Philanthropy & Social Change

Course #: UPADM-GP.222 Fall 2015
Schedule: 9/19 11:00-4:30, 9/20 11:00-2:45, 9/26 11:00-4:30, 9/27 11:00-2:45
Location: Silver #620
Instructor: Jason Franklin, PhD
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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 only represents 15% of the $330+ billion given to charitable causes, 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 grant making and long-term commitment to specific issues and approaches. Through this course, students will gain an understanding of the roles and influence (positive and negative) of philanthropy on political advocacy and social change movements in the US; 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 a brief but intensive 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 evolution through US history and its impact - positive & negative - 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 offer the chance to meet and discuss these issues with key movement leaders and grantmakers in NYC.

Course Audience

This course is available to undergraduate students. It is intended as a core course for students in NYU Wagner’s Social and Public Policy minor or as an elective for students interested in the subject.

Course Instructor

Dr. Franklin was appointed in June 2015 as the W.K. Kellogg Chair in Community Philanthropy at the Johnson Center for Philanthropy in Grand Rapids, MI. He brings to his work a background in grantmaking and donor education, nonprofit strategy and leadership, social entrepreneurship, and urban policy advocacy. As the nation’s first endowed chair focused on community philanthropy, he is developing a program of research, teaching, service, and thought leadership to explore and advance the field, nationally and internationally.

Previously, Dr. Franklin served as Executive Director of Bolder Giving in NYC, which he led through five years of growth after Melinda Gates credited them as an inspiration for the billionaire Giving Pledge. During his tenure, he helped Bolder Giving refine its focus on promoting philanthropy for social, racial, economic & environmental justice and dramatically expand its reach working with individual donors, foundation leaders and activists across the country and around the globe. Dr. Franklin has also held an appointment for the last decade as an adjunct professor at New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service teaching courses on
philanthropy, nonprofit management, and public policy. He serves on the boards of the Proteus Fund, Solidaire Donor Network, and 21st Century School Fund; advisory boards of the Chartered Advisors in Philanthropy Program, WiserGiving, and Credit Suisse’s LGBT Equality Portfolio; and is a member of Funding Queerly, the Threshold Foundation, and the High Impact Documentary Funding Circle.

Course Objectives

• To investigate the effect of philanthropy on nonprofits, social movements, and political change.
• To understand what a foundation is and how it operates.
• 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 connect readings and discussions to real-life through interactions with practitioners.

Course Organization and Design

The course is designed to provide an historical 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 individual investigation into a specific issue of their choice during the week between the two weekend class intensives and in the month following.

Expectations of Students

1. Take responsibility for your learning.

   • Attendance. Given the nature of this intensive two-weekend course design, attendance is mandatory for all classes. Barring a family or health emergency (which you should notify me of as soon as possible for possible adjustment), your grade will be reduced one full letter grade if you miss one day of class and if you miss a full weekend, you will be awarded an automatic IF (Incomplete-Failure) and have to consult with myself and the Associate Dean to determine an alternate way to complete the course for credit.

   • Participation. Participate actively in class discussions. 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 Graded and Ungraded 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 e-mail account, use the Internet, access electronic databases in the review of literature in the field, access NYU Classes, etc. Most assignments will be submitted electronically to the course site. I will be contacting you through the NYU Classes email system, so you are expected to check the email account on file for you in this system regularly.
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. 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.

**Auditing & Visitors**

Due to this class’ intensive seminar style, students will not be able to observe or audit this course.

**Assignments and Grading**

Your grade in this course is based on three components. More details will be provided in class on both written assignments. Other assignments will be docked one half grade (B+ becomes a B) for every day late.

1. **Class Participation – 30%** - Your participation grade is yours to lose. You will be evaluated based on your attendance, attentiveness in class, active engagement in class discussions and question sessions, and full participation in the final grantmaking exercise.

4. **Funder Issue Review – 20% - 4-5 pages** - Due on September 26th, you will write a short review of philanthropic activity in a specific social change issue based on your research during the week between classes, including reflection on at least four field reports or academic articles (at least one of each). Your review should highlight what you found particularly interesting about the grantmakers’ approaches to funding this issue, particularly their support or lack of support for advocacy and social change work, and any reflections or questions their involvement raised. A range of issue possibilities and sources for field reports will be shared during the first week of class to assist you in preparation for this review.

5. **Research Paper – 50% - 10-12 pages** – Due one month after class finishes, on October 27th, you will select a social change issue or movement of your choice (must be an issue different than covered in your Issue Review) and explore how philanthropy has supported work on this issue, which foundations have been involved, etc. More details will be given in class. If you desire, you may submit an optional initial non-graded and non-binding proposal of 1-2 paragraphs by October 2nd to get feedback and suggestions for where to begin your research.

