Learning Philanthropy: Engaging in the Study and Practice of Giving
Northwestern University
School of Education and Social Policy (SESP)
SESP 351
Spring 2015

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Teaching Assistant:  Tracy Dobie

Class:  Tuesdays, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
Location:  Annenberg Hall, Room 303, Baldwin Studio  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
An aim of this course is to engage students in the study of philanthropy and the practice of giving. We bring to this examination a particular set of perspectives emphasizing philanthropic giving intended to improve the lives of children and adults and the opportunities afforded them. As a class, we will interrogate this focus and the role of philanthropy in the United States by studying its history, social meanings, motivations, and effects. Students will learn about philanthropy in light of relationships with the nonprofit sector and government, socio-cultural and historical contexts, and influences on why individuals give. In addition to developing rich understandings of theory and actions in philanthropic practices, students will be asked to explore their own conceptions and values about philanthropic purposes and outcomes. By the end of the course, students should have gained knowledge and experience that will enable them to more thoughtfully and diligently engage in the practice of giving.

In the grant-making lab part of this course, students will have the unique opportunity to experience the satisfaction, challenges, and responsibility of giving away money with the intention of promoting a public benefit. Expectations are high for participation and engagement in course assignments and class discussion, and for professionalism in the community-based activities. Together, students and professors will decide, through deliberation and discussion, why and how this money will be granted to benefit people and causes of the students’ choosing. All recipients must be U.S. 501(c)(3) organizations. The grant cannot be made to a Northwestern University organization or used for any political purposes (e.g., political advocacy, funding political campaigns). This laboratory component of the course is made possible by an initiative of the Once Upon A Time Foundation ... of Ft. Worth, Texas. The Foundation has entrusted the class with these resources to enhance students’ understandings of and engagement in philanthropy.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
This course will require individual reflection as well as large- and small-group analyses and discussions of the readings and videos. Through dialogue and discussion, our goal is to facilitate your explorations of major ideas and practices in philanthropy. Students thus are expected to arrive at each class session on time and to have read the materials assigned, prepared to participate constructively in class discussions.

One third to one half of each class will be devoted to the grant-making lab. Each student is assigned to one of several workgroups based on individual and class topic priorities. In this portion of the course, students are expected to participate in discussions and other activities of the workgroup leading to a plan, argument, and decision about an organization to fund, and at what level. These other activities may include establishing goals and principles for giving, investigating and visiting nonprofit organizations on site and other performances of due diligence, engaging in discussions, and reaching collective decisions. For each session, the workgroup should select a facilitator and recorder. Benchmarks are provided for lab activities to help guide progress toward final recommendations.

Assessments of individual work account for 60% of the final grade; the grant-making lab accounts for 40%. Assignments are due by 11:59 pm (CDT) on the specified due date. No late assignments will be accepted after the last class. Late assignments received before the last class will lose ½ grade.

Five components make up the course requirements: Participation, Reflection Papers, Workgroup Class Presentations, Reviews of Other Workgroup Presentations, and the Workgroup Portfolio. Except for the in-class workgroup reviews, the papers and workgroup portfolios should be submitted on Canvas.

Participation (20%): This component includes attendance, coming to class prepared, active and constructive involvement in information gathering and due diligence discussions and activities, posting information on Canvas as requested, providing critique to other workgroup presentations, and participating constructively in final decision-making activities.

- One absence is excused without penalty – no questions asked. You are still responsible to your group and for catching up. An absence beyond that will affect your grade.
- Groups should expect to meet outside of class.
- Each student is expected to participate in two site visits to organizations being considered for funding by her/his workgroup.
- We will be supporting in this class a culture of being respectful of one another, listening to others’ points of view, presenting evidence, critiquing the ideas – exchanges that are part of the norm and practices of the academy. We anticipate that there will be differences of opinion. In fact, we will encourage healthy debate and discussions of contrasting ideas and points of view, with the expectation that these will be conducted with civility and respect.

