Issues in Not-for-Profit Management (RPAD 613)

Fall 2016
Monday 5:45p – 9:35p, Husted Hall 204

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth A.M. Searing
Office hours: Monday 2:00p – 3:30p or by appointment
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I. Course Learning Objectives

Deepened understanding of:
• the unique context of the not-for-profit sector
• current and future issues with which nonprofit managers and leaders are grappling
• values trade-offs inherent in various nonprofit organizational dilemmas
• alternative management and leadership strategies

Increased competence in:
• practice of different management elements in the nonprofit sector
• leveraging the strengths and handling challenges in a team environment
• writing management memos and reports
• utilizing research techniques for application to practice
• documenting references accurately and consistently
• contributing to a professional discourse of ideas and techniques

II. Course Readings

• There are substantial additional readings that will be available on Blackboard.
• There will be some in-class readings, as well, involving case studies and classroom activities. Please let me know if this will present obstacles or challenges for you.

The text is available through the U Albany bookstore and several online retailers.
Selected Journals of Interest

- **Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly**
  Journal of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA)
- **Nonprofit Management and Leadership**
- **Nonprofit Quarterly (Industry journal and daily newswire)**
- **Voluntas**
  Journal of the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR)
- **Stanford Social Innovation Review**

### III. Classroom Approach

This course uses a technique called Team-Based Learning (or TBL). A standard class assumes that information is best presented (often in lecture format) during class time; this means that group work and applications of the knowledge occur outside of class. The TBL approach, like the “flipped classroom,” uses time outside of class for the ingestion of knowledge through readings or mixed media. This means that class time can be used for applications and activities. Unlike the flipped classroom, the TBL approach emphasizes decision-making and the real-world role of teamwork. You will work with the same team throughout the semester. Though individual effort is still the largest component of your grade, your team and how well it functions will play a role in your success in this class.

### IV. Grading and Assignments:

**A. Individual Performance**

- Individual Readiness Assessments 7.5%
- Project Draft 10%
- Final Project 50%

**B. Team Performance**

- Team Readiness Assessments 7.5%
- International Memo 10%
- Participation 10%

**C. Team Peer Review** 5%

100%
1. **Readiness Assessment Tests (RATs) (15%)**. The RATs are designed to measure your comprehension of the reading assignments for each class. Each RAT has five questions that you will take individually and without notes. After you submit your answers for the individual RAT (or iRAT), your team will take the exact same RAT as a group (tRAT). You will be able to discuss and defend your answers within your group until you reach a consensus, at which point you select answers to the tRAT. The team will all receive the same grade for the tRAT. Each question on the iRAT and tRAT is worth a point, meaning that each week you will be eligible to receive a total of 10 points. Over the course of the semester, you will be able to earn 120 points for the iRAT and tRAT combined. Up to twenty points (or two missed classes worth) can be dropped at the end of the semester. These scores will constitute 15% of your your final grade (7.5% each for individual and team assessments).

2. **Class attendance and participation (10%)**. Participation and attendance account for 10% of the final course grade. Students are expected to attend each class on a timely basis so that they will benefit maximally from the class lectures and discussion. No formal attendance is taken, but I will often collect written materials from group activities we do in class (in addition to the RATs). Therefore, missed class will be reflected in your grade and, likely, in your peer evaluation at the end of the semester. If you find you must miss a class, please send me a notification via email.

3. **International Memorandum (10%)**. This memorandum offers the opportunity to explore the comparative nonprofit field beyond the broad approach used in class. Using a country selected by the group, this memorandum should give a snapshot of the chosen country, then explore the differences between the government, corporate, and nonprofit sectors based on the readings from class and outside sources. The audience for this paper is the professor, and the documentation should be accurate and consistent. The memo should be 6-7 double-spaced pages.

4. **Final Portfolio (45%), Draft (10%), and Presentation (5%)**: This portfolio integrates and expands on the materials learned in class. Each student should pick a nonprofit organization (with the approval of the professor) and discuss the topics covered in class in the context of their chosen organization. The two pages dedicated to each aspect of management should be written following discussion of the concept in class. To ensure timely and accurate completion of the portfolio, a draft of the components already covered will be turned in mid-semester. This gives you the opportunity to get feedback on your work prior to the final product. The final portfolio should be approximately 25-30 double-spaced pages. The report’s analysis or argument should be supported with substantial secondary sources from the
reading, and at least five sources from outside the class readings. Be accurate, comprehensive, and consistent in documentation. The audience for this paper is as an organizational analysis or report for the nonprofit. For the presentation, you should select two of the substantive areas covered in the portfolio and prepare a handout summarizing your findings. You will briefly present this in a casual discussion of no longer than 5 minutes during the final exam period.

5. **Peer Evaluation (5%)**. Each team member will evaluate the helpfulness of the other members of their team at both the midterm point (for guidance) and the end of the term (for a grade). You will have a set number of points to distribute amongst the rest of your group to assess their contributions, plus will have the opportunity to give written verbal feedback.

