NONPROFITS AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
RPAD 616 – Fall 2013

Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany
Department of Public Administration and Policy

Professor Jennifer E. Dodge

Class Location: Husted 017
Class Time: Tuesday 5:45-8:45 pm
Office location: Milne Hall 308
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:00 pm and by appointment
Email: jdodge@albany.edu
Office phone: 442-5274

Course Description
This course addresses the role of nonprofits organizations in creating social change in a democracy. The course will focus on structures, strategies and tactics that nonprofit organizations can and do use to make change at individual, policy, and societal levels. Theoretical and case study readings focus on the challenges, paradoxes and successes of a variety of social change initiatives. A central organizing concept for this class is that creating social change is a challenging, long-term project, and that organizations trying to create social change must engage in a different kind of efficiency that has to do with what I call “doing double duty.” Doing double duty means making the most of one’s limited resources by working simultaneously toward multiple goals. This organizing concept will inform discussions of strategy, tactics, and goals of social change.

While this class will focus on nonprofit organizations, a central aim is to provide students who work or plan to work in nonprofits, government agencies or any other organization that has a public purpose with the opportunity to learn tools of social change. Through class discussions, exercises, and a service learning component, students will learn to apply these tools in diverse institutional settings and policy domains. The service learning component provides students with an opportunity to interact directly with a nonprofit organization in the Capital District or surrounding area to complete a research project that documents and evaluates a piece of the work that it does.

Course objectives: By the end of the course, students should be able to:
1. Analyze and assess opportunities for improving the effectiveness of social change organizations along these dimensions: organizational strategy, organizational structure, and theory of change
2. Examine and critique the tactics and strategies that nonprofit organizations employ to pursue social change goals
3. Analyze and describe social problems from a social justice perspective that acknowledges the efficacy of affected individuals and populations, and exposes root causes of the issue
4. Apply a social justice approach to nonprofit work by learning how to:
   a. Communicate social change efforts
   b. Marshal resources to affect change
   c. Identify ways of achieving impacts beyond specific organizational goals
5. Identify how scarce resources can be most effectively used to meet multiple goals simultaneously
Text Books
You may purchase required books through Mary Jane books at 215 Western Avenue.

Required:

For doctoral students

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard at https://blackboard.albany.edu/. Use the same login and password required for MyUAlbany.

Assignments
*Note: assignments for doctoral students are listed below.*

Commentaries
To practice applying course concepts to real world cases and students’ own experience, students are required to submit short commentaries for designed classes that relate to the topic of the day. The assignment for each class is listed on the syllabus. Importantly, the commentaries should not be summaries of the reading. Instead they are opportunities to apply the concepts from the readings to real social change organizations or case studies, including the one that you will chose for your organizational assessments (see below). Students should be prepared to share their commentaries in class each week. As a class, we will work together to discuss them for the purposes of developing your skills in analyzing and critiquing social change efforts.
- Assignments should be no more than 1 page in length, unless otherwise specified.
- Write all commentaries in complete sentences and paragraphs, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font, and number the pages. Do not use cover pages.
- Submit all commentaries electronically on blackboard the day before class at 2pm on the designated date and bring a copy to class to discuss (electronic versions are fine). I will not accept late commentaries.

Organizational Assessments
To assess your understanding of course materials and your ability to apply course concepts to real-life social change efforts, each student is required to write 3 organizational assessments throughout the course. Each organizational assessment will require students to use course materials to define and analyze different organizational and social change efforts. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be distributed in class and posted on blackboard several weeks before the assignment is due.
- Submit all organizational assessments electronically on blackboard at 11:59pm on the designated date.
- Assignments should be no longer than 5 pages in length.
- Write all assessments in complete sentences and paragraphs, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font, and number the pages. Do not use cover pages. *I will return essays that do not meet these guidelines to be rewritten, and the late penalty will apply (see grading below).*
• You may provide tables and figures to support your arguments; place them at the end of the paper. Bibliographies, tables and figures do not count towards page length.
• All sources should be in MLA citation style. For guidelines on Citations and Sources see Appendix A.

