Philanthropy, Advocacy & Social Change

UPADM-GP.224 - 001
Fall 2017
Mondays, 5:55-8:25pm

Instructor
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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description
With over $700 billion in assets and grantmaking exceeding $50 billion/year, private charitable foundations are a source of concentrated social and political influence in American society. Despite the fact that their giving represents only 15% of the $370+ billion given to U.S. charitable causes annually, many believe that foundations exert a disproportionately large degree of influence on the political and social development of our country due to their institutional approach to grantmaking and long-term commitment to specific issues and approaches. Through this course, students will gain an understanding of the roles and influence of philanthropy on political advocacy and social change movements in the US (with differing views on the appropriateness of this influence); the scope and diversity of the philanthropic sector; political advocacy approaches and social movements; and examples of current philanthropic involvement in advocacy and social change efforts across the political spectrum.

Course Purpose
This course provides an introduction to the influence of philanthropy on political advocacy and social change movements in the United States. It examines the scope and diversity of the philanthropic sector, tracing its and its impact on social change movements. This course will also introduce students from a range of disciplines to the complex role of different types of foundations in US society and culture; encourage them to examine further the intersections of philanthropy with policy, business, law, and society; and provoke thinking about the policy implications of foundations' influence on society.

Course Audience
This course is available to undergraduate students.

Course Instructor
Yossi Prager is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Public Service. He is also the Executive Director for North America of The AVI CHAI Foundation, a philanthropy founded by Zalman C. Bernstein. Under Mr. Prager’s leadership since 1994, AVI CHAI has invested over $450 million to benefit the field of Jewish education. Mr. Prager led the North American operation as the Foundation developed its strategic priorities, hired staff and developed philanthropic programs. With AVI CHAI spending down by 2020, Mr. Prager’s leadership shifted in recent years to building collaborations with other funders, capacity building at key grant recipients and non-profit cooperation and consolidation.
A graduate of Yeshiva College and Yale Law School, Mr. Prager practiced law at Debevoise & Plimpton in Manhattan before joining AVI CHAI.
In addition to Mr. Prager’s work at AVI CHAI, he serves on the boards of communal and public policy organizations. Mr. Prager served on The Governor’s Study Commission on New Jersey’s Nonpublic Schools, which produced recommendations for greater state support for New Jersey private and parochial schools.

Mr. Prager edited a book on Judaism and philanthropy entitled “Toward a Renewed Ethic of Jewish Philanthropy” and has been published in Philanthropy Magazine, eJewishphilanthropy.com and other publications.

**Course Objectives**

- To understand what a foundation is, how it operates and how it can maximize impact.
- To review the context of foundations and how they have evolved into the organizations they are today.
- To analyze and debate the roles and responsibilities of foundations in society.
- To investigate the effect of philanthropy on nonprofits, social movements, and political change.
- To connect readings and discussions to real-life through interactions with practitioners.
- To formulate and support an individual opinion on the subject.
- To develop critical analytical thinking and writing skills.

**Course Organization and Design**

The course is designed to provide context for understanding the role of philanthropic organizations in social change. We will move from the historical to the contemporary role of philanthropic organizations to examine in-depth the current practice and trends in grant making locally and nationally.

The course includes rigorous reading assignments, active discussions and meetings with current leaders in the field. In addition to classroom discussions, students are expected to engage with the topic through written assignments and individual investigation.

**Expectations of Students**

1. Take responsibility for your learning.

   - **Attendance.** Every student benefits from the viewpoints of other students. If you need to miss a class for unforeseen reasons you are responsible for getting all information covered in class. It is preferable to inform me of any previously scheduled conflicts no later than the first week of the course. I understand that occasionally family and health emergencies necessitate missing class, but please email me in advance of a class that you will be absent OR email immediately afterwards for follow-up. If you miss more than two class sessions, your participation grade will be affected.

