NONPROFITS AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
RPAD 616 – FALL 2017

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

Professor Jennifer E. Dodge

Class Location: Husted 308
Class Time: **Monday 5:45-9:25 pm**
Office location: Milne Hall 308
Office Hours: Wednesday 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 and exercises, a field mapping project that includes an organizational assessment, students will learn to apply these tools in diverse institutional settings and policy domains. The field mapping and organizational assessments provides students with opportunities to interact directly with nonprofit organizations in the Capital District, and apply theoretical ideas to real-world cases.

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: mission, organizational strategy, and organizational structure
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 online or used copies can be purchased at Mary Jane books at 215 Western Avenue.

Required:

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

Assignments
Position Papers
To assess your understanding of the different concepts covered in the readings, and your ability to apply them to different cases, each student will be expected to submit a position paper on the readings for 3 of the 14 weeks of the course. Position papers should answer the “Guiding questions for readings” posted on the syllabus for each class session. You should take a position on the readings and defend it (e.g., “Yes, Koreatown has lost its sense of its mission because…” or “No, Koreatown has not lost sense of its mission because…”). These assignment require you to engage the theoretical readings and apply them to a case. Page limit = 2 pages, complete sentences and paragraphs, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font, and number the pages. Due the day before the designated class at 11:59pm. I will not accept late position papers.

Mapping the Nonprofit Sector in Albany & Strategic Assessment of One Organization in the Field
To assess your understanding of how social change organizations operate within a broader field, you will work in teams of 3-5 students to map the nonprofit sector in Albany (or the Capital District) as it relates to one issue area (e.g., poverty reduction or homelessness). Each team will choose the issue area in consultation with Professor Dodge. Each assignment requires students to use course materials to define and analyze social change efforts. The field map project will consist of
- a series of “short assignments” that will prepare you to write
- 1 team assignment (a field map) that assesses the field you’ve chosen and
- 1 individual assignment (strategic assessment) that assesses the strategic advantage of a single organization in the field.

Detailed instructions for the field map and the strategic assessment will be distributed in class and posted on blackboard. The assignments and their due dates are included on the following page.

Following these guidelines in submitting your assignments:
- Submit all assignments electronically on blackboard at 11:59pm on the designated date. One team member will upload team assignments. Each student will upload individual assignments and team evaluations. (Team evaluations will be included in the instructions).
- Page limits will be included on assignment instructions.
- You may provide tables and figures to support your assessments; place them at the end of the paper. Bibliographies, tables and figures do not count towards page length.
- Write all reports 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).
- All references should be cited in APA style. Formatting instructions can be found at http://library.albany.edu/cfox and a list of appropriate sources see Appendix A.
### Assignment Schedule