Reflection Papers (40%):
Paper 1 (20%): Philanthropic autobiography (2-4 pages), with references to course readings. This paper is an opportunity for you to reflect on yourself and your times of giving. What are key values or principles that motivated this giving? What connections of your views and experiences can be made to the readings, as support for or further illustrations of your points? Cite course readings in American Psychological Association (APA) style. DUE APRIL 14

Paper 2 (20%): In two to four pages, identify a challenge to giving away money wisely that you have discovered through your readings, through class discussions, or through the unfolding of your group's
activities. Describe how this challenge occurred to you, and why you find it difficult. Does this possible pitfall make you hesitate to give or to ask for money? Why or why not? How would you address it or at least guard against its worst effects? Include and reference at least four class readings to support and/or elucidate your ideas. Cite course readings in APA style. **DUE MAY 19**

**Workgroup Class Presentations** (15%):

Presentation 1 (5%). Power-point/video/oral presentation on the final 3-4 organizations the workgroup is considering for funding, including the following:

1. Overview of your topic and context (e.g., arts/culture, poverty, education); the workgroup mission statement; and the workgroup theory of change.
2. A brief description of the 3-4 organizations under consideration and compelling reasons why the workgroup considers these the leading candidates for funding.
3. The kind of information you would like to collect at the site visit; questions/issues on which you would like advice from the class.

In written and oral exchange, class members will have an opportunity to ask questions about the workgroup's rationale and organization choices. The presentation is limited to 15 minutes. **MAY 5, 2015**

Presentation 2 (10%). Power-point/video/oral presentation on the workgroup's recommendation and rationale for funding, including the following:

1. Brief statement of your workgroup topic, mission statement; and theory of change.
2. Brief overview of the nonprofit and the intended use of funds. Describe the organization and its mission and history, general population served, location, and financial status; the amount you propose to give to the organization and why you propose that amount; how the organization intends to use the funds, and anticipated results and outcomes of this award.
3. Why support this organization? Provide compelling reasons for the selection of this organization and the grant purpose; include key learnings from the site visits and other due diligence investigations of the organization; and provide evidence that the organization is worth funding, given the criteria for judging organizations developed in class.

The intention is to present a persuasive argument designed to inform others about what you want to do, and why. The presentation is limited to 20 minutes. Class members will have an opportunity to critique the presentations made by other workgroups. **JUNE 2, 2015**

**Workgroup Portfolio** (25%):

The workgroup portfolio is comprised of five (5) documents. One portfolio per workgroup will be accepted. **JUNE 10, 2015**

1. A written report (5-10 pages) including all elements of your PowerPoint presentation. The report should include the following.
   a. Overview of your topic and context: your workgroup’s topic; workgroup mission statement; workgroup theory of change, including references supporting the theory of change.
   b. Brief description of the 3-4 organizations that were considered.
   c. Overview of the nonprofit recommended and the project. Describe the organization and its mission and history, general population served, location, and financial status; the amount you propose to give to the organization and why you propose that amount; how the organization intends to use the funds, and anticipated results and outcomes of this award.
d. Why support this organization? Provide compelling reasons for the selection of this organization and the grant purpose; include key learnings from the site visits and other due diligence investigations of the organization; and provide evidence that the organization is worth funding, given the criteria for judging organizations developed in class.

e. Name and contact information for a key contact person at the organization.

2. Citation for the award: a 100-word statement about each organization selected to receive an award that could be used as a press release (and can be incorporated into your presentation at the reception).

3. Copy of the email of declination that was sent to the organizations that you visited but decided not to fund.

4. Memo (2-3 pages) to the next cohort of students including the following information:
   a. Reasons for giving money to your organization
   b. Expectations/intended uses of the grant, including a timeline of activity for the next year
   c. Questions that should be asked of the organization in one year regarding the activities and outcomes to be completed/achieved (What should others look for in one year to know that your grant-making has achieved what you intended?)

5. A 3-5 minute PowerPoint to accompany the presentation of awards to your organizations at the reception.
   a. The PowerPoint should consist of 1-3 slides including the following information:
   b. Name of the organization
   c. Pictures of the organization and/or its clients (if available)
   d. Brief description of what the organization does
   e. Your workgroup’s reasons for choosing to fund the organization

GRADING
The grading system used in computing a student’s grades will be a 100-point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 to 94</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>76 to 74</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93 to 90</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>73 to 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89 to 87</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69 to 67</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86 to 84</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>66 to 64</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83 to 80</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>63 to 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79 to 77</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 to 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE FINAL FOR THIS CLASS IS MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2015, 5:00-7:00pm.** At this session, students will make the final decisions about the allocation of grant money. Food will be served.

