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PSCI 529.50: Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations

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Political Science 529
Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations
Fall 2017

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Civic Engagement – DHC 020

Course Description
This course provides an introduction to nonprofit organizations and the nonprofit sector within which they are embedded. It investigates such topics as the nature of the nonprofit sector, the diverse kinds of nonprofits in existence, the phenomenon of charitable giving and volunteering, and the legal framework that establishes nonprofits and regulates their activities.

Learning Outcomes
1. Understand the distinguishing features of the nonprofit sector relative to the public and private sectors.
2. Understand the complexity and diversity of the nonprofit sector.
3. Understand the unique legal structure of nonprofits and the role of boards in governing them.
4. Develop skill in writing a business plan for a new nonprofit organization.

Required Text
None. A series of chapters and articles have been posted to our Moodle webpage.

Course Requirements
Grades will be determined by a point system totaling 325 points. All assignments must be completed and turned in by the due date indicated in the syllabus each week.

Students are required to read all assigned readings, participate in the Discussion Forum (70 points total for participation), submit four writing assignments (25 points each), and an integrated paper – business plan (50 points). This is a service learning course and each student will perform 20 hours of service learning/volunteering with a nonprofit organization (55 points). The final exam is a case study exercise (50 points). Full descriptions of each of these assignments are included in the Course Assignments and Assessment section of the syllabus.

Grading Scale is based on 325 point total, assignment points are distributed as follows:

- Discussion Forum = 70 Points Total (5 points each)
- Writing Assignments = 100 Points Total (25 points each)
- Business Plan = 50 Points Total
- Service Learning Project = 55 Points Total
- Final Exam Case Study = 50 Points Total
A 302-325 points
A- 293-301 points
B+ 283-292 points
B 270-282 points
B- 260-269 points
C+ 251-259 points
C 238-250 points
C- 228-237 points
D+ 218-227 points
D 195-217 points
F 194 points or lower

Course Assignments and Assessment

Discussion Forum Guidelines: The Discussion Forum is our opportunity to “talk” together as a class. Each week the instructor will post specific questions for each student to respond to. Questions are designed to have you reflect on the mini-lectures, reading materials, and service learning experiences to express your thoughts, key learnings, insights, questions, etc. You must enter the Discussion Forum more than once per week. The first entry will be your response to the specific Discussion Forum question. Your second entry will be a response or comment to your peers’ postings. This dual entry process will help you stay engaged in the class conversation to post your own comments and respond to classmates’ comments. Your active participation in the Forum (reading each other’s comments and posting your own) will help you to better understand the material in each week’s lessons, and demonstrate your learning and comprehension of the topic areas we will cover. In a typical on-campus class, you would be spending 3 hours per week in the classroom. The discussion forum in the online environment replaces our in-class time, so you should be spending an equivalent amount of time in the discussion forum each week.

****Your initial entry response to each discussion question is due every week on Thursday before 11:00 PM. Your second entry response commenting on at least one of your classmates’ responses is due every week on Sunday before 11:00 PM. It is important to remember these two deadlines each week for the Discussion Forum assignments.****

This is a graduate-level course and your Discussion Forum responses should reflect higher level thinking and interpretation. The instructor hopes to see that you are able to demonstrate not only that you have completed the required reading assignments and understand them, but that you have thought more deeply to analyze and critique the information provided, draw connections between readings and topics throughout the semester and even the professional applicability of the information (when appropriate).

Your Discussion Forum responses and comments will be assessed based on the following criteria:

1) Does the response address the question asked?
2) Does the response demonstrate comprehension of the topic and reading materials?
3) Can you make comparisons/contrasts between this topic and others discussed in class materials?
4) Is it based not only on what has been presented, but also includes insights you have and can justify?

In addition, use academic writing style (proper capitalization, punctuation, spelling and grammar) in all messages to avoid misunderstandings. Do not use emoticons, e-mail acronyms such as lol (laughing out loud), imho (in my humble opinion), tl; dr (too long; didn’t read) and other informal, abbreviated forms of electronic writing. **Students in any of your online courses may be using screen readers or other assistive devices that will not properly read such abbreviations.** Be courteous and write in ways that are accessible and understandable to all members of your online class.

Be sensitive to the perspective of others when expressing ideas. Do not use an authoritarian or judgmental style of writing that discourages open group discussion and trust. Stick to the topic and contribute with comments/questions that move the dialogue forward or into deeper reflection. Debate and humor are welcome here.

