Learning Philanthropy: Engaging in the Study and Practice of Giving
Northwestern University
School of Education and Social Policy (SESP)
SESP 351
Spring 2016

Professors: Penelope Peterson
Lauren Jones Young
Teaching Assistant: Tracy Dobie

Class: Tuesdays, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Annenberg Hall, Room 303, Baldwin Studio
Office Hours: Penelope Peterson
By appointment: 847-467-1190
252 Annenberg, p-peterson@northwestern.edu
Lauren Jones Young
By appointment: 773-244-9974
330 Annenberg, lauren.young@northwestern.edu
Tracy Dobie
By appointment: 773-234-8898
332 Annenberg, tdobie@u.northwestern.edu

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. Through dialogue and discussion, our goal is to facilitate your explorations and understandings of major ideas and practices in philanthropy as well as reflections on who you are, what you have to give, and what are your own values. 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 six workgroups based on individual preferences. 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 55% of the final grade; work in the grant-making lab accounts for 45%. Five components make up the course requirements: Participation, Reflection Papers, Workgroup Class Presentations, Site Visit Information Forms, and the Workgroup Portfolio.

Participation (15%): 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 of other workgroup presentations, and participating constructively in final decision-making activities. This portion of your grade also centers on the extent to which you are a thoughtful, reliable, collegial, collaborative, and informed workgroup and class participant.

Reflection Papers (40%)
Paper 1 (20%): Philanthropic autobiography (2-4 pages), with references to four course readings. This assignment asks that you describe and reflect on your times of giving. What are key values or principles that motivated this giving? What are the origins of these values? In this context, describe your attitudes toward and ways of thinking about your relationships to others. Connect your views and experiences to course readings, as support for, elaboration, or further illustration of your points. Cite course readings in American Psychological Association (APA) style. DUE APRIL 20

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 discussions and 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 18
**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:

2. Research references to support the theory of change.
3. Brief description of the 3-4 organizations under consideration and compelling reasons why the workgroup considers these the leading candidates for funding.
4. The kind of information you would like to collect at the site visit; questions/issues on which you would like advice from the class.

The presentation is limited to 15 minutes. Class members will have an opportunity to ask questions, orally and in writing, about the rationale and organization choices. **MAY 3**

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

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. **MAY 31**

**Site Visit Information Forms (5%)**

A completed form for each of the two site visits you conducted is due before class on **MAY 24**.

**Workgroup Portfolio (25%)**

The workgroup portfolio is comprised of five (5) documents. One portfolio per workgroup will be accepted. **DUE JUNE 8**

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, mission statement, and 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 the 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 did not to fund.

4. Memo (2-3 pages) to the next cohort of students, including the following information:
   a. Reasons for giving money to the organization you recommend
   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 the award to your organization 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:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 to 94</td>
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<td>76 to 74</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93 to 90</td>
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<td>73 to 70</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>89 to 87</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>86 to 84</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>79 to 77</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 to 0</td>
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**THE FINAL FOR THIS CLASS IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, JUNE 6, 9:00-11:00am.** We will meet at this time to make the final decisions about the allocation of grant money.

**AWARDS RECEPTION: TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 4:30-6:00pm**
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.
COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- **Canvas:**
  - Class notices, updates, and reminders of assignments, deadlines, and changes will be posted at this course site.
  - Please upload a picture and brief bio to the class roster.

- **Attendance:**
  - Attendance at each class is important and expected.
  - 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.

- **Assignments:**
  - Written 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.
  - Papers and workgroup portfolios should be submitted on Canvas.

- **Workgroup Participation:**
  - You should anticipate that a significant part of the work for this course will happen outside of class.
  - Each student is expected to participate in two site visits to organizations being considered for funding by her/his workgroup.

- **Funding Amounts:**
  - The class will make grants totaling $100,000.
  - Each workgroup will propose an organization to receive an $8,000 grant.
  - The class together will recommend how the remaining $52,000 will be allocated.

- **Culture of the Class:**
  - 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 opposing ideas and points of view, with the expectation that these will be conducted with civility and respect.

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 and philanthropy.