**AWARDS RECEPTION**
One of the highlights and culminating experiences of the course is the awards reception. Here, for all class members and their guests who can attend, is the opportunity to spotlight each grantee’s work and for the workgroups to award symbolic checks to representatives of the selected organizations.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 4:30-6:00 pm
COURSE MATERIALS
Articles and book chapters can be downloaded from the online course-management system, Canvas, or found online at the link provided in the syllabus. As these readings will be the focus of class discussions, students should have access to digital or print copies during the class. Below are website links to information that you may find useful about nonprofit organizations of interest and philanthropy.

General sites:
Guidestar (basic data on NPOs, including the tax form 990; the site is free but registration is required)
Idealist.org (clearinghouse for nonprofit ideas and news)
NonprofitHub.com (large list of links organized by category)
Greatnonprofits.org (searchable database on nonprofits)
Charitynavigator.org (financial health and accountability reviews of 6000 major national charities)
Urban institute (general social and economic policy research institute, with section devoted to nonprofits and philanthropy)
Harvest Today (nonprofit and philanthropy news service)
Givewell.org (research on charities)
National Center for Charitable Statistics (http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/)
Independent Sector: www.independentsector.org (broad-based coalition dedicated to improving America’s third sector)
Foundation Center, www.fdncenter.org (database on foundations)

On philanthropy:
Donors Forum (www.donorsforum.com): organization dedicated to strengthening Illinois philanthropy and the nonprofit sector
The Chronicle of Philanthropy (national weekly devoted to covering philanthropy)
The Non-Profit Times (monthly news magazine)
Ashoka: www.ashoka.org (supports social entrepreneurship, with section devoted to nonprofits and philanthropy)
Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University (www.philanthropy.iupui.edu)
EPhilanthropyFoundation.org (organization dedicated to promoting online philanthropy, includes ezine)
Philanthropy News Digest (http://fdncenter.org/pnd)
American Association of Fundraising Counsel (http://www.aafrc.org: organization dedicated to ensuring ethical behavior amongst philanthropies)
The Philanthropic Initiative (www.tpi.org: offers strategic services to philanthropists)
American Institute of Philanthropy (www.charitywatch.org: general purpose philanthropy website, including ratings of organizations
Center for Strategic Philanthropy & Civic Service (http://cspcs.sanford.duke.edu)
Non-Profit Quarterly (www.nonprofitquarterly.org)
Wealth and Giving Forum, Boston College: www.wealthandgiving.org/people_schervish.html
Science of Generosity Initiative, University of Notre Dame: http://generosityresearch.nd.edu/

To give away money is an easy matter and in any man’s power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how large, and when, and for what purpose and how, is neither in every man’s power nor an easy matter.

Aristotle

Nicomachaen Ethics, 360 BCE
COURSE MEETINGS

MARCH 31  INTRODUCTION: PERSPECTIVES ON PHILANTHROPY
What is philanthropy, and why engage in such practices?
Introductions and discussion of admissions essays – what you bring to the class
What you hope to get out of the course
What we want to accomplish and how we will go about it
Course Overview

Readings:
http://archive.org/details/cu31924001214539


LAB: Six workgroups have been constituted, based on individual and class topic priorities. Over the quarter, you and other members of your workgroup will work together to recommend to your class peers a grant to a nonprofit organization. In this first session, introduce yourselves to one another. What are your initial instincts about giving to particular causes and/or organizations? Begin to identify principles that will guide your decisions.

APRIL 7  MISSION AND THEORY OF CHANGE
What is it that you hope to accomplish with this gift? What problems are you addressing? How will this gift help? What are key assumptions that underlie your theory of change, or your thinking about how this gift will help?

Readings:


LAB: Begin drafting a mission statement and theory of change for workgroup giving, highlighting the principles/goals that will guide your workgroup’s decisions. **Each student should begin to identify a reference that describes the workgroup’s issue and supports the theory of change being promoted.** The reference should be to your substantive area. This information should be helpful as you look for organizations to propose. In addition, together, the class will develop a Conflict of Interest policy.

APRIL 14

WHY GIVE?
Do you expect everyone to be charitable, or is someone who gives to charity going beyond the call of duty? How do personal philosophies intersect with ideas about improving society?

Readings:


GUESTS:
Charles A. Lewis, Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation, Evanston, IL
Casey Lewis Varela, Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation, Evanston, IL

LAB: Complete the mission statement and theory of action, including a citation from each workgroup member. **By the next Lab on April 21, each workgroup member is to have conducted online reviews of two organizations of interest and posted a brief report (1-2 paragraphs) about each one.** Don’t contact the organizations yet.

