COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course explores the interaction between public policy and nonprofit organizations: how nonprofits influence and are influenced by public decision-making. We will examine the role of nonprofits vis-à-vis the public sector, broadly, and in public policy formation, specifically. While we will focus primarily on the United States, we will also investigate nonprofit-related policy issues from a comparative international perspective. The topics covered include models of government-nonprofit relations, public policies toward nonprofits (tax policies, regulation, charitable deductions), accountability, policy advocacy and legislative lobbying, contracting out and other forms of government financing of nonprofit service provision.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to
• Identify and analyze relevant policies, current developments and pressing challenges in the nonprofit world using course concepts and frameworks,
• Formulate their positions on policy issues impacting nonprofit organizations,
• Develop a deeper understanding and awareness of the complex dynamics of government-nonprofit relationships, and the role of nonprofits in the public policy process,
• Demonstrate familiarity with the IRS Tax Code and state laws, i.e. constraints nonprofits face and the benefits they can draw on in their domestic and international work,
• Obtain a toolkit of resources that will help them navigate the policy and resource environment of their nonprofit workplace.

REQUIRED READINGS
Available for purchase at Mary Jane Books and the UAlbany Bookstore:

Additional readings and roadmaps are available on Blackboard or will be distributed in class.

SUPPLEMENTARY AND RECOMMENDED READINGS
The instructor reserves the right to deviate from the plan outlined in this syllabus in order to adapt to current policy developments and emerging student interests. Students will be consulted with and notified of modifications. Other supplementary documents (news articles, case studies and guidelines for good practice) may be assigned a week before class or distributed in class. Lists of recommended readings and resources are posted on Blackboard (see sites of interest in the Web Links section).
If you want to seek wider help from the nonprofit community on your final paper, I recommend you join ARNOVA-L, the Nonprofit Organization, Voluntary Action and Philanthropy Discussion List for the duration of the course. For instructions click Arnova Listserve on <www.arnova.org>.

**Course Format and Requirements**

The course is designed as a seminar involving brief lectures, class discussion, student presentations, small-group work and occasional case studies. The course uses Blackboard to enhance interaction.

**Attendance and Participation.** Active participation in class discussions is required and highly valued in this course. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. To help you do that, most weeks I will prepare a short roadmap to guide you through the following week’s readings. These roadmaps, posted on Blackboard, will help you identify the main issues in the readings and provide broad questions that we will discuss in class. You can miss up to 2 classes without being penalized, excused absences over this limit need to be documented. If you miss more than 2 classes, your default participation grade will be B (or less, depending on your performance). Absences will only be excused under certain circumstances such as religious observance, unplanned health emergencies and competing in intercollegiate athletics. If you miss more than 3 classes, the instructor reserves the right to drop you from the course and a notation will be placed on the transcript indicating you stopped attending class.

**Policy Brief.** Students are required to write a policy brief (3-4 pages, single space, cc. 1,500 words) that provides a concise summary of recent developments regarding a specific policy issue. The brief should be structured as:

1) Title and a two-sentence summary.
2) 1-2 paragraph summarizing pertinent information and ideas from required readings, providing a background to the policy problem (e.g. the rationale behind and general data on property tax exemption).
3) 2-4 paragraphs outlining the current policy debate, present alternatives and challenges about the chosen policy issue as presented in the media and/or research reports (e.g. summarize 4-5 sources on how local governments attempt to recoup property taxes from exempt organizations and what challenges this poses to nonprofits. Or focus entirely on one municipality like Pittsburgh and its alternative strategies.). You can use bullet points.
4) 1-2 paragraphs on recommendations for action or evaluation of policy options (e.g. assess Pittsburgh’s current strategies).
5) Bibliography.

The brief should provide balanced information targeting government or nonprofit decision makers with a clear focus on a specific topic. The brief’s goal is to inform on a recent trend or challenge and to make the reader take a position. You are expected to demonstrate your skills of critical thinking. The brief should be concise and to the point. You do not need to do original research. For evidence use sources such as the Nonprofit Quarterly, the Nonprofit Advocacy Matters archive of the National Council of Nonprofits, research reports and regular news media like the New York Times. Policy briefs are due by **5:45 on Thursday** on Blackboard and in class as a hard copy. Students will need to do a 5 to 10-minute oral presentation of their briefs in class. Late submissions will be penalized with grade reduction.

**Blackboard Discussion: Questions and Answers (Q&A).** Each week you have to submit one question regarding the week’s theme that you would like to be addressed in class or by your peers. Questions should be posted on the week’s discussion page on Blackboard by **9 pm on Wednesday**, with your name indicated. You are expected to scan through the questions before class and respond to one of the questions by another student by the beginning of the class. You will receive credit for 10 Q&As, thus you will not have to do this every week. Any posts will be graded either as 0, 0.5 or 1 point. For the full point, your grammar/spelling should be excellent and you should demonstrate that you have done the required readings. If you reference a passage in the readings, please include the cited page number to facilitate discussion. You can only get a grade for posts submitted before class time.
Team Project. Students are required to take ownership of one session section. You can work in teams of two or three. Your task is to design a presentation or a class activity that adds something new to the required readings. For instance, you can describe recent developments in the subject area (such as the impact of a new policy) or illustrate the topic through real-life cases you are familiar with, design a game or simulation, show video clips and lead a discussion session, and so on. You are not asked to regurgitate the readings. Your section should be no longer than 25 minutes and inform the instructor of your section plan by the Wednesday before class. Team members will receive the same grade unless they successfully present a report to demonstrate unequal work share.

Paper Proposal. You have to submit a short proposal of your final paper that should identify the central question, the goal and possible structure of the paper, along with the scholarly literature you plan to cover (with preliminary bibliography). Include the sources of data and other information, especially if you plan to write a research-based paper. Proposals are due on Blackboard and a hard copy in class by April 10.

