Foundations of Nonprofit Management P11.2125
Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service
New York University

Spring, 2009

Professor:  Sonia Ospina
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The Puck Building, 3075, Ext. 87478

Class: Thursdays 6:45 – 8:25 pm
Office Hours:  Ospina: Tuesdays 4 – 6 pm and by appointment

Prerequisite: P11.1020 or equivalent

Course Description

This course examines the nature and major trends of the nonprofit sector, understood within the context of a broad shift in governance, both in the US and internationally. The course aims to deepen student understanding of the nature of the nonprofit world and its organizations, considering both a historical and a contemporary context, and using both theoretical and practical lenses to do so. Understanding the legitimacy and authority of the nonprofit sector to address collective problems requires inviting both management and policy practitioners to see the intersection between managerial practices and policy decisions and to connect the macro and micro dynamics of governance.

The course focuses heavily on the broad trends shaping the sector, predominantly in the United States, but also within the international arena. The goal is for students – whether they are interested in policy or in management – to develop their own “cognitive map” of the sector, so that they can identify and interpret key issues and challenges of sustainability experienced by the various stakeholders of the nonprofit world, and consider their implications for practice. Classes will involve a mix of brief lectures; discussion based on readings and written assignments; and guest speakers.

Course objectives

Students will develop an informed perspective of selected key issues affecting the nonprofit sector and their implications for better understanding the nature of nonprofit organizations and their role in governance. By the end of the course:

- Participants will identify the key concepts and theories that explain the nature of the nonprofit sector, and appreciate the distinctiveness of nonprofits as public service organizations operating in the private realm, in relationship to for-profits and public agencies.
• Participants will link key trends in the US nonprofit sector to the broader international context where nongovernmental organizations are increasingly operating.

• Participants will be able to respond to arguments and positions about selected policy and management issues associated with the present and future of the nonprofit sector and its organizations.

• Participants will identify and discuss key themes associated with the sustainability of the nonprofit sector and of its organizational ecosystem.

**Required texts**

Available at the NYU Professional Bookstore:

• Collins, Jim. 2005. *Why business thinking is not the answer. Good to great and the social sectors*. A monograph to accompany *Good to Great*.

Available electronically via NYU’s online electronic journal service or Blackboard and at the NYU Bobst Library Course Reserves:

• Additional readings from selected sources (** in schedule of assignments)

**Course requirements**

Students must complete the reading before class and engage actively in the discussions. Students must also satisfy the following requirements:

• Three 3-4 page memos 75%
• Participation in class 10%
• Journaling 15%

For instructions on assignments, please go to Course documents in Blackboard.
Overview of Course Contents

PART I: Mapping the nonprofit world

1. Introduction: the state of the nonprofit sector (Jan 22)
2. The distinctiveness of the nonprofit sector (Jan 29)
3. The changing landscape of philanthropy (Feb 5) Guest
4. Accountability and legitimacy in the nonprofit world (Feb 12)
   First memo and first three journal entries due February 16

PART II: Understanding the nonprofit sector: dominant theories and their implications for policy and management practice

5. A focus on expressive functions: political and social theories (Feb 19)
6. A focus on expressive functions (2): community theories (Feb 26) Guests
7. A focus on instrumental functions: economic theories (March 5)
8. A focus on instrumental functions (2): entrepreneurial theories (March 12)
   Second memo and next four journal entries due March 13

March 19-Spring Break

PART III: Sustaining and building capacity in the nonprofit sector

9. Focusing on impact and measuring performance (March 26) Guest
10. Developing leadership and talent (April 2) Guests
11. Understanding and managing the leadership transition crisis (April 9) Guest
12. Building capacity through collaboration (April 16)
13. Replicating and scaling up results (April 23) Guest
14. Putting it all together: balancing functions and challenges (April 30)
   Third memo and final six journal entries due May 1st
Schedule of Assignments

PART I: Mapping the nonprofit world

1. Introduction: The state of the nonprofit sector (Jan 22)

Lester M. Salamon and Stephanie Lessans Geller with the assistance of Kasey L. Spence, 2008, Nonprofit Policy Priorities for the New Administration, Johns Hopkins University, COMMUNIQUÉ NO. 11 [on blackboard]