To improve the quality of organizational assessments, you may submit for feedback a one-page summary of the major arguments of your organizational assessments one week before each assignment is due. Submit your summaries electronically only via blackboard, do not email me. I will provide you with feedback on the summaries by class the next day, via Blackboard. **I will not accept late submissions of summaries.**

Organizational assessment due dates

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date of Draft (Optional)</th>
<th>Due Date of Final Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational assessment 1</td>
<td>September 19 at 2pm</td>
<td>September 26 at 11:59 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational assessment 2</td>
<td>October 23 at 2pm</td>
<td>October 31 at 11:59 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational assessment 3</td>
<td>December 5 at 2pm</td>
<td>December 12 at 11:59 pm</td>
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**Assignments for doctoral students**

Doctoral students will be expected to read the materials for each class and come prepared to participate in class discussion.

**Literature Reviews**

In lieu of the above assignments, doctoral students will be expected to write four literature reviews related to the topic of each unit of the course. Doctoral students will meet at the end of each unit to discuss their literature reviews with each other and with Prof. Dodge. You may choose to write commentaries and organizational assessments, but these will not be required and will not be graded. Detailed instructions for each literature review will be distributed in class and posted on blackboard several weeks before the assignment is due.

• Submit all literature reviews electronically on blackboard at 11:59pm on the designated date.
• Assignments should be no longer than 10 pages in length.
• Write all literature reviews in complete sentences and paragraphs, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font, and number the pages. Do not use cover pages. **I will return reviews that do not meet these guidelines to be rewritten, and late penalties will apply (see grading below).**
• You may provide tables and figures to support your arguments; place them at the end of the paper. Bibliographies, tables and figures do not count towards page length.
• All sources should be in MLA citation style. For further guidelines see Appendix A.

To improve the quality of your literature reviews, you may submit for feedback a one-page summary of the major threads of your argument one week before each assignment is due. Submit your summaries electronically only via blackboard, do not email me. I will provide you with feedback on the summaries by class the next day, via Blackboard. **I will not accept late submissions of summaries.**


**Literature review due dates**

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
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<td>September 12 at 2pm</td>
<td>September 19 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Review 2</td>
<td>October 10 at 2pm</td>
<td>October 17 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Review 3</td>
<td>November 7 at 2pm</td>
<td>November 14 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Review 4</td>
<td>December 5 at 2pm</td>
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**Grading**

Student performance in the course will be determined as follows:

- **Commentaries** 25 % (2.5% for each assignment x 10 classes)
- **Organizational assessments** 75 % (25% for each assessment)

For doctoral students:

- **Literature reviews** 100 % (25% for each review)

**Late assignments** - For every 24-hour period that an organizational assessment or literature review is late, the grade will be reduced by 10%. The first 24-hour period begins on midnight the day the assignment is due.

**Grading Scale**

- **A**: 93-100
- **B-**: 80-82
- **D+**: 67-69
- **A-**: 90-92
- **C+**: 77-79
- **D**: 63-66
- **B+**: 87-89
- **C**: 73-76
- **D-**: 62-60
- **B**: 83-86
- **C-**: 70-72
- **E**: below 60

**Grading Criteria**

**Commentaries** – Your commentaries will be evaluated based on the degree to which you demonstrate 1) that you have read the material and 2) that you have applied course readings critically and thoughtfully to the organization, social change effort or case.

**Organizational Assessments** – I will assess organizational assessments based on a rubric that will be posted on Blackboard along with the instructions. In general, submissions will be assessed according to 1) the degree to which the student answers the assigned question in a sophisticated manner, 2) the quality of the reflexivity of the analysis, 3) the degree to which the student illustrates a complete understanding of the course material, 4) overall organization and professionalism of the paper, and 5) the degree to which formatting and citation guidelines are followed.

**Literature reviews (for doctoral students only)** – Your literature reviews will be evaluated based on 1) the degree to which you demonstrate a thorough understanding of the diverse theoretical perspectives and empirical research related to a particular topic, 2) the degree to which you summarize key answered and unanswered questions related to a particular topic, 3) the quality of your critique of the existing literature (especially in terms of its ability to inform practice), 4) overall organization and professionalism of the paper, and 5) the degree to which formatting and citation guidelines are followed. A rubric with these criteria will be posted on Blackboard along with more details instructions.
**Communication** - Students are invited to ask questions in class, during office hours, or via email. The best way to contact me outside of class is by email. I will usually respond to emails within 24 hours. If you send an email after 6pm, I may not respond until the following day. Please check your email regularly for emails from me as well.

**Other policies**

*Academic Integrity* - As members of the SUNY community, we are all expected to adhere to high standards of intellectual and academic integrity. You can view our Academic Code at: http://www.albany.edu/content_images/AcademicIntegrity.pdf. Violations of these standards will result in one of the following penalties or some variant: revision and re-submission of the assignment, reduction of the grade or failure of the assignment, reduction of the course grade or failure of the course, filing of a case with the Office of Conflict Resolution and Civic Responsibility, suspension, 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.