REFLECTION PAPER 1 DUE
APRIL 21  THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN THE U.S.: MISSION AND SCOPE
What is the nonprofit sector in the United States and why do we need it? For whom
and for what?

Readings:


In addition, each workgroup has responsibility for reading the chapter in Salamon’s The State of Nonprofit America (2nd ed.) that is most relevant to the nonprofit sector central to the workgroup’s mission statement.

- Education and Training. Donald M. Stewart, Pearl Rock Kane, and Lisa Scruggs, pp. 137-191
- Social Services. Steven Rathgeb Smith, pp. 192-228
- Arts and Culture. Stefan Toepler and Margaret J. Syszomirski, pp. 229-265
- Housing and Community Development. Avis C. Vidal, pp. 266-293
- Environmental Organizations. Carmen Sirianni and Stephanie Sofer, pp. 294-328

Recommended reading:

LAB: Each student recommends to the workgroup two organizations for funding. Discuss the organizations proposed by group members. Weigh the merits. Start narrowing down the number of organizations.

APRIL 28  WORKSHOP ON GATHERING INFORMATION
What information is important to gather to inform your decision to support a nonprofit organization? What information about the organizations is needed in advance of the site visit? Where do you find it? Conducting site visits: making contacts, stating purpose, interviewing and other data gathering and evidence, observations and taking field notes.

Readings:

MAY 5 WORKGROUP PRESENTATIONS #1

Power-point/video/oral presentation on the finalist 3-4 organizations the workgroup is considering for funding, including the following:

1. Overview of your topic and context: your workgroup’s topic (e.g., arts/culture, poverty, education); the workgroup mission statement; and the workgroup theory of change, and list of citations from workgroup members.
2. Brief description of the 3-4 organizations under consideration and compelling reasons why the workgroup considers these the leading candidates for funding.
3. Kind of information you would like to collect at the site visit; questions/issues on which you would like advice from the class.

In written and oral exchange, class members will have an opportunity to ask questions about the workgroup’s organization choices. The presentation is limited to 15 minutes.

LAB: What additional information do you need about these organizations? The workgroup should develop common questions to ask and materials to collect from each organization. **Send Lauren and Penelope a copy of the draft questions for review prior to visiting the sites.** Decide who will visit which sites, in teams of 2-3 students. You can begin to schedule the site visits. Each student should visit two sites.

MAY 12 GRANTMAKING: ASSESSING THE WORK

What are your expectations for the gifts you make? How might the return on investment be evaluated?

PANEL DISCUSSION: Students from the 2014 Learning Philanthropy class talk about the intentions of their workgroup and the reports submitted by the funded organizations

Readings:
Memos written to the 2015 class by the four 2014 workgroups
Reports from the organizations awarded gifts in 2014


Recommended reading:


LAB: Take stock of your progress. Review any site visit or other information about the organizations. What else needs to be done? You should be nearing agreement on one nonprofit organization to advance for funding.

MAY 19  EFFECTIVENESS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND LEGITIMACY
How do you think about effectiveness and accountability – for nonprofit organizations, for the field of philanthropy, as well as for your own grantmaking?

Readings:


GUEST: Peter Bloom
Advisory Director, General Atlantic, LLC; Board Chair, DonorsChoose

LAB: Decide on the nonprofit to recommend for funding.

- Assign responsibility for the class presentation and portfolio components. Who will have responsibility for which parts of the class presentation and the workgroup portfolio? The workgroup portfolio, including all the components, is to be submitted as one document.
• Draft an email of declination that is to be sent to each organization that you visited but decided not to fund. Please send draft to Lauren and Penelope for review prior to sending emails to the organizations.

REFLECTION PAPER 2 DUE

MAY 26

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: OTHER MECHANISMS FOR TACKLING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Readings:


GUEST:
Terry Mazany
President and Chief Executive Officer, The Chicago Community Trust

LAB: Continue discussions about workgroup presentations and portfolio documents.

JUNE 2

WORKGROUP PRESENTATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS
In-class reviews of other workgroups are due by end of class.

MONDAY

DECIDING WHO GETS WHAT** [Note the different meeting day and time!]
JUNE 8
[Food will be served.]
5:00pm – 7:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

JUNE 10

PRESENTATIONS OF AWARDS AND RECEPTION
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM
Each philanthropy workgroup will make a brief presentation about its chosen organization and award the check to a representative from that organization.

JUNE 10

WORKGROUP PORTFOLIOS DUE

3/28/15
Learning Philanthropy

SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


