Advanced Social Entrepreneurs

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New York University
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
Spring 2009

Adjunct Professor: Ellen McGrath, Ph.D.

Tuesdays: 6:45 pm – 9:30 pm, Silver 515
Office Hours: Schedule as needed

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an advanced seminar for students who have taken the introductory course on social entrepreneurship, or have focused on similar coursework in past study. Each student will be responsible for developing an original blueprint for social innovation: a creative proposal for solving a societal problem. Over the course of the term, students are expected to turn their blueprint into a reality. To help them do so, the coursework will focus on the skill building necessary to complete the projects. Students will also find support in the instructor, teaching assistant, and their fellow classmates, as well as financial support in the form of seed money, provided by a generous donor, who has “adopted the class,” for project completion. Guest lecturers who have particular experience and expertise on the weekly topic will be presenting at various points throughout the term.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

A course reader, composed of many other texts from leading academics and practitioners of social innovation and enterprise.

(These are not available in the bookstore. They will be available to students in class on the first day at a discounted rate.)
PROFESSOR BIO:

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Dr. McGrath is a clinical psychologist and Head of the Behavioral Section of the La Palestra Weight Management Program. She was the director of the Outpatient Eating Disorders Clinic at University of California Irvine Medical School for the past five years. She is currently on the Advisory Board of SHAPE Magazine and consultant to thirty-one Lindora Weight Loss Medical Clinics in Southern California. For over twenty-five years, Dr. McGrath has developed weight loss and exercise programs for executives and executive teams.

Dr. Ellen McGrath is consistently rated as one of America’s “outstanding” psychologists. Author of three books on stress and depression management, Dr. McGrath is the only Senior Media Consultant to the American Psychological Association. She was the psychology expert on ABC’s “Good Morning America” for two years, and continues to appear on ABC News, 20/20, and other national media.

Listed by three magazines as one of the top therapists in the country, Dr. McGrath was honored again in 2001 as the Outstanding Psychologist of the Year by the Psychotherapy Division of the American Psychological Association. In 1995, she was chosen “Business Woman of the Month” by Orange Coast Magazine. She was selected to be the retreat leader for the Women’s Young President Organization (YPO), a group of female company presidents and CEOs who are interested in successful coaching strategies. She was a member of the Bedford Stuyvesant YMCA for five years, and served as co-chair of the NYC Firefighters Support Network, where she offered psychological support for firefighters after 9/11.

Dr. McGrath has been a faculty member at the University of California Irvine Medical School for the past twelve years, in addition to the University of Rochester School of Medicine for the past four years. Recently, she accepted a part-time appointment at New York University. She is a past President of both the Media Psychology Division and the Division of Psychotherapy of the American Psychological Association, and an APA Council Representative.

With over twenty-five years of experience, Dr. McGrath works as a coach and consultant for a number of Fortune 500 companies and their executives, as well as family owned businesses and individual executives. She has assisted executives screen prospective key employees for hidden psychological problems, and has helped executives and executive teams to achieve their potentials. She is the President and Founder of the educational and training center, Bridge Coaching Institute. She lives in New York City and has two sons. One of her sons recently graduated from Dartmouth College and the other is in school at Occidental College.
**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**Class 1**
Jan 20

**Social entrepreneurs, innovators, and creative new strategies for social change**

Currently the field of social change is being revolutionized. There are thousands of innovators and social entrepreneurs who are inventing creative new approaches to social change that are going far beyond the traditional strategies of protests, petitions, rallies, and lobbying efforts. Today we will examine several case studies of how people are coming up with innovative projects to eliminate poverty, create environmental sustainability, cure diseases, and solve many other pressing problems. Where do these social entrepreneurs come from? How do they develop their passion for changing the world? Where do they get their motivation? Can anyone become a social entrepreneur, innovator, or visionary? We will also examine these important questions, as they relate to the students in this class. We begin to explore the students’ own strengths, talents, experiences, and interests; these questions will lead students to develop their blueprints for social transformation over the next several weeks.