- Students with needs consistent with the Americans with Disability Act should inform the instructor during the first week of class so that reasonable accommodations can be made.
- This syllabus serves as a general outline. The instructor reserves the right to deviate from the plan if necessary. Students will be notified promptly of any modifications.
- See Appendix B for a description of how this course seeks to prepare students to develop their competencies in the five areas identified by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA).
Course Schedule

UNIT ONE: FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL CHANGE NONPROFITS

Class 1 (August 27): Introduction to Nonprofits and Social Change
  o Read only: The Research Findings: A framework of social change leadership, p. 268 – 279 (which reflect the figure on page 256).

Commentary 1 (due August 26 at 2pm; bring to class): Chose 1 nonprofit organizations that you would like to consider as the focus of your organizational assessments over the course of the semester. Describe the organization and its approach to social change drawing on the Ospina et al model. Be sure to select an organization that you think you’ll have the greatest chance of accessing for a class project (i.e., Do you have connection there? Is the organization in Albany? Etc.)

Class 2 (September 3): Mission and Theory of Change
- Smock, Chapter 2: Models of Community Organizing, p. 10-34. Chapter 6: Diagnosing and Framing the Community’s Problems, p. 149-175.
- Shapiro, I. (2006). Extending the framework of inquiry: Theories of change in conflict interventions. Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. (http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_shapiro_comm.pdf). (This reading provides good examples of different theories of change in the field of conflict resolution, and demonstrates how these can be framed at individual, social or structural levels of analysis.)

Commentary 2 (due September 2 at 2pm; bring to class): Consider the nonprofit organization that you will focus on in doing your organizational assessments over the course of the semester. How would you describe that organization’s theory of change drawing on the concepts in the Colby et al article? Include information that you can gather from the organization’s website or other sources to illustrate your assessment. Is the theory of change appropriate? If not, what adjustments would you recommend and why?

Project work (we will discuss in class): This week you should write an MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) to secure access to a nonprofit organization that you can study over the course of the semester. Next week, you should start doing interviews.
Class 3 (September 10): Structures of Social Change: Accountability and Legitimacy
- Smock, Chapter 5: Building a community governance structure, p. 97-148.

Commentary 3 (due September 9 at 2pm; bring to class): After reading the articles and book chapters for class 3 on structures of social change, how do you assess the structure of your organization of interest? Does it have a mode of member engagement that is appropriate? What is done right? What would you change, if anything? Why would you change it?

Project work (we will discuss in class): This week, you should start doing interviews.

Class 4 (September 17): Strategy in Social Change Organizations
  o Read the whole manuscript skimming issue 1 “Defining Great” and skipping Issue 3 “First Who.” We will get back to issue 3 later in the semester.
- Smock, chapter 7: Strategies and Outcomes, p. 221-243.

Commentary 4 (due September 16 at 2pm; bring to class): Chose a piece of work that the organization you have selected to study in class is implementing. After reading the articles and book chapters for class 4 on strategy, how do you assess the organization’s strategy with respect to this piece of work? What is done right? What would you change, if anything? Why would you change it?

Project work (we will discuss in class): This week, you should start analyzing your interviews and assessing the organization (see Organizational Assessment 1 instructions).

Literature Review 1: for doctoral students only (due September 19 at 11:59pm). This assignment is for doctoral students only. Instructions will be handed out separately.
UNIT TWO: ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES (OR ACTIVITIES) OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Class 5: (September 24): Organizational Strategies 1 and 2: Community Organizing & Advocacy

Community Organizing - *** Don’t panic! Most readings this week are short and straightforward!***


- If you have time, skim over Smock chapter 2 again.

Advocacy


Organizational Assessment 1 (due September 26 at 11:59 pm on blackboard): Instructions will be handed out separately.

Project work (we will discuss in class): This week, you should determine if you can continue working with the same organization to do another set of interviews. If so, start scheduling interviews. If not, begin developing a new MOA with another organization.
Class 6 (October 1): Organizational Strategies 3 and 4: Community Development & Social Entrepreneurship

Community Development:

Social Entrepreneurship

Commentary 5: (due September 30 at 2pm; bring to class): After reading the articles and book chapters for classes 5 and 6, how would you assess the strategy that the organization you have selected to study in class implements? Does it implement community organizing, advocacy, social entrepreneurship or community development alone, or does it combine two or more of these strategies? Provide evidence for your answer.

