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PSCI 529.50: Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations

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Political Science 529
Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations
Fall 2015

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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 (75 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 (50 points). The final exam is a case study exercise (50 points). Full descriptions of each of these assignments is 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 =	75 Points Total (5 points each)
Writing Assignments =	100 Points Total (25 points each)
Business Plan =	50 Points Total
Service Learning Project =	50 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, 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.

******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, 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 reflect an understanding of the concept or question?
- 3) 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.

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 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 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](#). On this website, scroll down to find the "Get NPQ'S FREE 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. Your assignment is to choose 3 articles from any of the recent digests that are of interest to you and also have some relation to the material we are covering in class. Write a 3 to 4 page paper describing:

- Main points of the 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

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. You will do this assignment twice, the first one is due September 16 and the second one is due October 7. 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 October 28. 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 18. 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.

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.

II. History

Who is proposing this new nonprofit? What is the nature of the proposed nonprofit? What community need is currently unmet?

III. Mission and Vision

What is the guiding mission and vision of the proposed nonprofit? What public value does it seek to create? (Hopefully you can offer something more inspirational than formalistic). What are the founding guiding principles that will launch this work? Please label the founding guiding 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 few things you will have to concentrate time and resources on in order to realize your vision). 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?

VI. Funding

How much funding will you need to get started and how do you propose to raise it? What are the early operational expenses you anticipate? 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.

This assignment is due December 9 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.

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 UM Writing Center is available as a resource to you. To learn more visit the [Writing Center](#).

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 21 and December 4. The service learning component of this class is worth a total of 50 points.

Service Learning Agreement (5 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 18.

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, such as Google Hangouts or a private account on YouTube, that hosts and stores files. You will need to post the link to your video in our Moodle Discussion Forum for that week by 11 PM on September 25.

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 17. 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 4. The instructor will provide you with a form to have your

supervisor complete and email to andrea.vernon@mso.umt.edu no later than Friday, December 4 with a short statement to indicate that you successfully completed your service hours and the type of service you completed.

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 10. It will be due (along with your service learning reflection paper) by 11:00 PM on December 17 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. And, this year the Montana Nonprofit Association will host its [annual conference](#) in Billings from September 30 to October 2. 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.

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.

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](#).

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

Emails:

- 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 have a smart phone, nor do I check email very much 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.

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:

Lesson 1: Overview of the Nonprofit Sector (Due Sept. 3)

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.

Board Source, "What is the Nonprofit Sector?" Reprinted in Ott and Dicke, *The Nature of the Nonprofit Sector*, 2012. Pages 10-11.

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. 10)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Helmut Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, 2005, p. 40-41.

Sherlock and Gravelle, An Overview of the Nonprofit and Charitable Sector, Congressional Research Service Report. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40919.pdf> Pages 1-15.

Montana Nonprofit Association <http://www.mtnonprofit.org/> peruse the website and fully read the 2015 Nonprofit Sector Report

Lesson 3: Nonprofit Revenue Streams (Due Sept. 17)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Sherlock and Gravelle, An Overview of the Nonprofit and Charitable Sector, Congressional Research Service Report. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40919.pdf> Pages 21-34.

Dropkin and Hayden, "Types of Nonprofit Income" Reprinted in Ott and Dicke, *Understanding Nonprofit Organizations*, 2012. Pages 253-259.

Sectors of the American Economy – Diagram

Assignments Due:

Nonprofit Quarterly Writing Assignment #1 Due Wednesday, September 16

Service Learning Agreement (signed by you and your supervisor) Due Friday, September 18

Lesson 4: Voluntary Associations and the Concept of Civil Society (Due Sept. 24).

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy*, pp. 21-29.

Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 2000, Chapter 1.

Assignment Due:

Service Learning Video Link posted in Discussion Forum Due Friday, September 25

Lesson 5: Volunteering as a Moral Activity & Deservingness (Due Oct. 1)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Robert Coles, "The Call of Service: Satisfactions," reprinted in Ott and Dicke, *The Nature of the Nonprofit Sector*, 2012, pp. 297-307.

