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COMM 191S.01: Can Giving Change the World? - Engaging Social Responsibility Through Philanthropy

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COMM 191s: Can Giving Change the World?: Engaging Social Responsibility through Philanthropy.

A Global Leadership Initiative Freshmen Seminar, Autumn 2013
Tuesday & Thursday from 9:40-11:00 a.m. in DHC 117

Instructors: Dr. Greg Larson, Associate Professor, Communication Studies

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SYLLABUS

Course Overview

This course examines the relationship between the individual and society by addressing the question: How do individuals and organizations address pressing and enduring social problems to create meaningful change? Through the lens of philanthropy, this course introduces students to social responsibility and some of the big problems facing society. As individuals and organizations attempt to address these problems and enact social change to create a more just and equitable world, philanthropic and innovative giving strategies are more commonly being used.

The course will teach you about the growing philanthropic movement at local, national and global levels to combat the most pressing contemporary challenges facing society such as poverty, environmental degradation, and disease. Students will learn about the strengths and limitations of philanthropy and social entrepreneurship as models for addressing contemporary social problems, and in doing so, better understand the overall challenges related to enacting social change.

COMM 191 is an experiential learning opportunity for you to study and engage in philanthropy as a tool for social change and community engagement at the local level. In this course, you will study and critique how innovative philanthropists and social entrepreneurs support social change and influence public policy to tackle complex, critical issues. In doing so, you will engage the continuing search to find the most innovative and effective ways to organize, communicate and allocate resources to solve social and environmental problems.

This course uses a multidisciplinary lens to explore models of philanthropy and social entrepreneurship and their impact on social change, drawing from communication studies, nonprofit administration, sociology, critical management studies, and economics. Complex social problems need to be studied from multiple disciplinary approaches. For example, one cannot adequately study poverty without delving into its roots in economic, political, and social policy. In addition, adequate means of communication are critical for not only understanding the problems themselves, but also for organizing to create changes.

Course Goals

Communication 191 will:

1. Teach students about philanthropy including the history, purposes, and models of philanthropy and social entrepreneurship to engage in social change at local and global levels; from small-scale individual donations to complex multi-billion dollar donations.

2. Introduce students to the ways in which nonprofit organizations shape community life and contribute to transformational social change, and the models of partnership and collaboration among nonprofit organizations with philanthropists, government and businesses.
3. Challenge students to engage the ways in which wealth, power and influence shape philanthropic organizations and, subsequently, the public agenda. As the wealth gap in the United States and around the world increases, students will explore the benefits, costs and consequences of wealthy philanthropists, social entrepreneurs, and philanthropic organizations (foundations) as key sources for addressing social problems.
4. Engage students in a community needs assessment to critically analyze them in the context of resource development and allocation.
5. Provide students with a philanthropic experience to gain a deeper understanding of societal issues, encourage leadership, critical thinking, and effective communication.
6. Introduce students to successful corporate philanthropists and social entrepreneurs through guest speakers from the wider Missoula and Montana community who will speak about their experiences first-hand.
7. Present students with the opportunity to build self-awareness and develop their own sense of citizenship in the 21st Century global society.
8. Emphasize the use of excellent communication skills, both in writing, presenting, and interactions with community organizations and in-class panels. Students will speak in front of the class and/or in small groups, complete writing assignments, and will communicate with community partners.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify strategies in which individuals and foundations engage in philanthropic giving to address social problems and effect social change locally and globally.
2. Understand and critique the role of philanthropy and the nonprofit sector in society and the economy.
3. Understand the impact of community service and grant-making on community organizations' strategies for meeting needs and creating sustainable social change.
4. Identify strategies and critique methods philanthropists and social entrepreneurs use to organize, communicate, and enable social change.
5. Understand critical debates and ethical issues surrounding philanthropy and develop an informed opinion about these issues.
6. Understand the community-based philanthropic grant-making processes.
7. Demonstrate communication skills for interacting in professional settings, making presentations to professional audiences, and relating philanthropic ideas that connect with other courses, individual career aspirations, global citizenship, and personal areas of one's own life.