Today’s introduction to the class will also include an overview of the term, expectations for the course, and an exercise for students to get to know one another.

Readings:  Sherman, Introduction and Chapters 1-2  
McGrath, Introduction

**Class 2**
Jan 27

**Visioning & Needs Assessment**

One of the most important skills for social innovators and entrepreneurs is to articulate a clear, compelling vision of a better future. Although many activists are very good at protesting and demonstrating against what they don’t like in society, it is even more important for them to put forth a positive alternative. In today’s class, we examine case studies of social entrepreneurs who have created successful visions for dealing with problems of drugs, crime, youth violence, and poverty. We will also discuss strategies for doing a needs-assessment in order to determine what types of social change ventures will be helpful and effective.

During and after today’s class period, students should begin thinking very concretely about their own visions for social change. In class, we will discuss using the 30-second elevator pitch to express your ideas for change.

Readings:  Sherman, Chapter 3-4  
McGrath, pgs 73-90

Homework:  Worksheet 1: VISION;  
Worksheet 2: STATEMENT OF NEED;  
Prepare for initial (informal) 30-second elevator pitch for presentation at Class 3, Feb 3

**Class 3**
Feb 3

**Research & Objectives**

Great social entrepreneurs need to learn how to do excellent research. They want to explore who else in the field is trying to solve the problem. Who are the visionaries and innovators who have come up with the best ideas for social transformation already? What are the best organizations and ideas in the field? Why haven’t these other solutions been completely successful? How can social entrepreneurs improve upon them? In Part 1 of
today’s class, we explore all these questions, and guide the students through a workshop on developing the most effective research strategies.

As social entrepreneurs create proposals for trying to change the world, they need to figure out specific, quantifiable objectives. What are the outcomes that they want to see? This is not just about how many people they serve. After all, a school could serve 10,000 students but offer a terrible education! How do they know that they are really making a difference? In part two of today’s class, we will work on articulating concrete objectives for student projects.

Readings:  Sherman, Chapters 5-6
            McGrath, Section 1 (pgs. 33-73)

Homework:  Worksheet 3: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN;
            Worksheet 4: OBJECTIVES

Class 4
Feb 10

**Methods & Budget**

The key to any social venture is the action plan. Once social entrepreneurs have figured out their specific objectives, they need to figure out how they will achieve them. They need a timeline and a list of activities. It may sound simple, but there are many challenges and pitfalls on the path. Students should hopefully already be thinking about some of these steps, but today we will work to more clearly define them.

A very key piece to this action plan is the budget. According to social movement theory, groups will be most successful in creating social change to the degree that they can mobilize resources. Yet most nonprofits, social activists, and community advocates have historically lacked sufficient funds to promote their agendas fully. Now a new generation of scholars and practitioners are creating innovative methods for generating funds, from Bill Shore’s “community wealth ventures” to Jed Emerson’s “blended value” model. Today we will review several of these emerging models in detail. We will explore how social entrepreneurs, innovators, visionaries, and problem solvers find the money to fund their organizational projects. We will discuss the seed funding that students have the opportunity to receive, thanks to our generous donor, Ira W. Miller, and the requirements for receiving this funding, as well as being accountable for its use.

Readings:  Sherman, Chapters 7 & 9

Homework:  Worksheet 5: METHODS
            Worksheet 7: BUDGET
            Final Budget Due Feb 17 as well

Class 5
Feb 17

**Measurement of Results & Accountability for Fund Utilization**

Many scholars have recently begun to question the effectiveness of traditional social change organizations. While many of these groups have relied on anecdotal evidence to prove their claims of efficacy, there is a new demand for accountability: more rigorous standards for measuring and assessing the results of nonprofit and social change strategies. Today we look at the latest theories and practices for creating accurate feedback systems.

Readings:  Sherman, Chapter 8

Homework:  Worksheet 6: EVALUATIONS
Class 6
Feb 24

**Funding Distribution & Project Support**

If student budget reports have been approved, they will receive funding today to help with start-up costs on their projects. Students are reminded to keep track of all records and receipts of how money is spent for their final spending report.