The instructor will issue Discussion Forum/Class Participation points each week throughout the semester so you can track your progress and grade. All Discussion Forum entry responses are submitted in Moodle.

To supplement our online discussion, we will also schedule Collaborate live chat sessions periodically throughout the semester.

**Written Assignment Guidelines:** All writing assignments will be turned in on Moodle as Word documents (NO PDF DOCUMENTS). There are two sets of writing assignments for this course, plus a written final exam. The first writing assignment set (consisting of two different assignments) will be based on information you learn from subscribing to and reading the free, daily Nonprofit Quarterly digest. This set of writing assignments is due in the first part of the semester. The second set (three different assignments) will be a business plan. This set will be due during the second half of the semester.

This is a large class. The instructor will try to give back assignments with grades and comments within 7 to 10 school days after the assignment due date.

**NONPROFIT QUARTERLY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** For the duration of this class you will need to subscribe to the FREE Nonprofit Quarterly newsletter (NPQ). On this website, scroll down to find the “Get NPQ’S FREE Daily Newsletters” on the right side bar. Enter your email address and you will begin to receive their daily digest of national nonprofit news. These digests include a fairly wide variety of short articles about interesting and provocative things happening in the nonprofit sector. The NPQ editors scan nonprofit news from across the country and globe, and write up short reviews/responses/editorials about the stories and provide links to the original sources. **Your first assignment is to choose 3 articles from any of the recent (NPQ) digests that**
are of interest to you and also have some relation to the material we are covering in class. This assignment is due September 19. Write a 3 to 4 page paper describing:

- Main points of the articles (include all 3 articles)
- Why these articles are of interest to you
- How the articles relate to our course
- Applicability/impact of the information in your work or study

Your second assignment is to choose one article from any of the recent NPQ digests dealing with a federal, state or local government policy that impacts nonprofit organizations. This assignment is due October 10. Write a 3 to 4 page paper that:

- Describes the background and purpose of the policy
- Explains the level that is driving the policy (federal, state, local)
- Explains the pros and cons of this policy for the nonprofit sector
- Discusses applicability/impact of the information in your work or study

For these two NPQ-related writing assignments, include the title, author and Nonprofit Quarterly publication date for each article you choose. Please feel free to use the writing and reference style preferred in your specific disciplinary area, such as, MLA, Chicago, or APA. Your first NPQ assignment is due September 19 and the second one is due October 10. Each of these writing assignments is worth 25 points and will be assessed based on completion of the stated requirements.

BUSINESS PLAN PREP WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: Your long paper for this class will be a complete business plan (see below for a further description of the business plan). For these “prep” writing assignments, you will have the opportunity to write specific portions of your business plan and turn them in for feedback before you turn in your full business plan assignment. Essentially, you are turning in draft copies of sections of your business plan for these two writing assignments.

Business Plan Prep Assignment #1: Complete parts I, II, and III of your business plan and turn in by November 7. This assignment is worth 25 points.

Business Plan Prep Assignment #2: Complete parts IV, V, VI and VII of your business plan along with revisions of parts I-III and turn in by November 21. Don’t forget to include revisions from your first draft with this assignment. This assignment is worth 25 points.

The Business Plan Assignment: Your long paper in this course is to write a complete business plan for a new nonprofit that you are going to invent.

A business plan (for a new nonprofit) is an important tool for developing any new business or nonprofit endeavor. It requires careful thinking about critical aspects of an organization’s development and function. If done well, the plan can be an ideal document to secure financial support for start-up. The business plan is a written document describing the organization, its intended product or services, the clients or members it will seek to serve, its marketplace competition, its unique competitive advantage, and its projected fundraising needs and
timeline. Although it can be prepared by any existing organization, it is especially important for a new nonprofit seeking to test and clarify its success strategy and/or seek start-up funding from foundations or individual donors. It must be written both for an internal audience such as its developers, and an external audience such as potential donors.

Your final paper will be 10-12 pages in length (double-spaced). Most of the analysis will come from your imagination, so have some fun with this while maintaining a realistic perspective. Include citations where appropriate. Think of this as a document you will provide to potential donors/investors/collaborators before you meet with them.