Experiential Philanthropic Project

The experiential philanthropic project is a center piece of the course. The philanthropic project is funded by the *Learning by Giving Foundation*. UM is one of 32 universities (including UC Berkeley, USC, Tufts, Cornell, Columbia, and Stanford) across the country funded by this unique foundation to support courses that educate the next generation of philanthropic leaders.

The experiential philanthropic project will engage students in learning about community needs, issuing a request for proposals to the public, reviewing real proposals from local nonprofit organizations, and debating the merits of each proposal before collectively making final funding decisions to allocate \$10,000 in the Missoula community. Grants of at least \$2,000 each will then be used by local Missoula nonprofits to further their missions. This project is a unique and impactful opportunity for you to explore theoretical concepts in relationship to practice as you engage in your community as grantmakers. This experience has the potential to be one of the most memorable academic experiences for you and can help set the path for you to become leaders around campus and in the community in engaging issues of social responsibility.

Attendance/Punctuality/Participation

Attendance in this class is critically important. You are expected to attend class every day and to come to class on time and prepared. Much of the work in this class is activity and discussion-based, your attendance each class period to discuss and debate the readings and participate in activities is essential to the success of the course and the grantmaking project. You will receive a grade for your attendance and participation in daily class discussions. Unexcused absences and tardiness will result in the loss of participation points (3 points per unexcused absence, 1 per tardy). Cell phone use (including text messaging) is not allowed in class.

Special Assistance

If some extenuating circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting your expectations for your attendance and performance, we expect you to contact us immediately. It is important that you contact us sooner rather than later.

Notice to Students with Documented Disabilities

We encourage students with disabilities, including but not limited to, chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury and attention deficit/hyperactive disorder, to discuss with one or both of us, after class or during office hours, appropriate accommodations that might be helpful to you.

Due Dates

A late written assignment will be penalized one full grade for each day it is late unless arrangements are made with instructors ahead of time. Presentations must be delivered on the day that they are due.

Backup Copies

You are responsible for keeping back-up copies of all work that you do for the class.

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php

Requirements of the Course/Grading

Assignment	Points Available
Participation	50
Presentation on Class Readings	50
Community Needs Assessment Report & Critique	100
Grantmaking Project	100
Final Exam and Reflection Paper	100
Total Points	400

Class Reading Assignments:

Throughout this course, you will engage in readings and discussions that will consistently expose you to various disciplinary perspectives on social problems and philanthropic means to address them. Reading materials are drawn from various books, journals, reports, and websites. The course calendar notes when specific readings are assigned. Students will be assigned to facilitate a class discussion on the readings one day. Students will work in pairs and be the facilitators for the day. The group will be responsible for (1) developing discussion questions and (2) leading the class discussion on the reading that day. Each group will turn in their discussion questions and facilitation guide as the assignment on the day they do the group facilitation.

For each reading assigned, ALL students are expected to have read the material and be prepared to discuss it in class regardless of if they are the facilitators for that reading assignment or not.

Criteria for Reading Assignments

Discussion questions should demonstrate that you have thoroughly read the material and thought about implications of ideas and information presented by the writer. They should show relevance to our specific class based on our discussions, guest panels, and the grantmaking project. The facilitation guide should include not only the discussion questions, but also key points the presenters want the class to know about the reading material. Students will turn in typed and printed discussion questions and their facilitations guide at the beginning of the class in which we will discuss the reading.

Standards for Reading Assignments

In addition to the above criteria, high quality discussion questions and class facilitation should be (1) engaging – asking thoughtful questions to get discussion started, keep it interesting; (2) relevant – asking questions that connect to what we've done in class; and (3) enhancing – asking questions that contribute to furthering our insight and understanding of the topic.