Peter Frumkin, *On Being Nonprofit*, pp. 16-19.

Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth," reprinted in Ott and Dicke, *The Nature of the Nonprofit Sector*, 2012, pp. 58-62.

Lesson 6: Philanthropy (Due Oct. 8)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Bishop and Green, *Philanthrocapitalism: How Giving Can Change the World*, 2008, Chapter 1 and 2, Pages 1-29.

Dees and Anderson, Framing a Theory of Social Entrepreneurship: Building on Two Schools of Practice and Thought, in *Research on Social Entrepreneurship: Understanding and Contributing to an Emerging Field*. ARNOVA Occasional Paper Series Vol. 1, Number 3, 2006, Pages 39-66.

Philanthropy Northwest, [2014 Trends in Giving Report](#), read the full report that is a PDF file on this website.

[World Giving Index 2014](#), read the full report that is a PDF file on this website.

Assignment Due:

Nonprofit Quarterly Writing Assignment #2 Due Wednesday, October 7

Lesson 7: Lawful Incorporation and the Legal Duties of Board Members (Due Oct. 15)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum Questions.

Assigned Reading:

Stephen R. Block, "Board of Directors," reprinted in Ott and Dicke, *Understanding Nonprofit Organizations*, 2012, pp. 7-17.

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. 22)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Office of Consumer Protection, Montana Department of Justice, "Montana Attorney General's Investigative Report of Greg Mortenson and Central Asia Institute," April 2012, pp. 1-31

[A Board Member's Guide to Nonprofit Overhead](#), in *Blue Avocado* by Masaoka & Zimmerman, September, 2014

Lesson 9: Ethics, Lobbying, Advocacy (Due Oct. 29)

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 Wednesday, October 28.

Lesson 10: Organizational Mission and Vision (Due Nov. 5)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

Thomas Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization in the 21st Century*, 22-25.

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

Burt Nanus and Stephen Dobbs, *Leaders Who Make a Difference*, 1999, pp. 75-88.

Harvard Business Review, (blog, Jan. 31, 2011), "Do You have a Mission Statement, or Are You on a Mission?"

Lesson 11: Strategic Planning (Due Nov. 12)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignment identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

David La Piana, *The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution*, (2008) Chapter 4: Organizational Identity and Strategy Formation, and Chapter 5: Developing a Strategy Screen, pages 45-70.

Lesson 12: Market Analysis (Due Nov. 19)

Read the mini-lecture and respond to the Discussion Forum questions. (No readings this week).

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 Wednesday, November 18.

Lesson 13: Fundraising (Due Friday Nov. 27 – Happy Thanksgiving!)

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

Lesson 14: Evaluation and Performance Measurement (Due Dec. 3)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

M. Hendricks, M. Plantz, & K. Pritchard, "Measuring Outcomes of United Way-Funded Programs," reprinted in Ott and Dicke, *Understanding Nonprofit Organizations*, 2012, pp. 321-329.

[Association of Fundraising Professionals Code of Ethical Standards](#), 2014

Assignment Due:

Documentation of Completion of Service Learning Hours due Friday, December 4. This is a form emailed to your instructor from your service learning supervisor.

Lesson 15: Trends and Future of the Nonprofit Sector (Due Dec. 10)

Read the mini-lecture and the reading assignments identified below and respond to the Discussion Forum questions.

Assigned Reading:

L. Crutchfield and H. McLeod Grant, *Forces for Good*, 2008, Chapter 1: Forces for Good, pages 11-29.

[Leadership New England: Essential Shifts for a Thriving Nonprofit Sector](#), by Third Sector New England, 2014.

Assignment Due:

Final version of the complete Business Plan is due Wednesday, December 9.

Final Exam Week:

Final exam (includes case study analysis and service learning reflection paper) will post in Moodle no later than Thursday, December 10. Both the exam and your service learning reflection paper are due Thursday, December 17 by 11:00 PM.