Project work (we will discuss in class): This week, you should be scheduling and conducting interviews for your second organizational assessment.

Class 7 (October 8): Integrating Social Movement Work into Organizations that Provide Services
- Kivel, P. 2007. “Social service or social change?” In INCITE (ed). The Revolution will not be funded: Beyond the Nonprofit Industrial Complex. (pp. 129-149).

Commentary 6 (due October 7 at 2pm; bring to class): Where does the organization you have selected to study for your class project stand on the balance between service and social change? Is there room for improvement from a social change point of view? What would you recommend to move toward a more social change orientation? What are the risks and constraints of doing so for the organization?

Project work (we will discuss in class): This week you should be finishing up your interviews and beginning your analysis for your second organizational assessment. Your draft is due next week.

*** October 15 – No class – Professor Dodge will be traveling. ***
UNIT THREE: PRACTICES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Class 8 (October 22): Framing and Communications in Social Change Work


**Commentary 7 (due October 21 at 2pm):** Focusing on the piece of work that you identified for commentary 4, how would you evaluate the way the organization frames the issue? Drawing on the Foldy et al reading, what type of sensegiving is going on, if any? How do you assess the organization’s approach to reframing? Could it be done better or is it compelling? Why or why not?

**Project work (we will discuss in class):** This week, you should be writing your final draft for organizational assessment 2.

**Literature Review 2: for doctoral students only (due October 17 at 11:59pm).** This assignment is for doctoral students only. Instructions will be handed out separately.

Class 9 (October 29): Community Building: Building Bridges across Communities


**Organizational Assessment 2 (due October 31 at 11:59 pm on blackboard):** Instructions will be handed out separately.

**Project work (we will discuss in class):** This week, you should determine if you can continue working with the same organization to do another set of interviews. If so, start scheduling interviews. If not, begin developing a new MOA with another organization.
Class 10 (November 5): Collaboration and Partnerships: Building Bridges across Organizations

- Case: New York Immigration Coalition
  Recommended:

**Commentary 8 (due November 4 at 2pm):** Identify one partnership in the organization that you’ve elected to study in class, or focus on the New York Immigration Coalition case. In what ways do you see it managing its partnerships well? Where is there room for improvement to achieve social change goals?

**Project work (we will discuss in class):** This week, you should be scheduling and conducting interviews for your second organizational assessment.

Class 11 (November 12): Unleashing Human Potential: Tapping into Member Knowledge, Interests, & Desires


**Commentary 9 (due November 11 at 2pm; bring to class):** Does the organization you’ve elected to study in class engage in some form of popular education? If not, how might this strategy be implemented to encourage a stronger social justice orientation to its work. What do you think the outcome would be? If so, assess how this approach fits within the organizations broader approach to social change (or not).

**Project work (we will discuss in class):** This week you should be finishing up your interviews and beginning your analysis for your second organizational assessment.

**Literature Review 3: for doctoral students only (due November 14 at 11:59pm).** This assignment is for doctoral students only. Instructions will be handed out separately.

*** November 19 – no class – Professor Dodge will be traveling ***
UNIT FOUR: MARSHALLING RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Class 12 (November 26): Raising Money for Social Change
- Dodge, J., A. Hofmann-Pinilla, A. Beard and C. Murphy (2012). Beyond Foundation Funding: Revenue-Generating Strategies for Sustainable Social Change. New York: Research Center for Leadership in Action. Read “Introduction” (p 2), “Social Change Organizations and Financial Sustainability” (p. 3-6), and “Chapter 9: Other important sustainability considerations” (p. 63-71). You may skim chapter 1-8 for ideas about fundraising but this is not required.

Commentary 10 (due November 25 at 2pm; bring to class): What do you think of the challenges about fund raising and resource generation that are laid out in the articles for this week? Do you think the claims are exaggerated, or is there a real problem with the way social change work is funded?

Project work (we will discuss in class): This week, you should be finalizing your analysis of the interviews, and writing your draft for organizational assessment 3.

Class 13 (December 3): Managing Staff in Contexts of Scarcity: Creating Opportunities to Lead
- Chetkovich, C. and F. Kunreuther, Chapter 2: Doing the Work (p. 28-51); Chapter 3: Leadership (p. 52-82).
  o Read Issue 3 “First Who.”