***This is a tentative schedule. Working with people in the real world may require mid-course corrections!***

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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Assignments and Due Dates</th>
<th>Pts.</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 positions papers on dates of your choice</td>
<td><strong>Position Papers (3 on dates you chose)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due:</strong> Sunday before the designated class at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Select “policy field” for mapping project&lt;br&gt;Assign teams (in class)&lt;br&gt;Work on team agreement on work responsibilities and communication</td>
<td><strong>No class – labor day</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Start working on tasks for next week:</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;ul&gt;&lt;li&gt;Short assignment 1 – team&lt;br&gt;• Statement on policy field and strategic question&lt;br&gt;• Signed team agreement on responsibilities/communication&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due:</strong> Friday, September 8 at 11:59pm&lt;/li&gt;&lt;li&gt;Short assignment 2 – team&lt;br&gt;• Boundary specification (field boundaries and list of relevant characteristics of orgs)&lt;br&gt;• List of orgs and key informants (people you will interview)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due:</strong> Friday, September 15 at 11:59pm&lt;/li&gt;&lt;li&gt;Short assignment 3 - team&lt;br&gt;• Excel file with orgs and their characteristics&lt;br&gt;Team evaluation 1 – individual&lt;br&gt;Both <strong>Due:</strong> Friday, September 22 at 11:59pm&lt;/li&gt;&lt;li&gt;Short assignment 4 – team&lt;br&gt;• Interview protocols&lt;br&gt;• Invitation to interview&lt;br&gt;• (Preliminary) interview schedule – individual&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due:</strong> Friday, September 29 at 11:59pm&lt;/li&gt;&lt;li&gt;Short assignment 5 – team&lt;br&gt;• Coding scheme/analysis strategy&lt;br&gt;Team evaluation 2 – individual&lt;br&gt;Both <strong>Due:</strong> Friday, October 13 at 11:59pm&lt;/li&gt;&lt;li&gt;Short assignment 6 – team&lt;br&gt;• Interview transcripts&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due:</strong> Friday, October 20 at 11:59pm&lt;/li&gt;&lt;/ul&gt;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Conduct interviews</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Conduct interviews&lt;br&gt;Analyze interviews for team map</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Analyze interviews for team map&lt;br&gt;Writing: field map draft&lt;br&gt;Schedule brief follow up interviews (if needed)</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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| 8    | Writing: field map draft  
Conduct follow up interviews (if needed) | Draft field map – team  
Due: Friday, October 27 at 11:59pm | 10 |
| 9    | Analyze follow up interviews (if conducted)  
Revising: field map | Final field map - team  
Team evaluation 3 – individual  
Due: Friday, November 10 at 11:59pm | 20 |
|      | No class – ARNOVA conference | | 5 |
| 11   | Writing: “strategy” assessment draft (reanalyze transcripts if needed) | Draft “strategic” assessment – individual  
Due: Friday, December 1 at 11:59pm | 10 |
| 12   | Writing: “strategy” assessment draft (reanalyze transcripts if needed) | | |
| 13   | Revising: “strategy” assessment | Final “strategic” assessment - individual  
Due: Friday, December 8 at 11:59pm | 20 |
| 14   | Revising: “strategy” assessment | | |
|      | TOTAL POINTS | | 100 |
Grading

Student performance in the course will be determined as follows:

3 position papers 15% (5% x 3)
Field Map – short assignments 10% (5% x 1; 1% x 5)
Field Map 30% (10% draft; 20% final)
Strategic assessment 30% (10% draft; 20% final)
Team evaluations 15% (5% x 3)

Late assignments - For every 24-hour period that a short assignment, field map or strategic assessment 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

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<td>A:</td>
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Grading Criteria

Position Papers – I will assess position papers based on 1) whether or not you take a clear position on the issue that answers the guiding question(s), 2) how well you defend your position using course materials and evidence from the case, 3) overall organization and professionalism of the paper, and 4) the degree to which formatting and citation guidelines are followed.

Field Map – I will assess field maps 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 demonstrates an understanding of theory and how to apply it, 2) the quality of the substance of the arguments and evidence to support them 3) the degree to which the student illustrates an understanding of the complex organizational and policy issues, 4) overall organization and professionalism of the paper, and 5) the degree to which formatting and citation guidelines are followed.

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 28): Introduction to Nonprofits and Social Change
  o Read only pages 268 – 279 and view figure on page 256.

September 4 *** NO CLASS – LABOR DAY ***

Class 2 (September 11): Mission and Theory of Change
- Smock, Chapter 2: Models of Community Organizing, p. 10-34.
- Case: Koreatown Youth and Community Center.

Guiding questions for readings: Considering the Koreatown case, do you think the organization has lost track of its mission? Why or why not? What is its mission? What are its intended impact (including beneficiaries and benefits) and its theory of change? Do these make sense?

Class 3 (September 18): Structures of Social Change: Accountability and Legitimacy
- Smock, Chapter 5: Building a community governance structure, p. 97-148.
- Chetkovich & Kunreuther, Chapter 4: Organizational structure: Legitimacy and accountability, p. 83-110.
  o READ ONLY PAGES 1063 -1070.

Guiding questions for readings: What do you observe about the governance structure of the Dudley Street Neighborhood case? What model from the Smock chapter does it seem to represent? And what are its strengths and weaknesses?
UNIT TWO: CORE ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Class 4 (September 25): Integrating Social Movement Work into Organizations that Provide Services


Resources:

Guiding questions for readings: Where do you stand on the debate about whether or not service providing organizations can serve broader social change goals? How do you respond to the other side of the debate? What are the consequences of service providing nonprofits moving toward – or not moving toward – broader social change efforts? Considering the “Bread for the City” case, what are the challenges to moving toward social change from its perspective? What is it doing well to move toward social change? How could it improve its efforts?