Today’s class will also be used as a workshop for checking in with students on where they are on their projects and for addressing any challenges that have come up so far.

Readings: McGrath, Section 2 and part of Section 3 (pgs. 91-146)

Class 7
Mar 3

**Teams & Team Development**

Today we discuss how social entrepreneurs put together effective teams. No social movement can succeed behind the efforts of just a single person. They need to have effective boards of directors, advisors, mentors, and collaborators. Today we explore how social entrepreneurs create these alliances and networks that help their cause succeed. We will focus specifically on students in the class who have chosen to work as teams to accomplish a project this term, providing them support on working to identify roles and responsibilities within the team.

Readings: Sherman, Chapter 10

Homework: Worksheet 9: TEAM

SPECIAL EVENT – GET-TOGETHER OUTSIDE OF CLASS (Optional, but we encourage everyone to come) – Potluck dinner at Dr. McGrath’s Brooklyn Heights brownstone (right across from Wall St. and centrally located for all trains). Friday night, March 6th at 7:00.

Class 8
Mar 10

**Individual Challenges & Removing Obstacles to Success, Part 1**

In this class, we discuss challenges that social entrepreneurs face. Any movement for social change is inevitably going to face obstacles, setbacks, and failures. Campaigns for social justice and innovation often take years or decades. A crucial issue for social change advocates, therefore, is how to respond effectively to failure, and how to overcome barriers to progress. Today’s class will look at these types of issues and any specific challenges that students are facing.

Readings: Sherman, Chapter 11
McGrath, part two of Section 3 (pgs 147-169)

Homework: Worksheet 10: CHALLENGES

Class 9
Mar 24

**Individual Challenges & Removing Obstacles to Success, Part 2**

Today we continue looking at challenges that social entrepreneurs and students may be facing, including money management issues, burnout, general management issues, effective delegation of tasks, etc.

Readings: McGrath, first part of Section 4 (pgs. 171-196)
Class 10
Mar 31

**Societal Challenges for Social Entrepreneurs**

Social injustices can create huge divisions between people and communities, and may also create many challenges for people working to address these injustices. This week we look at some of the complexities of changing social injustices built along lines of difference, as well as transformative approaches to solving problems of racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice. We will practice applying connector skills to improve communication, collaboration, and understanding across lines of difference.

Reading: McGrath, second part of Section 4 (pgs. 196-207)

Homework: Worksheet: Societal Obstacles to Success

Class 11
Apr 7

**Workshop for Supporting Project Completion**

Today we will work to support each student in getting what they need for project completion for this stage of their project. (It is our hope that students will be able to continue their work after the term is over, moving on to another stage of development.) We will also discuss expectations for final project presentations and reports, and draw numbers to determine the order for presentations.

Reading: McGrath, Summary (pgs 207-218)

Homework: Worksheet: Individual Obstacles to Success

Class 12
Apr 14

**Workshop for Supporting Project Completion**

We continue working to support students on their projects, so that they can feel proud of their progress made over the course of the term and feel a confident sense of direction for moving forward on their own after the term ends. Skills practice includes time/stress management, do-able goals, asking for help, identifying resources for project completion, fears of failure/success, marketing strategies.

Homework: Prepare for final presentations (Culminating Assignment)

Class 13
Apr 21

**Project Presentations**

Today the students make their final presentations. Each student will have 10 minutes to present and will be given 5 minutes of feedback from the class. A detailed description of the expectations for the final presentations and reports is provided below, beneath class requirements.

Homework: Culminating Assignment, all parts

Class 14
Apr 28

**Project Presentations, Conclusions & Future Directions**

Today we finish with student presentations and wrap up the class. All parts of the Culminating Assignment are due.