   - **Participation.** Participate actively in class discussions, demonstrating what you learned from doing the readings for class. The course design takes into consideration the difference in learning styles and interests of students to ensure the best learning experience for everyone.

   - **Preparation for Class.** Read ALL assigned materials and make note of questions, inconsistencies, areas of interest, and connections you find to other readings.

   - **Complete All Course Assignments.** All assignments should be turned in on time and in compliance with all criteria listed in the assignment instructions.
• **Technology.** It is expected that you will use an active NYU e-mail account and NYU Classes.

  No cell phones or tablets will be permitted for use in class. Laptops may be used only for note taking during lecture sessions, not discussions, as they are distracting and impede the quality of discussion in the seminar.

2. **Abide by the Wagner Academic Code.** These expectations include the application of academic integrity and honesty in your class participation and assignments.

3. **Accommodations.** In order to receive accommodations for a disability, you must be registered with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities. If possible, please talk with me about any accommodations you require prior to class sessions.

4. **Questions about class.** If you have any questions/comments/concerns about readings, about anything said in class (particularly by me or a guest speaker), about the tone or content of class discussion, about your papers and their grades, or, in short, about anything having to do with this course, please talk with me. This course requires the participation of each and every student to be successful.

### Course Evaluations
As this course is evolving based on ongoing student feedback, your input will make a great deal of difference in the development of the content and structure. You will have opportunities throughout the semester to provide comments and suggestions and I will appreciate your honest and candid feedback.

### Required Readings
*This is a reading intensive course*, so please plan your reading schedule appropriately. All readings are listed under the day when we will be discussing them and should be completed before class.

We will use two books in this course and extensive readings posted to the NYU Classes site. I have placed copies of each text at the Bobst reserve desk for your use as well. The two assigned books are:


These books have been ordered for the NYU Bookstore and are also available for purchase online and at most major bookstores.

All other readings are available on the web or have been uploaded to Resources in the NYU Class site for this course.

### Recommended Readings
You are encouraged to conduct further investigation on contemporary issues in philanthropy raised in class through periodic reading of relevant publications such as *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* and *Philanthropy* magazine. You are also encouraged to explore the websites of various philanthropic organizations to remain abreast of trends in the field.
Assignments and Grading

Your grade in this course is based on five components. More details will be provided in class as we near each deadline. I am happy to discuss any of these assignments with you before they are due, please email me to schedule an appointment. Assignments will be docked one half grade (B+ becomes a B) for every day late.

1. **Class Participation – 20%** - Your participation grade is yours to lose. You will be evaluated based on your attendance, attentiveness in class, active engagement in class discussions, and demonstration of the knowledge you gained from the readings. Please feel free to ask questions about the readings or challenge them. I anticipate that the class will provide opportunity for differences of opinion to emerge.

2. **Foundation Initiatives in History – 10% - Oral Presentation** – Beginning on October 16, each class will include an oral presentation of up to ten minutes by a different student (with PowerPoint slides if you wish) of one historical case involving a foundation initiative generating social change. I will develop a schedule of presentations in advance, so you know when your turn will be. Cases can be drawn from Casebook for the Foundation: A Great American Secret (http://cspcs.sanford.duke.edu/learning-resources/publications/casebook-foundation-great-american-secret) or Korten, Change Philanthropy, (2009, Center for Community Change) and should be updated based on simple web research. Please refer back to this syllabus and the main Fleishman book to make sure that your case is not already being used in this course. (If you would like to check the case with me, feel free to send me an email.) In reporting to the class, please use the Theory of Change document I will share to explain the problem being addressed, the strategy, the outcome, the impact and any thoughts the case suggested to you about how foundations can be effective.