Community Needs Assessment Reports

Students will work in groups of 3 to 5 and embark on researching a specific community need and providing a report to the class about the need. Students will gather information about the specific need on the local level (Missoula), as well as the national and international levels. Students will use library and web resources to conduct their research. Community need areas that will be researched are:

Environment
Youth
Hunger
Health/Disease
Homelessness

Student teams will write a collective report synthesizing the research based on the community need they investigated and its context in Missoula. Through research, which may include interviews with local people, students will determine (1) the magnitude of the issue in the community (depth and breadth of the problem); (2) how the issue is being addressed in the community (services and programs being provided); and (3) by whom, what are the gaps in terms of programs, services, policies, etc. Teams will present their needs assessment reports to the class and turn them in for a letter grade. After hearing all of the community needs report presentations, the class will prioritize the most importance community needs and then come to consensus on which need(s) the Class Foundation will focus its grant-making on.

Criteria

Students will write a report that provides a strong overview of the *community need under study*, *NOT an overview of any specific organization(s) they have studied*. Students will condense information obtained through their research into a concise document highlighting the most informative and critical pieces of information pertaining to community needs in the three content areas listed above to help the class prioritize the need areas for funding considerations. All student group members are expected to contribute equally to the project by researching, writing, and presenting (students will evaluate their teammates). Papers should be no shorter than 3 pages typed (single-spaced) with appropriate headings. Group presentations should be at minimum 15 minutes long. Appropriate headings/report sections include:

1. Brief statement of the need – What is the need? What is the problem that is being addressed? Include a broad statistics about the need at the national and international levels.
2. Magnitude of the Issue – What does the need look like in Missoula? How widespread is it? Include local statistics about the scope of the need.
3. How & Who – How is the need currently being addressed in Missoula? What programs and services exist to meet this need? What organizations are doing this work?
4. Gaps – Where are we falling short as a community in terms of meeting this need? What is left to be done?
5. Considerations – What recommendations does your group want the class to consider as they determine funding priorities? How could the class funding potentially help to close the gap and meet this need better?

Standards

Higher quality reports and presentations will include information in the areas stated above. Lower quality reports are missing at least one of the previously listed components and/or lack evidence of thought or critical analysis. In addition, lower quality papers and presentations focus more on the organization than on the topic of need. Finally, individual grades may be adjusted based on the evaluations that the student receives from teammates.

Grant-making Project

All students will participate in the major component of the class, which is the experiential grant-making project. Students will create a Class Foundation with funding priorities based on specific student-researched needs of Missoula County. Students will develop a Request for Proposals (RFP), evaluate those proposals, and decide which proposals to fund. The grant funding for the class is made possible by the generosity of the Learning by Giving Foundation, founded by Doris Buffet. The class will simulate a foundation board with the goal of making funding decisions for grants totaling \$10,000 to nonprofits in the Missoula community. The organizations that are selected to receive funding must be recognized as nonprofits (501c3 status) and no

disbursements can be made in amounts smaller than \$2000. Students must maintain confidentiality about the process, discussion, and decisions throughout the grant-making project. Students will conduct site visits to those organizations that make it to the final round of funding decisions.

Criteria

Students will read grant proposals and use a score sheet to evaluate each proposal. Score sheets will be used during the deliberation process and will be turned in as the first part of the grant-making project grade. In small groups, students will conduct a site visit to one of the organizations that make it to the final stage of decision making. Students will complete a site visit report that will be turned in as the second part of the grant-making project grade.

Standards

Due to close public interaction in this course it is imperative that students conduct themselves in a professional manner both in class and when dealing with the public outside of class. Each student is expected to contribute fully to the grant-making process, including participating in discussion and decisions about focus areas, review and evaluation of proposals, discussion and decisions about final funding, and the final award ceremony.

Professional-level outputs are expected from each student. High-level student participation will demonstrate involvement in all aspects of the process.

Final Exam and Reflective Essay

Students will write an essay final exam which includes a reflection essay at the conclusion of the semester, demonstrating evidence of learning from the course in relation to stated course learning objectives in addition to any unintended impacts.