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**SPECIAL EVENT – END-OF-TERM CELEBRATION PARTY!!!** After our final day of class, Dr. McGrath will host a BBQ to celebrate our accomplishments of the term. The party will be held at her brownstone in Brooklyn Heights at 6:00 pm Friday May 1st.
CLASS REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Participation

The success of this course depends on the active, enthusiastic participation of each student. Students ought to display great initiative, motivation, and a passion for learning. It is essential that students be here every day, especially because we only meet only 14 times throughout the spring semester. It’s also imperative that you come to class on time and come to class prepared. Please do the assigned readings before class (as listed for that day’s class period) and work consistently on your project. In order to have the greatest chance of successfully influencing other people and changing the world, you need to be professional!

2. Accountability Teams

At the beginning of the term, we will set up Accountability Teams to help support you in your project completion. You and your accountability team will encourage each other to excel and will challenge each other to be accountable to your classmates and to yourselves for both the time spent developing your projects in class and the time you use developing your social change projects outside the classroom. Working with an accountability team can help you achieve dramatic results in personal and social change, in a supportive “win-win” atmosphere. You may also select an Accountability Partner within your team to increase support and accountability.

3. Homework Assignments

The homework assignments listed throughout the syllabus (along with a few others that may be added) are meant to help you develop and strengthen your social change project. Most of the worksheets can be found in the back of Transform America but should be written or typed on separate paper, so as not to limit yourself in space and so that you can reuse the worksheets later. Other worksheets will be handed out in class. These should not be taken as “busy work,” but rather should be completed seriously and thoroughly, as they will impact your long-term success on your project. Assignments should be completed during the week between classes and turned in at the start of the following class period.

4. Social Change Projects

The support of this class and the seed money generously donated have provided the opportunity for students interested in social change to actually start their own social change initiative. Over the course of the term, you will identify a vision, convert your vision into more concrete objectives, develop an action plan (including specific activities, timeline, and budget) to initiate your organization, and take the steps to get your project up and running. Real and lasting change efforts can obviously take years to realize, but the goal of this course is to support you in accomplishing the first phase of a project of your choosing and encourage you to continue to grow and evolve your project and other social change work after this class is over. Your project
can be creative and take any form that will make a positive contribution to the community and the world. It can also be on any scale, from local to global. You can work together on a project with your accountability partner or a small team in the class, although final presentations and reports should be completed individually.

5. Culminating Assignment

At the end of the term, you are asked to complete a culminating assignment that consists of four parts. Each student will complete these requirements individually, regardless of whether they worked with other students on the projects. (The final spending reports are the exception to this – these can be done together, but please submit a copy for each student.)

1. **3-5 Page Project Report:** (DUE 4/28/09) This report will serve as a summary of the progress you made on your social change project over the course of the term. In this report, you should include:
   a. A description of the project you developed (including the name of your organization)
   b. An overview of your experience working on the project throughout the term (Successes? Challenges? Strategies you used? Etc.)
   c. An account of the level of success you achieved in goal completion (did you meet your goals, according to the timeline you established at the beginning of the term?)
   d. Project goals for the future
   e. Marketing, PR, and Growth Strategies for your organization
   f. Acknowledgments and Appreciations

2. **In-class Presentation:** (WILL TAKE PLACE EITHER 4/21/09 OR 4/28/09) You should prepare to present on some/all of the topics above for NO MORE THAN 10 minutes. You may (but do not have to) use PowerPoint for your presentations. We will draw numbers to determine the order in which students will present and will spend 5 minutes giving feedback after each presentation.

3. **1 Page Project Summaries:** (DUE AT TIME OF PRESENTATION) You should prepare a 1 page summary sheet with information about your project, including a description of the organization with its name, contact info, an update on your progress on the project, any upcoming events associated with your organization, any big accomplishments over the term, etc. Feel free to be creative with this sheet, using graphics/logos/photos or anything else you have developed for your project/organization. Please make enough copies of this summary sheet to pass out during your presentation. You may also provide any other print media that you developed over the term to help show your progress and/or strategy for growth.