3. **Article Review – 15% – 3-4 pages** – Due on October 23, you will select an article published in the last 10 years that is not on our reading list and is connected to institutional philanthropy and social change, and prepare a short summary and critique of the article. Ideally, the article will be from a peer-reviewed academic journal; given the limited number of academic journals that seriously explore philanthropy, once you have learned what you can from peer-reviewed articles, you may also turn to publications such as the Stanford Social Innovation Review, The Chronicle of Philanthropy, Alliance Magazine or Philanthropy Magazine to supplement the academic article. You may submit the article citation and abstract in the weeks before each review is due (at least one week in advance) to get feedback on whether it fits the assignment requirement.

4. **One In-class Test – 15%** - The test will be on November 13. I will provide additional information in advance of the test.

5. **Response to Robert Reich article – 15% - 3-4 pages** - Due on December 4, you will review the article by Professor Rob Reich of Stanford University titled Repugnant to the Very Idea of Democracy? On the Role of Foundations (https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Repugnant-to-the-Whole-Idea-of-Democracy_On-the-Role-of-Foundations-in-Democratic-Societies.pdf) and respond to his argument with your reasoned thoughts based on your thinking, and taking into account the arguments advanced in Joel Fleishman’s book, as we near the end of the semester. You may agree or disagree with him, entirely or in part; your response will be assessed based on the clarity of your writing and the extent to which you provide appropriate evidence or arguments, which can draw on readings or case studies from this course or beyond.

6. **Research Paper – 25% - 10-15 pages** – Due on December 12, a research paper of approximately 10-15 pages
will take the place of a final examination. A 1-2 paragraph proposal should be presented to me by October 30.

For your research paper, you should pick 1) a specific foundation/philanthropist attempting to generate social change, 2) an important initiative (successful or failed) of a foundation or group of foundations that affects public policy and social change or 3) an issue within contemporary philanthropy that is generating discussion. In the case of a foundation/philanthropist or initiative, your analysis should include the strengths and weaknesses of the approach in taking a philanthropic approach to scale. If you are addressing an issue, your analysis should include the factual background and the arguments in favor and against proposals being suggested.

Among the relatively recent themes and approaches you might consider are donor experimentation with for-profit entities to carry out their philanthropic endeavors fashioned as social entrepreneurship and alliances between foundations and governments (public/private partnerships), foundations and business, or foundations and public charities or other foundations to achieve shared objectives.

It will be very important for your topic to be sufficiently narrow for you to be able to research and write within the time available and the page constraints.

It is essential that you think about possible topics as soon as possible and clear topics with me before beginning research. For your own benefit, I need to be certain that you are not taking on more than you can manage and are framing your topic in a way that makes sense in the context of this course. You should clear your topic with me no later than October 30. I will be happy to talk if you seek help in finding a topic.

Some Details
1. **Objective:** This is a research paper. While you are not expected to present original ideas, you are expected to present your ideas and information in an original way. That implies that you do more than rephrase someone else’s writing. Moreover, you are expected to:
   a. Use more than one source.
   b. Limit direct quotations. (When you do quote, use quotation marks).
   c. Use primary and/or secondary sources. (Each source should be indicated either in a footnote or endnote.)

   If you are uncertain whether you should document a source or statement, do so. Plagiarism is serious breach of trust and according to NYU regulations can result in a failing grade for the course. By contrast, overdocumentation is merely distracting for the reader.

2. **General structure:** Introduction (½ - 1 pg); Body (10 – 12 pgs); Conclusion (1 - 2 pgs)

3. **Writing:** Your paper is expected to be written in grammatically-correct English, with the words spelled correctly. Take advantage of NYU’s Writing Center.

**Submission Guidelines for Assignments**

Hard copies of all written assignment are to be submitted in class on the due date. Electronic copies should be submitted via NYU Classes prior to the start of class on the due date.
## Assignment Due Dates

Assignments are due by the start of class on the designated date. Please bring a hard copy to class and also submit electronic copies by email prior to class on the due date.