Criteria

The final exam will consist of essay questions regarding course material. Students are expected to complete their answers on their own, with only the use of notes and course material (not each other). There are no limits to the length of the responses, only that they be complete. The reflective essays should be between 2 and 4 pages typed single-spaced. Writing should be guided as follows:

- Reflect on the assumptions you brought to the course, how did your perspectives on philanthropy change?
- Reflect on how you will use what you learned in this class in your future personal, professional, and/or academic endeavors.
- Reflect on the grant-making process – What worked? What would you change?

Standards

High quality exams will address the questions asked in complete form. High quality reflection essays include the components mentioned above, are well-written, and show critical thought. Lower quality exams are incomplete in some manner (e.g., not fully answering a question or missing an important component). Low quality reflection essays are too brief or shallow, have writing mistakes, do not show any evidence of critical thought, and/or do not follow the guidelines provided.

Extra-Credit Opportunities

This year the Montana Nonprofit Association will hold their annual conference in Missoula on October 3-4. There is a special discount rate for students who wish to attend. You can earn extra-credit points by attending a

conference session and writing up a brief reflection paper about what you learned. Find out more about the conference at <http://www.mtnonprofit.org/2013Conference.aspx>

Tracy Kidder, author of the First-Year Book, Mountains Beyond Mountains will speak on campus on Monday, September 9th at 8:00 PM in the George and Jane Dennison Theatre. Attend the lecture and write a one-page paper describing one aspect of what he discusses that is relevant to our class and why.

The UM Volunteer Fair will be held September 10-11 in the UC from 10 AM to 2 PM. Browse through the Fair and talk with representatives from local nonprofit organizations about their volunteer needs. Write a one-page paper describing 3 different organizations you learned about.

The Learning by Giving Foundation will offer a video contest that could win a local nonprofit organization \$1000 or more in the spring semester! Students in our class have the opportunity to create a short video highlighting a local nonprofit organization that has benefitted from the philanthropy class at UM in the recent past. More details to come...

Letter grades for all assignments are figured as follows:

A = Outstanding - goes beyond expectations

B = Good - above average

C = Satisfactory - meets minimum requirements

D = Unsatisfactory - does not meet some requirements

F = Failing -- Does not meet requirements

Grade	Percent
A	100-93%
A-	92-90%
B+	89-88%
B	87-83%
B-	82-80%
C+	79-78%
C	77-73%
C-	72-70%
D+	69-68%
D	67-63%
F	Below 63%

Class Outline (tentative)

WEEK	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
Week #1: 8/27-8/29	Course Overview, Student Introductions	What is Philanthropy? Definitions, history, motivations Reading #1: Loeb (2010)
Week #2: 9/3-9/5	The Nonprofit Sector: Definition, history, scope, purpose Reading #2: Egger (2004)	Philanthropy and the American Economy – Foundations Reading #3: Trends in Northwest Giving (2012)
Week #3: 9/10-9/12	Social Entrepreneurship: Definition, examples Reading #4: Bornstein Chapt 1 (2004) Reading #5: Girls on the Run (2007)	Community Needs Research
Week #4: 9/17-9/19	Social Entrepreneur <u>Panel</u> Reading #6: Bornstein Chapter 18	Exercise: Give Away \$1 Million, Review previously funded proposals Reading #7: Singer (2006)
Week #5: 9/24-9/26	Small Groups and Decision Making, Former Philanthropy Student <u>Panel</u>	Power, Critique, and Social Policy Reading #8: Rogers (2011) Former Grantee <u>Panel</u>
Week #6: 10/1-10/3	Community Needs Reports 5 Group Presentations	Identify Funding Priorities
Week #7: 10/8-10/10	Identify Funding Priorities, What is an RFP?	Build and Finish the RFP Finish the RFP, Post and Market the RFP
Week #8: 10/15-10/17	Philanthrocapitalism Reading #9: Bishop & Green--Part 1(2008)	Assessing the Impact of Philanthropy Reading #10: Bishop & Green--Part 2 (2008)
Week #9: 10/22-10/24	Power, Critique, and Social Policy Reading #11: Edwards (2008)	Foundation <u>Panel</u>
Week #10: 10/29-10/31	Negotiation Reading #12: Lewicki, Barry & Saunders (2007)	How to read NP financial statements
Week #11: 11/5-11/7	Tips for Reviewing Proposals, Review Score Sheets, Conflict of Interest	Grant Proposal Review
Week #12: 11/12-11/14	Grant Proposal Review	Grant Proposal Review
Week #13: 11/19-11/21	Pick Finalists for Site Visits	Conduct Community-based Site Visits
Week #14: 11/26-11/28	Final Funding Decisions	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Week #15: 12/3-12/5	Future Trends in Philanthropy Reading #13: Bernholz (2013)	Reflection
Week #16: FINALS	Grant Awards Ceremony Thursday, December 12, 10:10 AM. Final Exam and Reflection Papers DUE	