4. **Final Spending Report:** (DUE 4/28/09) This report should be attached to your Summary Report and should be as long as necessary. We ask that you account for all of the funding that you received and spent on your project with both a spreadsheet (detailing the expenses) and copies of receipts.
GRADING POLICIES

Because this is a project-based class, your grade will be determined primarily by the effort you put into getting the most out of class time (see the participation grading scale below) and the effort and progress you show on your social change projects in and outside of class. The reading is to support this change process and will greatly enhance your learning experience, but you are not expected to memorize every detail of the texts. For this reason, there are no tests in this class. Homework assignments, however, are meant to enhance and strengthen your project development, therefore the grade breakdown is as follows:

Attendance and participation: 25 percent
Homework Assignments: 15 percent
Social Change Projects & Culminating Assignments: 60 percent

We will not accept late work.

GRADING CRITERIA

Participation grading scale:

A - You are an outstanding, invaluable contributor to class discussions. The class would be considerably poorer without your presence. You speak often, engage your fellow students, and always offer intelligent, thoughtful opinions. Your level of energy and enthusiasm is very high. You are passionate about learning and come to class with an open mind to new ideas; you always show great motivation and interest. You complete all the assignments, and you do an excellent, thorough job on each one. You come to every class session and you are always on time. You know the names of all of your fellow students and empower other people to do their best. You care about your classmates and how they are doing in class.

B - You are an active participant in class discussions. You seem to be showing a great deal of interest, even if you are a naturally quiet person. You are a very active listener, and you appear to respect the opinions of your fellow students. You often contribute many intelligent ideas to the class discussions. You complete all the class assignments, and it appears that you put a great deal of thought and effort into them. You go beyond what is required of you. You are absent or late to no more than 2 classes. You know at least 80 percent of your classmates’ names.

C - You have an acceptable level of class participation. You occasionally participate in a class discussion, although not very much. If you are a naturally quiet person, you at least seem to be paying attention and showing interest. You complete all the assignments and you do what is required of you. You are absent or late to no more than 4 classes. You know at least 67 percent of your classmates’ names.
D - You are physically present in class, but your mind seems to be somewhere else. You do not seem to pay attention (or even to disguise your boredom). You rarely participate in class discussions. Even when called on to answer a question, you have very little to say. Sometimes you seem to be on the verge of sleeping, or melting into your chair. You complete the assignments, but it appears like you put little time or effort into them. You are late or absent more than 4 times. You know less than 67 percent of your classmates’ names.

F - You miss class often. You do not participate at all. You show no interest whatsoever in the subject matter, the readings, or the opinions of your fellow students. You do not complete many of the assignments. Overall, you put no effort into the class. You are absent or late to class more than 7 times. You know less than 50 percent of your classmates’ names.

OTHER CLASS RULES:

Out of respect to the professor, guest lecturers, and your classmates:

1. Cell phones must be turned off and students are strongly encouraged not to use computers in class. If students are unable to take notes by hand, they are allowed to use their computers but it is preferred that any notes be taken by hand so that other features of computer use do not distract students from participating in class discussion.

2. Please arrive on time to the start of class and return from breaks in a timely manner.

POLICY ON DISABILITIES:

I encourage students with disabilities, including “invisible” disabilities, to come talk with me after class or during my office hours to discuss appropriate accommodations that might be helpful to them.

Terms and Limitations:

By enrolling in this class, you agree to all the terms and limitations of the syllabus, which serves as a legally binding contract between the party of the first part (hereinafter referred to as "the professor") and the party of the second part (hereinafter referred to as "the students.") This contract will be in accordance with all federal and state regulations, pursuant to the rules set forth by New York University, and any applicable statutes of the United States or the county of New York, except where the professor decides otherwise. The rules, requirements, and benefits of this contract are subject to change at the end of the first week of classes, or at any other time by the University or other governing authorities, including, but not limited to, the professor and the administrators of the educational department under which this course is offered. The professor reserves the right to change the terms of the contract at will, and may exercise his personal discretion in revoking all rights of the students without just cause. No person is authorized nor entitled to refute the terms of this contract, nor subject the policies described herein to any form of strict scrutiny or critical questioning.