

HODC 3352: PHILANTHROPY & SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING

3 credit hours T/Th 9:35-10:50 Room: Home Economics 107

Professor Beth Shinn Spring, 2017



Most people think that Americans are generous because we are rich. The truth is that we are rich, in significant part, because we are generous. — Claire Gaudiani

Every man goes down to his death bearing in his hands only that which he has given away.

— Persian proverb

The true friend of the people should see that they be not too poor, for extreme poverty lowers the character of the democracy. — Aristotle

The hell with charity, the only thing you'll get is what you're strong enough to get.

— Saul Alinsky

I can testify that it is nearly always easier to make \$1,000,000 honestly than to dispose of it wisely. — Julius Rosenwald

This course provides an opportunity to engage in the practice of philanthropy, while learning about charitable giving, social problem solving, and the non-profit sector. Working in teams, students will distribute up to \$50,000 (\$2,000 per student donated by the Philanthropy Lab) to local non-profits after analyzing community needs, considering approaches to social problems, and investigating the effectiveness of organizations in solving them. The course is part of the Community Leadership and Development track of the HOD undergraduate program, which prepares students for a career focused on “finding solutions to human problems in organizations and communities.” The program, rooted in the philosophy of American Pragmatism and John Dewey, emphasizes linking academic knowledge and theory to personal and professional practice through tackling organizational and community issues and concerns.

The class will be run as a seminar, with much of the work done in student teams. The semester will be divided into four sections: I. Problem identification: How do community needs and student values shape selection of problems? II. Approaches to change: How do different problem definitions imply different solutions? What organizations are currently working on the problem, and how does their work embody different approaches to change? III. Evaluating approaches: How do the efforts of non-profit organizations working in the area fit with theories of change? How effective and efficient are the organizations? How would the organizations use a donation to address the problem? How should their efforts be evaluated? IV. Decision making. Students

will serve as the Board of Directors of the HOD Philanthropy Lab Foundation to decide how and where to donate the funds.

Prerequisites: In the same or a prior semester, students must have taken courses in group processes, organizations, and systematic inquiry/research methods (HOD 1300, 2100, 2500 or equivalent), so that they are prepared to work in teams and to analyze both social problems and the organizations that aim to deal with them.

Course Structure

Course structure will align with the timeline areas foci (above).

- Focus 1: Problem Identification. Class members will be broken up into teams based on issue area interests (3 to 5 groups expected). Each team will research a broad problem area (housing, education, crime, economic development) and identify specific conditions within Nashville with regard to the problem area (e.g., in education: dropout rates; college admissions; absenteeism; suspensions; teacher turnover; test scores; performance differentials by neighborhood, race, gender, etc.). The goal is to develop a firm empirical grounding on areas of greatest need.
- Focus 2: Approaches to Change. Teams will conceptualize potential interventions to address the areas of need identified, and identify potential organizations addressing this need. What interventions align with different definitions of the problem: services to support the need or advocacy to prevent the problem? individual treatments or organizational or systems-level interventions? What organizations in Nashville are filling the gaps identified? What is the role of the non-profit sector with respect to the problem? What leverage might philanthropic dollars have?
- Focus 3: Evaluating Organizational Approaches. Drawing on the problem identified and the conceptual approaches to addressing this problem, teams will identify a small pool of organizations in Nashville that fit the selected approach, analyze these organizations, and determine those likely to have the greatest impact. Teams will also decide on criteria for evaluating funded change efforts.
- Focus 4: Decision-making. Students will make decisions at several stages in the class (e.g., narrowing the problem area foci), and at the end will make final decisions about how they, acting as a Foundation, will allocate their resources for maximum impact on the problem areas identified in Nashville. Groups will make presentations to the class to make the case for funding based on research and analysis.

Texts for Course

We will use two textbooks with supplemental readings to be posted on Blackboard:

Brest, P. & Harvey, H. (2008). *Money well spent: A strategic plan for smart philanthropy*. New York: Bloomberg Press.