Potential Guest Speaker: TBD

Class 5: (October 2): Incorporating Advocacy

  - Read page 1-12. Ignore the material about the corresponding case studies.

Guiding questions for readings: What is unique about advocacy as a core activity of social change? How is advocacy conducted in the solid waste case? What are the challenges of doing advocacy? What were effective strategies in this case? What could have been done better?

Potential Guest Speaker: Ray Brescia, Albany Law School
Class 6 (October 9): Incorporating Community Organizing

Recommended:

Guiding questions for readings: Considering the ACORN case, do you think community organizing is a good strategy of social change? What are its weaknesses? What are its strengths? How could community organizing be incorporated into the overall strategy of a social service organization that you know to improve its ability to achieve social change?

Potential Guest Speaker: TBD

UNIT THREE: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN SOCIAL CHANGE ORGANIZATIONS

Class 7 (October 16): Framing and Communications in Social Change Work

Guiding questions for readings: Is the messaging of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers Fair Food Campaign effective? Why or why not? Minch’s tips on communication might help you formulate your answer.
Class 8 (October 23): Community Building: Building Bridges across Individuals & Communities

- Smock, Chapter 4: Building a Community’s Capacity. 65-96.
- Case: Shaleshock Action Alliance Listening Project: http://shaleshock.org/resources/the-listening-project/ (See documents on Blackboard.)

Guiding questions for readings: Is the listening project approach a good way to build “bridging” social capital? Why or why not? You might ground your answer in a social change effort that you know about or from the readings.

Potential Guest Speaker: TBD

Class 9 (October 30): Collaboration and Partnerships: Building Bridges across Organizations

- Kanter, B. & Fine, A. (2010). The networked nonprofit: Connecting with social media to drive change. PA: Jossey-Bass. Chapters 1,3. (These are short and easy to read.)
- Case: New York Immigration Coalition

Recommended:

Guiding questions for readings: What are some of the challenges of organizational collaboration and partnership in the nonprofit sector? Are these challenges worth overcoming? What is a good approach to partnerships in a competitive environment?

Potential Guest Speaker: TBD

Class 10 (November 6): Unleashing Human Potential: Tapping into Member Knowledge, Interests, & Desires

- Chetkovich & Kunreuther, Chapter 3: Leadership (p. 52-82).

Guiding questions for readings: What tactics work well to incorporate opportunities for people with low levels of power to transform into leaders?
November 13  *** NO CLASS – Keep working on your projects! ***

UNIT FOUR: MARSHALLING RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Class 11 (November 20): Strategy in Social Change Organizations
  - Skip Issues 3 “First Who.”
- Case: Levine et al 2008. The Justice Project

Guiding questions for readings: How would you assess The Justice Project’s strategy based on the Phills reading? Do they have a strong strategy or not? Why?

Class 12 (November 27): Raising Money for Social Change
- Chetkovich & Kunruether, Chapter 5: Resources: Spinning straw into bricks, p. 111-131.
- Case: The Fortune Society (see readings on blackboard, TBD)

Guiding questions for readings: Does fundraising for social change need to be different than fundraising for any other kind of nonprofit organization? How so? And why or why not?

*Potential Guest Speaker: TBD*

Class 13 (December 4): Managing Volunteers: Strategies and Dilemmas

Guiding questions for readings: How should a nonprofit organization engage volunteers? (Note: Community leaders in community organizing organizations should not be thought of as “volunteers” per se, but other participants in these organizations can be.)

*Potential Guest Speaker: TBD*

Class 14 (December 11): Wrap up and pot luck
Appendix A: Citations and Sources

Citations. 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 APA style. See the on-line help sheets at University at Albany’s citation fox website at http://library.albany.edu/cfox#top. 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.

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 for unbiased information but may be used as data in field maps or strategic assessments. 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.