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## Weekly Topics and Readings:

### September 11: Introductions, Course Overview, and Presentation of Philanthropy Generated by 9/11

**No Readings**

Please be prepared to talk from a personal perspective:

1. Why are you taking this course?
2. Do you have any experience interacting with or studying about non-profits or philanthropies?
3. How do you perceive the role of foundations?
4. Why are you interested in learning more about the foundation sector?
5. To what non-profits do you volunteer time or give money, or would you like to volunteer time or money? What do you hope that your time and/or money will accomplish?

### September 18: Giving Circles and Introduction to the Civic Nonprofit Sector

**Guest:**
Joelle Asaro Berman, Executive Director, Amplifier

**Readings:**


**Optional:**

- Philanthropy in America - Glossary of Terms in Philanthropy [http://www.cof.org/content/glossary-philanthropic-terms](http://www.cof.org/content/glossary-philanthropic-terms) *(Useful reference for all semester)*

September 25: Introduction to Foundations and Foundation Strategy, Including Public Policy Strategy

Readings:
• “What is the Most Daring, Audacious, and Successful Grant of the Past 100 Years?” Philanthropy Magazine (Winter 2011).
• Fleishman – Chapters 3-5. pgs 91-125.
• Callahan, D. “A Foundation Gives $1 Billion in One City and Things (Mostly) Get Worse. What’s the Lesson?” Inside Philanthropy. August 18, 2017.

Optional:

October 2: How Foundations Have Impact Part I – Research, Advocacy & Litigation

Readings:
• Fleishman – Chapters 5-7, pgs 127-147
• Fleishman – pgs 206-210 (case study on Tobacco Use Program)
• Fleishman – pgs 165-170 (case study on the Transformation of American Medical Education)
• Fleishman – pgs 179-188 (case study on the Green Revolution)

Optional:

October 16: How Foundations Achieve Impact Part II – Pilot Programs & Building Human Capital

Readings:
• http://www.goldmansachs.com/citizenship/10000women/capital-for-women-entrepreneurs/index.html
October 23: How Foundations Have Impact Part III - Public Private Partnerships

Readings:

October 30: How Foundations Achieve Impact Part IV & Some Critiques of Contemporary Philanthropy

Readings:
- Masaoka, J., “The Founding Fathers Write a Grant Proposal”. [http://www.blueavocado.org/content/founding-fathers-write-grant-proposal](http://www.blueavocado.org/content/founding-fathers-write-grant-proposal)

November 6: Civil Marriage Collaborative

Guests:
Rebecca Fox, Program Officer, Wellspring Advisors and Chair, Funders for LGBTQ Issues
Evan Wolfson, Founder & President, Freedom to Marry

Readings:

November 13: When Things Don’t Go According to Plan: Case Study of Zuckerberg Gift to Newark School & Exam

Readings:
• Russakoff, D., The Prize: Who’s In Charge of America’s Schools (2015), pgs 1-77 and Appendix II.

November 20: When Things Don’t Go According to Plan Continued

Readings:

November 27: Funder Visit and Introduction to Hybridization

Guest:
Mem D. Bernstein, Chairman, The AVI CHAI Foundation

Readings:
• [To Follow]

December 4: Hybridization - Impact Investing

Guest:
Patrick Briaud, Philanthropic Advisor, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Readings:
• Omidyar Network Investees: https://www.omidyar.com/investees

December 11: Spend-Down Foundations – Good Public Policy?

Readings:
• Fleishman – Chapter 14, pgs 309-322.
  http://www.beldon.org/beldonfund_1.pdf
  http://www.philanthropyroundtable.org/topic/donor_intent/learning_from_the_sunset

December 12: Reflections: Looking Back and Looking Forward

Readings:
• The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative – FAQ. http://chanzuckerberg.com/faq/
• The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative – Mission Statement. https://www.facebook.com/chanzuckerberginitiative/about/?entry_point=page_nav_about_item&tab =page_info
• “To B or Not to B – That is the Question: What Nonprofits Need to Know About Benefit Corporations”. Reid and Riege, P.C. Nonprofit Organization Report. Fall 2012

I look forward to teaching you, learning with you, and learning from you this Fall!