*The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Facts and figures from the Nonprofit Almanac, 2007*
[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311373_nonprofit_sector.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311373_nonprofit_sector.pdf)

*The International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations*

Assignment:

1. Please browse *The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Facts and figures from the Nonprofit Almanac, 2007* then choose one particular table or chart that calls your attention and study it more carefully. Pose a question of interest to you about the nonprofit sector based on the data presented in that table. Be prepared to discuss in class your question and the motivation behind it. Please bring the question in writing, to hand it in.

2. Please review the categories and subcategories of nonprofits presented in the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations and be prepared to discuss your reactions to this proposed classification

3. What is your reaction to the expectations described by Salamon in reference to policy priorities for nonprofits in the new administration?

2. The distinctiveness of the nonprofit sector (Jan 29)


3. The changing landscape of philanthropy (Feb 5)


4. Accountability and legitimacy in the nonprofit world (Feb 12)


**ATTENTION: FIRST MEMO AND JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE MONDAY FEBRUARY 16**
PART II: Understanding the nonprofit sector: dominant theories and their implications for policy and management practice

5. **A focus on expressive functions: Political and social theories (Feb 19)**

Frumkin, Peter. Chapter 2: Civic and Political Engagement (pp 29-63)


6. **A focus on expressive functions (2): Community theories (Feb 26)**

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

- Michelle De la Uz, Executive Director, Fifth Avenue Committee, [http://www.fifthave.org/](http://www.fifthave.org/)

Frumkin, Peter. Chapter 4: Values and Faith (pp. 96-128)

** From Constituents to Stakeholders”, Minieri et al, 2005, Research Center for Leadership in Action, NYU/Wagner. Document will be distributed in class and is available electronically at: [http://leadershipforchange.org/insights/research/files/ConstituentstoStakeholders.pdf](http://leadershipforchange.org/insights/research/files/ConstituentstoStakeholders.pdf) [also on Blackboard]

7. **A focus on instrumental functions: Economic theories (March 5)**

Frumkin, Peter. Chapter 3: Service Delivery (pp. 69-95).


8. **A focus on instrumental functions (2): Entrepreneurial theories (March 12)**
PART III: Sustaining and building capacity in the nonprofit sector

9. Focusing on impact and measuring performance (March 26)

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Abigail Diner, Director, Planning & Measurement at Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), [http://www.bgca.org/](http://www.bgca.org/)

*Collins, Jim. 2005. (Good to Great) Issue One: pages 4-9*


**Heather McLeod Grant; Leslie R Crutchfield, Creating High-impact Nonprofits. Stanford Social Innovation Review; Fall 2007; 5, 4 [on Blackboard]**

10. Developing leadership and talent (April 2)

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** Bethany Godsoe, Executive Director and AiLun Ku, Program Manager, RCLA, NYU/Wagner, [http://www.wagner.nyu.edu/leadership](http://www.wagner.nyu.edu/leadership)

*Collins, Jim. 2005. (Good to Great) Issue Two: pages 9-13*


11. The leadership transition crisis (April 9)

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Frances Kunreuther, Director and Founder of the Building Movement Project, DEMOS. [http://www.buildingmovement.org/](http://www.buildingmovement.org/) [And co-author of]

Collins, Jim. 2005. (Good to Great) Issue Three: pages 13-17

** Kunreuther et al. 2008. Working Across Generations. Introduction and Chapter 1 (on Blackboard) [available on Course Reserves]

12. Building capacity through collaboration (April 16)


13. Replicating and scaling up results (April 23)

GUEST SPEAKER: Danielle Scaturro, Senior Portfolio Associate, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, www.emcf.org


14. Putting it all together: balancing functions and challenges (April 30)

Frumkin, Peter. Chapter 6: Balancing the functions of nonprofit and voluntary action (pp. 163-181).

Collins, Jim. 2005. (Good to Great) Issue Five: p. 23-33. [please review the other four issues again]