**Submission Guidelines for Assignments**

Electronic copies should be submitted in Blackboard prior to the start of class on the due date (they may be submitted via email if you have problems with Blackboard).
Course Schedule and Readings:

September 19: Introductions, Course Overview, & Understanding the Evolution of Philanthropy in the US

Course Schedule: 11:00 am – 4:30 pm, lunch break from 1:00-1:30pm

Readings:

- **Optional Readings:** (useful to skim and keep as reference throughout the course) *Glossary of Terms in Philanthropy* and the *Timeline of Key Events* from *Philanthropy in America*

Guest Speaker: Jee Kim, Program Officer, Increasing Civic and Political Participation Initiative, Ford Foundation

Jee Kim works on civic and political participation in the United States. His grant making focuses on increasing the participation of poor and marginalized groups by strengthening organizations and networks that build and mobilize the grassroots base for social change. Prior to joining the Ford Foundation in 2012, Jee helped launch 18MillionRising.org, a national civic engagement project designed to build the political power of Asian Americans using social media and online organizing. This effort drew upon his experience in digital community building and media production at Pseudo.com, AsianAvenue.com, BlackPlanet.com and BET.com. Previously, Jee served as a program officer and then program director at the Surdna Foundation, where he managed grant-making portfolios in youth civic engagement, community organizing in New Orleans, and nonprofit infrastructure over his eight-year tenure. He also worked in New York as a racial justice and immigrant rights organizer and as a journalist, editing the 9/11 anthology, "Another World Is Possible" and "Future 500," an analysis of youth activism in the United States. Jee received his master's degree from Oxford University and his undergraduate degree from Columbia University.

September 20 - Understanding Foundations’ Roles in Social Change

Course Schedule: 11:00 am – 2:45 pm, short break from 1:00-1:15 pm

Readings:


Guest Speaker: Farhad Ebrahimi, Trustee Chair, Chorus Foundation

Farhad is the founder and chair of The Chorus Foundation, which works for a just transition to a regenerative economy in the United States. The Chorus Foundation supports communities on the front lines of the old, extractive economy to build new bases of political, economic, and cultural power for
systemic change. While still in his teens, Farhad received a significant amount of wealth from his father. Says Farhad of his inherited wealth, “It’s not something I was particularly comfortable with growing up, to be honest. And as a result, it took me a long time to get my arms around how I wanted to respond to the situation.” His ultimate response was to establish the Chorus Foundation. He also serves on the board of directors of the New Economy Coalition, Citizen Engagement Laboratory, Divest-Invest, and the Democracy Alliance, as well as the advisory board of The Wildfire Project. He is a founding member of the Boston-based organizing collective Simorgh. Farhad graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2002 with a bachelor's degree in Mathematics with Computer Science and is an avid musician; a lover of science, literature, and art; and a bicycle fanatic.

September 26: Ideology, Identity and Philanthropic Engagement in Social Change

Course Schedule: 11:00 am – 4:30 pm, lunch break from 1:00-1:30pm

Readings: Progressive Philanthropy and Grassroots Social Justice Organizing

Readings: Conservative Philanthropy and the War of Ideas

Readings: Philanthropy & Identity: Issues of Race, Class, Gender and Orientation

Guest Speaker: Hugh Hogan, Executive Director, North Star Fund

Hugh Hogan joined North Star Fund as executive director in 2003 with a firm commitment to bringing far greater resources to the grassroots movement for social justice in New York City. His tenure has seen dynamic organizational growth on many fronts, culminating with North Star Fund's largest-ever fundraising effort, Activism's Future: Campaign for Philanthropic and Grassroots Leadership, publicly launched in 2013. He has furthered North Star Fund's founding commitment to taking risks by funding emerging grassroots groups, and he has created new funding streams for these groups as they grow in size and impact. During Hugh's tenure, North Star Fund's annual grantmaking has increased from $318,550 to $4.3M and he has led a wide range of partnership efforts to increase North Star's impact. In
2010, he spearheaded the creation and growth of Community Food Funders — a philanthropic organizing project to transform the regional food system to be more ecological, equitable, and economically vibrant. He has also led North Star’s engagement in other key partnerships including the Grassroots Hurricane Relief Fund after Hurricane Sandy, serving as fiscal sponsor of Communities United for Police Reform, and an $8M distribution from the New York State Public Service Commission for the Greening Western Queens Fund. Prior to joining North Star he directed the Open Space Equity Campaign for the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYCEJA), supporting grassroots groups organizing around environmental and land use issues that disproportionately affect low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. He previously served in the Peace Corps and remained in west and southern Africa for nearly a decade, assisting rural farmers and urban communities in reversing the destructive legacy of colonialism and apartheid. Hugh is a graduate of Boston College and Clark University, and a two-time Switzer Environmental Leadership fellow.


Course Schedule: 11:00 am – 2:45 pm, short break from 1:00-1:15 pm

Readings:

Guest Speaker: Leah Hunt-Hendrix, Co-Founder & Director, Solidaire Donor Network

Leah Hunt-Hendrix was born and raised in New York City. She has lived around the world, including in Egypt, Syria, and the West Bank. She recently completed her PhD at Princeton University where she researched the history of western political thought and social movements. She was an active participant in Occupy Wall Street and continues to work on issues related to economic justice and frameworks for a more just economy. In 2012, she co-founded Solidaire, a donor community dedicated to supporting grassroots organizing and movement building, and the Hildegard Fund, which aims to provide resources for faith-based organizing for economic justice. She serves on the boards of the EDGE Funders Alliance, Free Speech for People, and the New Economy Coalition.