Recommended:
- Go to the National Council on Nonprofits, and browse their section on Managing Staff: More Topics, Tips, and Tools at http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/administration-and-management/hr/managing-staff. This website has many practical tools and resources related to managing staff in nonprofits.

Project work (we will discuss in class): This week, you should be finalizing your organizational assessment 3.
Class 14 (November 10): Managing Volunteers


Organizational Assessment 3 (due December 12 at 11:59 pm on blackboard): Instructions will be handed out separately.

Literature Review 4: for doctoral students only (due December 12 at 11:59pm). This assignment is for doctoral students only. Instructions will be handed out separately.
Appendix A: Citations and Sources

Citations. Include a bibliography in each essay. Students are to cite sources in a manner consistent with academic honesty policies. I would rather you include too many citations rather than too few. As a general rule of thumb, provide a citation for something you did not know before you began your research. In-text citations and the bibliography should be formatted in MLA style. See the on-line help sheets at University at Albany’s citation fox website at http://library.albany.edu/cfox?type=mla. This reference explains how to cite references in the works cited section (bibliography) of your paper and how to cite references in the text of your essay.

When citing government documents, follow the formatting guidelines in Rubin’s Modified MLA Formatting for Government Documents, posted on Blackboard under course content/writing resources.

Acceptable Sources. You may use primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include, but are not limited to, government or nonprofit reports, legislative hearings and testimonies, court decisions, and government auditor reports. Secondary sources are summaries and interpretations of primary sources. Secondary sources include, but are not limited to, articles from major newspapers and news magazines, network and cable news programs, and academic research. Blogs and Wikipedia are not acceptable sources. Be an intelligent consumer of information by evaluating secondary sources for potential political bias. If it is well known that a particular source is liberal or conservative, you must compensate for this in the paper. Acknowledge its bias and balance the information with something from a source on the other side of the political spectrum. Here are some places to start with your research, but feel free to consult other sources:


• Case descriptions that might be found in sources such as The New York Times Magazine, The Chronicle of Philanthropy, or at centers such as Board Source, Center for Charitable Statistics, the Research Center for Leadership in Action, Synergos, etc. (Keep in mind that these sources might be biased in the sense that they put forward a positive spin on the organizations and might be less likely to provide analyses of their challenges and problems.)

• Books that provide academic case analyses of specific organizations or networks such as Bargaining for Brooklyn, Fighting for Our Health, and so on.
Appendix B: MPA Core Competencies

On the first day of Welcome Week and at the beginning of PAD 507, master’s students are introduced to the five competencies identified by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Overall, the competencies are intended to ensure MPA students are well-rounded academically and professionally in the core subject areas important to the field.

What are competencies?

- Competencies are integrative. Competencies are a bundle of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that, when fully integrated, define successful performance. Competencies are broader than knowing how to use excel or being able to define what marginal cost means.
- Competencies describe the characteristics of the person who does the job best. In this way, competencies describe the whole person and their total performance. Competencies are broader than job tasks.

The five NASPAA competencies are:
1. The ability to lead and manage in public governance
2. To participate in and contribute to the policy process
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions
4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective
5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

This course is designed to build student competency in all five areas. For example:

- Competency #1: Students will discuss various organizational strategies that nonprofits might adopt to advance social change agendas. Students will develop an understanding of the different ways these strategies shape organizational choices in terms of making decisions, and structuring nonprofit organizations to be accountable to diverse stakeholders. We will discuss different means for achieving accountability from these different organizational and social change strategies.
- Competency #2: In this course, students will learn different ways of conceptualizing theories of change that may focus on policy change, individual change, or social change. Students will learn how nonprofit implement these theories of change through various organizational strategies and through different relationships including partnerships and networks with other actors, including nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and even for-profit corporations.
- Competency #3: Through case studies, we will analyze myriad problems that nonprofit organizations face at the organizational, policy and societal levels. We will have ample opportunities to assess the mistakes and successes of others, to break down problems into component parts, analyze the problems from the perspectives of different stakeholders, and develop proposed solutions.
- Competency #4: Issues of equity, inclusiveness, and justice are fundamental to social change efforts. We will discuss these values as part of a public service perspective writ large, and discuss how to achieve these values through organizational and network strategies, emphasizing how different emphases might produce different outcomes.
- Competency #5: Writing assignments will require students to evaluate cases, using evidence to support arguments, and to communicate analysis in a highly-organized manner. Work in small-groups will develop skills in working with diverse groups and providing constructive feedback. Students will also be asked to examine – through course readings and other materials – social problems faced by a diverse citizenry.