General sites:
Guidestar.org (basic data on NPOs, including the IRS 990 form)
Charitynavigator.org (financial health and reviews of 6000 major national charities)
American Institute of Philanthropy, includes ratings of NPOs, [www.charitywatch.org](http://www.charitywatch.org)
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (www.geofunders.org/geo-publications)
Idealist.org (clearinghouse for nonprofit ideas and news)
Nonprofithub.com (large list of links organized by category)
Greatnonprofits.org (searchable database on nonprofits)
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:
The Chronicle of Philanthropy (national weekly devoted to covering philanthropy)
Donors Forum (www.donorsforum.com): organization dedicated to strengthening Illinois philanthropy and the nonprofit sector
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (http://www.ncrp.org/publications) (Resources on giving circles)
Ashoka: www.ashoka.org (supports social entrepreneurship, with section devoted to nonprofits and philanthropy)
The Non-Profit Times (monthly news magazine)
Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University (www.philanthropy.iupui.edu)
The Philanthropic Initiative (www.tpi.org : offers strategic services to philanthropists)
Center for Strategic Philanthropy & Civil Service (http://cspcs.sanford.duke.edu)
Non-Profit Quarterly (www.nonprofitquarterly.org)
Center on Wealth and Philanthropy, Boston College, http://www.bc.edu/research/cwp.html

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
INTRODUCTION: PERSPECTIVES ON PHILANTHROPY
What is philanthropy, and why engage in such practices – charity, duty, justice?
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: These very short articles offer various perspectives on philanthropy and philanthropists in the U.S.


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.
What is it that you hope to accomplish with this gift? What problems are you addressing? How will this gift help remedy the problem you identified in your mission statement? What are key assumptions that underlie your theory of change? Together, the class will develop a Conflict of Interest policy.

Readings:


Resources:

Conflict of Interest policies for the 2014 and 2015 Learning Philanthropy classes.


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

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.

APRIL 19

WHY GIVE? TO WHOM? AND FOR WHAT ENDS?

How do personal philosophies intersect with ideas about helping others and improving society?
Readings:


Resources:


LAB: Complete the mission statement and theory of action, including a citation from each workgroup member. **By the next Lab on April 26, each workgroup member is to have conducted online reviews of two organizations of interest, posted by April 23 a brief report (1-2 paragraphs) about each one, and reviewed the organizations proposed by other workgroup members.

REFLECTION PAPER 1 DUE ON APRIL 20

APRIL 26

WORKSHOP ON GATHERING INFORMATION, SITE VISITS, AND RELATED ISSUES
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?
- Interviewing and other data gathering and evidence
- Observations and field notes
- Using evidence to make good arguments
- Conducting site visits: making contacts, stating purpose, ethical issues

Together, the class will develop criteria for judging organizations.

Readings:


Giving 2.0 LLC. *Site Visit Guide*.

**Resource:**

LAB: Discuss the organizations proposed by each workgroup member. Weigh the merits. Select the top 3-4 nonprofit organizations, and for each organization provide the contact information (contact name, mailing address, email address) on Canvas. The instructors will send letters of introduction to these organizations prior to your contacting the organization. Begin to draft site-visit questions. Assign responsibility for the workgroup presentations on May 3. Together, the class will develop principles/criteria for grantmaking.

**MAY 3**

**WORKGROUP PRESENTATIONS #1**

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

1. Introduction, mission statement; and the workgroup theory of change.
2. Research references to support the theory of change.
3. A brief description of the 3-4 organizations under consideration and compelling reasons why the workgroup considers these the leading candidates for funding.
4. The kind of information you would like to collect at the site visit; questions/issues on which you would like advice from the class.

The presentation is limited to 15 minutes.

Class members will have an opportunity to ask questions, orally and in writing, about the rationale and organization choices.

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 10

**GRANTMAKING: ASSESSING THE WORK**

What are your expectations for the gifts you make? Is your philanthropy having the intended impact? How might the return on investment be evaluated?

Readings:
Grant letter from Once Upon A Time Foundation to Northwestern University dated June 11, 2015

Memos written to the 2016 class by the six 2015 workgroups
Reports from the organizations awarded gifts in 2015
   Each workgroup will have responsibility for reading and asking questions about two of the memos and reports.


PANEL DISCUSSION: Students from the 2015 Learning Philanthropy class will talk about the intentions of their workgroups and the reports submitted by the funded organizations

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 17

**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? What does it mean to say that philanthropy is “effective”?

Readings:


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

**PAPER 2 DUE MAY 18**

**MAY 24**

**SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:**
**OTHER MECHANISMS FOR TACKLING SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

Readings:


GUEST: Robert Waldron
Chief Executive Officer, Curriculum Associates

**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.

**SITE VISIT INFORMATION FORMS DUE BEFORE CLASS ON MAY 24**

**MAY 31**

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

**JUNE 6**
9:00-11:00am **DECIDING WHO GETS WHAT**
Note the different meeting day and time!

**JUNE 7**
4:30-6:00pm **PRESENTATIONS OF AWARDS AND RECEPTION**
Each philanthropy workgroup will make a brief presentation about its chosen organization and award the check to a representative from that organization.
JUNE 8 WORKGROUP PORTFOLIOS DUE
Learning Philanthropy
SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