I. Cover Page

Identify the name of the proposed nonprofit and identify that this document is a Business Plan; identify the organizers (you and founding board members and their titles/professional affiliations) and your contact information. Identify your board members based on who you think would be good people to have on a founding board to add value and legitimacy to the new endeavor. Use a logo or some imagery to represent your proposed organization.

II. History

Who is proposing this new nonprofit? What is the nature of the proposed nonprofit? What community need is currently unmet? What evidence do you have of this need (local/statewide statistics, etc.)? Why is this an important unmet need in your community?

III. Mission and Vision

What is the guiding mission and vision of the proposed nonprofit? Carefully read assigned reading material on this topic to help craft your mission and vision statements. What public value does it seek to create? (Hopefully you can offer something more inspirational than formalistic). What are the founding principles that will launch this work? Please label the founding principles with a header in your paper.

IV. Market

What does your market look like? (That is, who are your targeted clients? What competition will you face? Is there a unique opportunity currently available? What competitive advantages do you imagine having?). Who are your potential collaborators – what other community organizations will you work with? Who are your stakeholders?

V. Strategy

What is your strategy for success? (This refers to the things you will have to concentrate time and resources on in order to realize your vision). How do you know this will be a successful strategy based on researched best practices in the field? How will you market your programs
and services? Who are the key decision makers and doers? How will you evaluate your work and measure success (don’t say “I don’t know this yet”)?

VI.  Funding

How much funding will you need to get started and how do you propose to raise it? What are the early operational and programmatic expenses you anticipate? Provide specific examples of the expenses you will incur, using a table format works well for this. What are your initial plans for sustainability? What is the timeframe for start-up and implementation?

VII. Persuasive Conclusion

Conclude with a brief persuasive summary that will compel potential supporters to join forces with you in support of this effort, a type of “call to action”.

This final business plan assignment is due December 5 and is worth 50 points. It will be assessed based on the changes you incorporate from feedback in each of the prep assignments, quality of writing, level of thought and detail, and the overall, well developed nature of the plan and how it flows together as one final document.

WRITING GUIDELINES: All written assignments should be turned in on Moodle as DOCX files, not PDF. All assignments will be graded for clarity, grammar, content, and overall readability. Strong academic writing is expected for each assignment. The University of Montana Writing and Public Speaking Center offers students in all disciplines free support as they write papers or prepare presentations for any course. Welcoming all students, The Writing Center provides a learning environment where students can engage in supportive conversations about their work and receive feedback at any point during their process. To make an appointment and learn more about The Writing and Public Speaking Center, visit www.umt.edu/writingcenter or call 243-2266.

Service Learning Guidelines: This class is a service learning class. Service Learning at UM is a method of teaching and learning in which students, faculty and community partners work together to enhance student learning by applying academic knowledge in a community-based setting. Student work addresses the needs of the community, as identified through collaboration with community or tribal partners, while meeting instructional objectives through faculty-structured service work and critical reflection meant to prepare students to be civically responsible members of the community. At its best, service learning enhances and deepens students’ understanding of an academic discipline by facilitating the integration of theory and practice, while providing them with experience that develops life skills and engages them in critical reflection about individual, institutional, and social ethics.

In order to gain hands-on knowledge of the nonprofit sector, students will perform 20 hours of service learning/volunteering with a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a minimum budget of $25,000 and at least one paid staff member. The course timeline assumes students will perform an average of 2 hours a week of service between approximately September 22 and December 8. The service learning component of this class is worth a total of 55 points.
Service Learning Agreement (10 points): Complete this document with the person at the nonprofit organization who will supervise your service learning hours (the form is available in the Resources tab on Moodle). Due September 22.

Service Learning Video (10 Points): Create a short video (no longer than 3 minutes) using your cell phone or other convenient device. The video should be shot on-site at your service learning organization (if appropriate), being cautious to adhere to any confidentiality concerns of your site. The video should include an overview of the organization you are serving at, their mission statement, primary services provided by the organization, and a brief description of the service you will be involved in at the organization. These videos should be informative and fun so feel free to get creative. Videos should be posted on a website, YouTube seems to be the easiest one for most people. Here is a [link](#) to a short tutorial to help you upload your videos to YouTube. Please post as “unlisted”, not public or private. You will need to post the link to your video in our Moodle Discussion Forum for that week by 11 PM on September 29. Think about sharing your video on your social media sites to inform your network about your service learning project.