Reading Assignments (additional reading material may be assigned)

1. *We Don't Have to be Saints* from the book Soul of a Citizen, by Paul Rogat Loeb, 2010, pages 42-63
2. “*Brother, Can you Spare a Dime? A Brief History of the Handout*” pages 1-23, by Robert Egger in Begging for Change, 2004, HarperCollins, New York.
3. Trends in Northwest Giving 2012 Report from Philanthropy Northwest at http://www.philanthropynw.org/s_pnw/bin.asp?CID=8175&DID=56039&DOC=FILE.PDF
4. *Restless People* (Chapter 1) by David Bornstein in How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas. 2004, Oxford University Press; Oxford.
5. *Girls on the Run* by Paul Bloom. 2007, Duke University: The Fuqua School of Business. Available online at http://www.caseatduke.org/documents/girlsontherun_case.pdf
6. *Six Qualities of Successful Social Entrepreneurs* (Chapter 18) by David Bornstein in How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas. 2004, Oxford University Press; Oxford.
7. “*What Should a Billionaire Give and What Should You?*” by Peter Singer in The New York Times Magazine, December 17, 2006 at <http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/20061217.htm>
8. “*The Hidden Costs of Million-Dollar Donations*” by Robin Rogers in The Washington Post, December 30, 2011 at http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-hidden-costs-of-million-dollar-donations/2011/12/20/gIQAzpC1QP_story.html
9. “The Age of Philanthrocapitalism” pages 1-12, by Matthew Bishop and Michael Green in Philanthrocapitalism: How Giving Can Save the World, 2008, Bloomsbury Press, New York.
10. “Picassos, Genomes, and Ivory Towers” pages 138-150, by Matthew Bishop and Michael Green in Philanthrocapitalism: How Giving Can Save the World, 2008, Bloomsbury Press, New York.
11. Just Another Emperor? Myths and Realities of Philanthrocapitalism. Michael Edwards, 2008, Demos: A Network for Ideas & Action.
12. *Strategy and Tactics of Integrative Negotiation* pages 58-82, by Roy Lewicki, Bruce Barry and David Saunders in Essentials of Negotiation, 2007, McGraw Hill: New York.
13. “*Philanthropy and Social Economy: Blueprint 2013*” by Lucy Bernholz of Grantcraft at <http://www.grantcraft.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&pageId=3744>

Additional interesting websites and articles...

Resource Generation: Organizing young people with financial wealth to leverage resources and privilege for social change <http://www.resourcegeneration.org/>

United for a Fair Economy: a network of business leaders, investors, and inheritors in the richest five percent of wealth and/or income in the U.S. who believe that growing inequality is not in their best interest, nor the best interest of society http://www.faireconomy.org/responsible_wealth

Patagonia Road Tests New Sustainability Legal Status by Creating a Benefit Corporation, a new legal structure that gives directors legal ability to consider social and environmental missions over financial returns <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-01-04/patagonia-road-tests-new-sustainability-legal-status.html>

Duke University, The Fuqua School of Business, Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship. <http://www.caseatduke.org/>