6. **Final Grade**: Final grades will be based on class attendance and participation, homework assignments, and semester projects, as described above. Final letter grades will be assigned as followed:

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<th>Grade</th>
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7. **Late and Make-up Policy**: Since part of the RAT process is a team effort, there are no late or make-up RATs. For more substantial written assignments (the International Memo, Final Portfolio, and the Portfolio Draft), these assignments are due at the
beginning of class. A written assignment turned in within 24 hours of the beginning of the class where it was due is eligible for 90% of the original point total. A written assignment submitted between 24-48 hours after it was due is eligible for 80% of the original point total. No written assignments will be accepted more than 48 hours after they are due except for a documented emergency situation.  A documented emergency situation is hospitalization (with accompanying paperwork), the death of an immediate family member, or situations of similar magnitude. All emergencies must have documentation, and the treatment of each is totally within the professor’s discretion.

**IV. Other Policies**

**Academic Dishonesty:** Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please refer to University at Albany’s Academic Code at: [http://www.albany.edu/content_images/AcademicIntegrity.pdf](http://www.albany.edu/content_images/AcademicIntegrity.pdf) for the definition of academic dishonesty. Ignorance of these policies will not excuse dishonest conduct. Violations of these standards will result in one or more of the following penalties: reduction in the grade for the assignment, failure of the assignment, failure of the course, or expulsion. In all cases, a Violation of Academic Integrity Report will be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies to be placed in your university file, with copies provided to you, the department head, and the Dean of Rockefeller College.

**Accommodations for Disabilities:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

(1) contact the Disability Resource Center; and

(2) provide the instructor with the appropriate and official university documentation indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to University at Albany students with disabilities, contact:
Disability Resource Center, University at Albany, State University of New York
BA 120, 1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12222
(518) 442-5490 (voice)
Director: cmalloch@albany.edu
[http://www.albany.edu/disability/](http://www.albany.edu/disability/)
**Electronics:** Cellphones are not allowed to be used while class is in session unless it has been cleared by the instructor ahead of time. You can use your laptop or tablets only for taking notes, reading class materials, or doing in-class exercise. No other programs are allowed in class. The instructor reserves the right to view your screen (in addition to the fact that most of your neighbors can see it anyway) or to require you to turn it off. Any violation of the above policy can result in either temporary or permanent revocation of the privilege to use electronics in class.

**Course Evaluations:** Your honest assessment of this course is an important source of feedback for both me and the department. We will have course evaluations both mid-semester and at the conclusion. These are an important part of curriculum development, so please take the time to fill out the evaluations thoughtfully.
References are included on the syllabus for your information. They are not part of the required course reading, but are good resources for additional information on the topic.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Aug. 29  Introductions, Syllabus Review, and Discussion

Reading in Class:

Sept. 5  No Class (Labor Day)

Sept. 12  Foundations of the Nonprofit Sector


Reference

The Social Sector Across the World


Nonprofit Manager as Leader


No Class (Rosh Hashanah)

Nonprofit Manager as Governor


Kearns, Kevin P. “Effective Nonprofit Board Members as Seen by Executives and Board Chairs,” Nonprofit Management and Leadership 5 (Summer 1995), 337-358. (Blackboard)

“Right from the Start: Responsibilities of Directors and Officers of Not-for-Profit Corporations,” Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, New York State Charities Bureau. (Blackboard)


**Oct. 17  Nonprofit Manager as Advocate**


**Oct. 24  Nonprofit Manager as Government Citizen and Contractor**


Saidel, Judith R., and Harlan, Sharon L. “Contracting and Patterns of Nonprofit Governance,” Nonprofit Management and Leadership 8 (Spring 1998), 243-260 (Blackboard)

References


Oct. 31 Nonprofit Manager as Public Relations Expert


Nov. 7 Nonprofit Manager as Human Resources Director


Reference

Nov. 14 Nonprofit Manager as Resource Developer


Searing, Elizabeth A.M., and Young, Dennis. (Forthcoming.) “Feeding the Zoo.” In The Social Enterprise Zoo. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. (Blackboard)


Nov. 21 Nonprofit Manager as Financial Guru


**References**

**Nov. 28 Nonprofit Manager as Program Evaluator**

*There is little evidence, however, that organizations can reliably measure organizational performance at the institutional level, much less at the community and/or sectoral levels at a time when sophisticated assessment methodologies are in demand* (Flynn and Hodgkinson, 2001:5)


Wheatley, Margaret and Kellner-Rogers, Myron. 1998. “What Do We Measure and Why?” *the New England Nonprofit Quarterly* (Fall/Winter), 6-9. (Blackboard)

**References**


**Dec. 5**  
*Nonprofit Manager as Strategist*


**Dec. 12**  
*Future Trends in the Nonprofit Sector*


Harris, Margaret. 2012. “Nonprofits and Business: Toward a Subfield of Nonprofit Studies.” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 41 (5), 892-902. (Blackboard)


**Dec. 19**  
*Portfolio Selection Presentations and Course Wrap-Up*