Final paper. A final paper of 15-20 pages (double-spaced) is required on a substantive theme explored in the course. You are granted freedom in selecting the topic of your paper but you are encouraged to consult me regarding your choice. You can do a comparative analysis of nonprofit-public policy interaction in the United States and another country. You can also opt to write a literature review or expand your policy brief into your final paper. The final paper is due by May 16 on Blackboard. I will consider collaborative team papers.

GRADING AND GRADE SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>15%</th>
<th>Team Project</th>
<th>10%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Paper proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Brief</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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I do not grade on a curve. Students receive a letter grade that matches their performance throughout the course and is determined by a weighted average of the points earned for each assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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<td>0-59</td>
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Grade appeals. If a student has a grade dispute on a specific assignment, they should submit a one-page memo to the instructor, along with the original assignment, presenting evidence for their case within two weeks of receiving the graded assignment. The instructor will review and re-grade the original assignment. This review can create a grade increase or even a grade decrease based on the new evaluation.

COURSE POLICIES

Late paper policy. Late assignments will be penalized by reducing points you can earn, except under extraordinary circumstances when the instructor has given advance permission. You cannot take an incomplete for this course. All late assignments need to be submitted by May 19.

Plagiarism. Please review the University’s policy on violations of academic integrity <http://www.albany.edu/eas/104/penalty.htm> regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty and the Plagiarism 101 tutorial at <http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/>. Ignorance of these policies will not excuse dishonest conduct. Any forms of academic dishonesty will be penalized with a failing grade for the assignment and/or for the course and by referral to the appropriate university judicial board. In all cases of academic dishonesty, a Violation of Academic Integrity Report will be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies to be
placed in your university file. Note that you may be required to submit your assignments online via Blackboard’s SafeAssign, which detects and prevents incidents of online plagiarism.

Students with disabilities. Students with needs consistent with the Americans with Disability Act should notify the instructor during the first week of class so that reasonable accommodations can be made. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students who have appropriate documentation on file with the Disability Resource Center http://www.albany.edu/disability/

Green classroom. I encourage the reduction of paper waste and the electronic submission of assignments via Blackboard. If you prefer a hard-copy submission, I encourage two-sided printing and the recycling of used paper.

Communication. I aspire to create a welcoming, non-threatening and mutually respectful classroom environment. I encourage all students to form and express their own views openly and to listen to other students’ views with respect. Communication outside classes and office hours will occur primarily over email. Use regular email, and not Blackboard’s email function, to communicate with me electronically. To ensure timely response, put PAD 612 in the subject line and sign your letters. I will strive to respond to your emails within 24 hours. I will use Blackboard email to send out announcements so log on regularly.

Electronic device use in class. Switch off your cell phones, iPods, MP3 players and PDAs in class. If your phone rings or you text during class, you will be asked to leave and incur an absence. Notify the instructor before class begins if there is an emergency that requires you to leave your electric devices on.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Team Assigned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>I: Overview</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 30</td>
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<td>Nonprofits, Civil Society, Democracy</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 6</td>
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<td>Nonprofit-Government Relations</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>II: Public Policies Toward Nonprofits</td>
<td>Policies Regulating Nonprofits</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 27</td>
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<td>Policies Regulating Nonprofits</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mar 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Legal Environment: Comparative Perspective</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mar 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulation of U.S.-based International Nonprofits</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 27</td>
<td>III: Policy Advocacy</td>
<td>Public Policy Advocacy: Overview</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Apr 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Foundations, Think Tanks</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Apr 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transnational/International Advocacy</td>
<td>Q&amp;A Paper proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>IV: Service Provision and Policy Implementation</td>
<td>Government Financing, Contracting</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Service Provision</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hybrid Models of Social Mission and Commercial Revenue Generation</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>V: Overview</td>
<td>Future Avenues for Making Policy for the Nonprofit Sector</td>
<td></td>
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PART I: OVERVIEW: NONPROFITS AND PUBLIC POLICY

1. Introduction to the course, course organization


2. Nonprofits, Civil Society, and Democracy


Optional


3. Nonprofit-Government Relationships


Policy Trends


Optional


PART II: PUBLIC POLICIES TOWARD NONPROFITS


Policy Trends
Property tax exemption: Pittsburgh’s PILOT program
IRS special scrutiny of conservative organizations’ application for tax-exempt status
Comprehensive tax reform: expired tax incentives, charitable tax deduction cap

Optional

5. Public Policies Regulating Nonprofits: Accountability, Governance and Public Trust


Policy Trends
Social welfare organizations and political activities
Charity fraud scandals and accountability enforcement in recent news: Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, etc.

Optional

6. The Legal Environment for Nonprofits and Civil Society Organizations from a Comparative Perspective: Overview and the Case of Accountability Enforcing Mechanisms


**7. Regulation of U.S.-based International Nonprofits**


**PART III: POLICY ADVOCACY**


Optional

Executive Summary: Overview of Findings of Strengthening Nonprofit Advocacy Project. 2002. OMB Watch, Tufts University and Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest. *Blackboard*


**9. The War of Ideas: Foundations, Think Tanks and Their Influence on Public Policy**


10. Transnational Advocacy and Nonprofit Advocacy in Comparative Perspective

Nonprofit Advocacy in Comparative Perspective


Transnational Advocacy


PART IV: SERVICE PROVISION AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

11. Government Financing of Nonprofits and Contracting


12. Social Service Provision and Charitable Choice


Optional


13. Hybrid Models of Social Mission and Commercial Revenue Generation


14. Future Avenues for Making Policy for the Nonprofit Sector