Service Learning Reflection Paper (35 points): Reflection is an integral aspect of service learning. Through reflection, students should demonstrate key learning achieved through the service experience. Your service learning reflection paper should be between 4 and 5 pages long, double-spaced and typed. This paper is due during finals week and will be turned in with your final exam by 11:00 PM on December 15. Writing should be guided as follows:

- Reflect on the assumptions you brought to the course, how did your perspectives about the nonprofit sector change?
- Reflect on your specific service learning experience – what worked? What would you change? How did you feel about the process? What advice do you have for the organization where you served?
- Reflect on how you will use what you learned in this class in your future personal, professional, and/or academic endeavors.

Documentation of Completion of Service Learning Hours: You must complete 20 service learning hours by Friday, December 8. The instructor will send a survey link to your service learning supervisor to ask them to confirm completion of your hours and provide input about your service.

Final Exam Guidelines: The final exam will consist of a case study analysis and is worth 50 points. The case study will be available in Moodle on December 9. It will be due (along with your service learning reflection paper) by 11:55 PM on December 15 during finals week.
EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES! Yes, even graduate students can earn extra credit 😊. I fully encourage attendance and participation at nonprofit professional development conferences and workshops. In some locales, there are many options to participate in trainings offered specifically for people in the nonprofit sector at low or no-cost. For example, in the Kalispell area the Flathead Nonprofit Development Partnership offers a series of workshops and so does the Missoula Nonprofit Network. There are several other nonprofit networks around the state, click here to find out if there is one in your community. And, this year the Montana Nonprofit Association will host its annual conference in Missoula from September 26 to 28. They offer a discounted rate for students. If you attend a professional development training/workshop/conference you can earn extra credit by writing up a 2-page reflection paper that describes the key things you learned, and the relevancy of it to class and/or the profession. Extra credit papers should be turned in within two weeks of the event you attended. Extra credit is worth 5 points, students can do up to two extra credit assignments in the semester.

Due Dates

A late written assignment will be penalized one full grade for each day it is late unless arrangements are made with the instructor ahead of time.

Grades

I use the Joule Grader feature in Moodle to record grades for your assignments and provide you with comments and feedback. Be sure to check this area of the grade sheet.

Backup Copies

You are responsible for keeping back-up copies of all work that you do for the class. Note: If using any of the class assignments for your final MPA portfolio, it is the student’s responsibility to keep track of individual grades and professor feedback.

IT Support

Please make sure that your Internet browser settings meet the requirements to be Moodle compatible. Call UM Online by phone, (406) 243-4999 or email umonline-help@umontana.edu if technological problems arise. There is no on-call assistance during nights and weekends. For a total Moodle system failure, students will be sent an email by the University of Montana. Your instructor cannot provide IT support so please contact the appropriate University staff if an issue arises.

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.

**Students with Disabilities**
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

**Important Communication Tips**

**Email:**
The best way to reach me is by sending an email. I am on email regularly during typical week-day work hours. I will always try to respond to emails in a timely manner (typically within 48 hours). However, I do not check email regularly during weekends.

We are required to use our designated University of Montana email accounts.

**Telephone:**
You may call me at my office number listed on the front page of the syllabus. I love talking or meeting with students.

**Appointments:**
I do work on campus, so for those of you in the Missoula area, I am happy to schedule in-person appointments.

Because this is an online class, we won’t be able to see each other so it makes it more challenging for me to know if you are having difficulty with the course, are confused, or just plain frustrated. Please contact me via email, phone, or by setting up an in-person appointment if you need help. I want you to be successful in this class.
Course Weekly Schedule Fall, 2017:

Week 1: Introduction to the Course and Classmates (Due September 2)
Read the course materials in Moodle and respond to Discussion Forum question.

