> 1) “With Strings Attached;” 2) CAF Global Generosity Report; 3) <a href="#">Holiday Charitable Giving can Raise Thorny Issues;</a> 4) <a href="#">Charities funded by FTX's Sam Bankman</a>	Complete Pre-survey
Class 2	26 Thurs	Philosophies of Giving / Historic Context	1) “The Gospel of Wealth;” (pp. 1-15) 2) “But How is the World Changed?” 3) “Four traditions of philanthropy.”  <b>Watch</b> <a href="#">“The Why and How of Effective Altruism”</a>  <b>Listen</b> <b>This American Life: act one <a href="#">“Money for nothing and your cows for free.”</a></b>	Reflection Journal Entry Due  Read and Sign the grant letter.
February Class 3	2 Thurs	Role of NPOs	1) Nonprofit Management, Michael J. Worth; 2021, chapter 2, 19-47.  2) Nonprofit Starvation Cycle  <b>Watch</b> <a href="#">Unlocking the potential of nonprofits: A conversation with Dan Pallotta   LIVE STREAM - YouTube (Minutes 13-27 in particular)</a>	Scholarly Articles and Discussion Due  Groups Form
Class 4	9 Thurs	Motives for Giving	<b>Guest: Ryan Ripple – Gates Foundation</b>  <b>Read</b> 1) “Donated Money.” 2) “What Should a Billionaire Give;.” 3) <a href="#">MacKenzie Scott’s Unrestricted Gifts Transform the Organizations That Receive Them. Study Finds   Barron's (barrons.com)</a> 4) “Major Donors, Major Motives;.” 5) <i>Sex Cells</i> Ch. 4 “Being a Paid Donor.”	
Class 5	16 Thurs	Evaluation And Impact	1) <i>Nonprofit Management, Michael J. Worth, Chapter 6, pp. 159-182;</i> 2) The Many Faces of Nonprofit Accountability;.” 3) <a href="#">How did a Billionaire in Seattle Gain so Much Power over Global Public Health?;</a> .” 4) “The Paucity of Useful Information;.” 5) “In the Public Benefit.” 6) “They are all Organizations;.” 7) Familiarize yourself with <a href="#">IRS form 990</a>	Needs assessment Paper and Presentation Due

<b>Class 6</b>	<b>23 Thurs</b>	<b>Alternative Revenue and Funding models</b>	1) <i>Nonprofit Management</i> , Michael J. Worth, Chapter 6, pp. 159-182	
<b>March Class 7</b>	<b>2 Thurs</b>	<b>Ethics and Accountability</b>	1) "Philanthropic Choice and Donor Intent;" 2) "The Transience of American Wealth;" 3) <a href="#">Elon Musk and Troll Philanthropy</a> 4) " <a href="#">A Failure of Philanthropy</a> ;" 5) " <a href="#">Tackling Today's Poverty with Yesterday's Philanthropy</a> ;"	<b>RFP Due</b>
<b>Class 8</b>	<b>9 Thurs</b>	<b>Professional and Volunteers Roles</b>	This class may be held off-campus. Faculty will ensure that all students have transportation to and from campus.  <b><u>Panelists</u></b> TBA	<b>List of Potential Grantees Due</b>
	<b>13-17</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS</b>		
<b>Class 9</b>	<b>23 Thurs</b>	<b>Race, Ethnicity, and Philanthropy</b>	<b>Walking Tour</b> <u>Read</u> 1) Centering Equity in Collective impact -- Winter-2022-Feature-Kania-Collective-Impact; 2) "The Price of Civil Rights;" 3) "Training the Apostles of Liberal Culture;" 4) " <a href="#">Can Government Play Moneyball?</a> " <u>Watch</u> <a href="#">Edgar Villanueva   Decolonizing Wealth   SkollWF 2019 - YouTube</a> <u>Listen</u> <a href="#">Diversity and Philanthropy at African American Museums</a>	<b>Complete pre/post surveys</b>
<b>Class 10</b>	<b>30 Thurs</b>	<i>Site Visits</i>	<b>Groups clear their plans with Faculty</b>	<b>Students out on Site Visits</b>
<b>April Class 11</b>	<b>6 Thurs</b>	<b>Nonprofits, Advocacy, and Data</b>		<b>Site Visit Reports Applications due back</b>

			<a href="#">Weaponized data: How the obsession with data has been hurting marginalized communities – Nonprofit AF</a> “Does Government Funding Suppress Political Advocacy?” “ <a href="#">The Growth of Climate Change Misinformation</a> ”	
<b>Class 12</b>	<b>13 Thurs</b>	<b>Decision Making</b>	“Advocacy, Civic Engagement, and Social Change”	
<b>Class 13</b>	<b>20 Thurs</b>	<b>Future of Giving</b>	<u><b>Read</b></u> 1) <a href="#">“Silicon Valley’s New Philanthropy</a> 2) <a href="#">“Creating Digital Civil Society;”</a> 3) <a href="#">“The Future of Giving.”</a> 4) <a href="#">Blueprint 2023</a> <a href="#">Readings\Blueprint-2023_FINAL_DIGITAL.pdf</a> 5) <a href="#">Spoiler Alert: Future Philanthropic Leadership is About More Than Just Money   Giving USA</a>  <u><b>Watch</b></u> <a href="#">“You are the future of philanthropy.”</a>	<b>Students Post Giving Goals</b>
<b>Class 14</b>	<b>27 Thurs</b>	<b>Who Will We Fund?</b>		<b>Group Presentations Due</b>
<b>May Class 15</b>	<b>4 Thurs</b>	<b>Funder/Grantee celebration!</b>	3:30 PM – 5:30 PM; Location TBD	<b>Final Project Due</b>

\*Throughout the semester, it may be necessary to make changes to the course schedule—including assignment due dates. These changes will be announced in class and with email reminders as early as possible.