Assigned Reading:
- Course Welcome & Information
- Course Syllabus
- Course Assignments
- Nonprofit Resources

Watch: Course welcome from Dr. Vernon

Lesson 1: Overview of the Nonprofit Sector (Due Sept. 7)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:
- Peter Frumkin, *on Being Nonprofit*, 2002, Chapter 1, Pages. 1-16.
- Robert Egger, *Begging for Change*, Chapter 1, Pages 1-23

Watch: TED Talk entitled “The way we think about charity is dead wrong” by Dan Pallotta

Lesson 2: The Nature and Diversity of Nonprofit Organizations (Due Sept. 14)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:
- Montana Nonprofit Association http://www.mtnonprofit.org/ peruse the website and fully read the 2017 Nonprofit Sector Economic Impact Report

Lesson 3: Nonprofit Revenue Streams (Due Sept. 21)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:
Assignments Due:
Nonprofit Quarterly Writing Assignment #1 Due Tuesday, September 19
Service Learning Agreement (signed by you and your supervisor) Due Friday, September 22

Lesson 4: Civil Society and the Concept of Deservingness (Due Sept. 28).
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Assignment Due:
Service Learning Video Link posted in Discussion Forum Due Friday, September 29. Post your link and then watch your fellow students’ videos to learn more about the organizations where they are serving.

Lesson 5: Philanthropy (Due Oct. 5)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:
Philanthropy Northwest, *2017 Trends in Giving Report*, read the full report that is a PDF file on this website.

*World Giving Index Report* 2016 Infographic
How Millennials Give, blog by Max Evans

View the Charity-Philanthropy Continuum

Lesson 6: Federal Policy Implications for Nonprofit Organizations (Due Oct. 12)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum Questions.

Assigned Reading:

Urban Institute’s National Study of Nonprofit-Government Contracts and Grants 2013: State Profiles. Read pgs. 1-12, and MT pgs. 55-56, and one other state profile of their choosing to compare differences and discuss why – include comparisons with national stats too)

Urban Wire: Nonprofits and Philanthropy. How Vulnerable are Nonprofits under Trump’s Skinny Budget?

Johnson Amendment, MNA Congressional Letter

Assignment Due:
Nonprofit Quarterly Writing Assignment #2 Due Tuesday, October 10

Lesson 7: Lawful Incorporation and the Legal Duties of Board Members (Due Oct. 19)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum Questions.

Assigned Reading:


Montana Nonprofit Act: MCA 35-2-213 and MCA 35-2-416

Montana Nonprofit Association, Articles of Incorporation

Montana Nonprofit Association, By-Laws

Lesson 8: Legal Duties: A Case Study (Due Oct. 26)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:


A Board Member’s Guide to Nonprofit Overhead, in Blue Avocado by Masaoka & Zimmerman, September, 2014
Lesson 9: Organizational Mission and Vision (Due Nov. 2)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Mission and vision statements of the Montana Nonprofit Association (excerpted from Business Plan).


Lesson 10: Ethics, Lobbying, Advocacy (Due Nov. 9)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:
Accountability and Ethics: Rotting from the Head Down

New York Times article, Nonprofits are Balking at Law on Disclosing Political Donors

Assignment Due:
Complete Parts I, II and III of your Business Plan as described previously in the syllabus, Due Tuesday, November 7.

Lesson 11: Strategic Planning (Due Nov. 16)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Lesson 12: Market Analysis (Due Friday Nov. 24 – Happy Thanksgiving!)
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

*7 Steps to Creating Your Best Nonprofit Marketing Plan Ever*, Network for Good

Assignment Due:
Complete parts IV, V, VI, and VII of your Business Plan as described previously in the syllabus AND submit revisions for parts I-III, Due Tuesday, November 21. ***NOTE: Read ahead to Lesson 13 Fundraising to understand how to incorporate fundraising ideas into your business plan.***

**Lesson 13: Fundraising (Due Nov. 30)**
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:
- Wolf, Chapter 8 “Fundraising”, pages 235-273
- Association of Fundraising Professionals Code of Ethical Standards
- [Online Fundraising – must know stats](#)
- Podcast – Nonprofit Radio Hub. There are many podcasts related to fundraising on this site. Scroll to the bottom to find [John Haydon – The Changing Landscapes of Social Media Fundraising](#)

**Lesson 14: Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Future Trends (Due Dec. 7)**
Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:
  - [Models and Components of a Great Nonprofit Dashboard](#), Nonprofit Quarterly, May 9, 2016

Assignments Due:
1. Documentation of Completion of Service Learning Hours due Friday, December 8. This is an online survey completed by your service learning supervisor.
2. Final version of the complete Business Plan is due Tuesday, December 5.

**Final Exam Week:**
Final exam (includes case study analysis and service learning reflection paper) will post in Moodle no later than December 9. Both the exam and your service learning reflection paper are due Friday, December 15 by 11:00 PM.