Frumkin, P. (2010). *The essence of strategic giving: A practical guide for donors and fundraisers*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Assignment and Grading

Course assignments are structured around group projects, although some assignments will be completed by individuals. For group assignments, group members will be asked to assess individual contributions to the group product, and the group grade *may* be adjusted accordingly. There are seven assignments in this class, five of them graded [90% of grade], along with a weekly reading quiz [10% of grade].

1. An exercise to *identify issue areas* of concern (from Gary, Inspired Philanthropy). Groups will be formed based on this assignment. (This is required, but ungraded) [individual assignment]
 - Please also complete the Pre-Course Survey from our funder, the Philanthropy Lab: https://qaz1.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8q9LzfbroDfi0Lj
2. Each student will submit a paper, pitching a *particular problem* to their group, with documentation of a) the magnitude of the problem; b) the importance of this problem relative to other problems and changes over time; c) who is affected; and d) who is being served. Due January 24. [15% of grade] [individual assignment]
3. Each student will submit a paper considering at least two alternative conceptual approaches to the problem that their GROUP has selected for focus, each of which is embodied by a local organization. How do the organizations define the problem, and how do different problem definitions imply different solutions? Does each organization provide services to support the need or advocacy to prevent the problem? Does it offer individual treatments or organizational or systems-level interventions? Does it seek ameliorative or transformative change? Note – you are NOT expected to contact organizations for this assignment. Use the web or other sources, noting where you must make assumptions for lack of direct evidence. The focus is on the conceptualization rather than a detailed description of the organizations Due February 16 [20% of grade] [Individual Assignment]
4. After the group narrows the list of organizations under consideration each student will participate in AT LEAST one group visit to an organizational finalist. [Ungraded, but visit reports included in Appendix to the draft briefing report.]
5. The group will prepare a *draft briefing report* describing the need identified (with evidence), the definition of the problem and the theory of change, the funding strategy, the evaluation of organizational finalists (with evidence), the recommended organization, why it was selected, how money would be used at different levels of funding, and how, specifically, the change efforts should be evaluated. An appendix should list the dates of visits to organizations, who at the organization was interviewed, and who in the team participated. Due April 4 [25% of grade] [group assignment]
6. Each group will make a *presentation* to the class about their issue, and the organization they nominated for funding (based on that organization's anticipated impact on this issue in Nashville), and how impact should be evaluated. Each member of the group must participate in some way for this presentation (not a single speaker for the whole group). Others in our class (non-group members), sitting as the Board of Directors of the HOD Philanthropy Lab Foundation, will make decisions based on this presentation about the allocation of funds. Due April 11 & 13 [10% of grade] [group assignment]

7. Using the feedback provided by the instructor and classmates, each group will produce a *final, polished briefing report*. Due April 24 [20% of grade] [group assignment]. Grades will reflect both the quality of the final document and the improvement over the draft.
 - The Philanthropy Lab will also have additional requests of you including a Post-Course Survey. Instructions will be provided.
8. Weekly Reading Quiz (in lieu of final exam). Unless otherwise specified, you are expected to complete the readings due each week before class on Tuesday, allowing us to build on the readings in class discussions and group work. The instructor will provide question to guide your reading in advance. Each week (weeks 2-11) at the start of class (usually Tuesday), the instructor will select one of these questions for you to answer. If you have to miss class and want credit for the weekly quiz, submit answers to ALL of the quiz questions by e-mail BEFORE the start of class on Tuesday. [10 % of grade]

Late Work Policy:

You are expected to turn in your assignments at the beginning of class on the date they are due. Your teammates depend on your timely submission of work. In the event that you turn your assignment in after the due date, 10% will be deducted from your grade for each 24-hour period (or part thereof) that the assignment is late. Quizzes cannot be late.

Grading Scale:

There is a total of 100 points possible for the assignments from this class. (The grade for quizzes will be the average that you earn across the 10 quizzes.) Final grades will represent the percentage of these points that you earned. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

94% or higher:	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%:	B+
80-86%:	B
77-79%:	C+
70-76%:	C
60-69%:	D
59% or below:	F

Borderline grades may be moved up or down one notch based on class participation.

Grading Concerns:

It is the responsibility of each student to submit work that is on time, original, complete, and done with the best of his or her ability. It is the responsibility of the instructor to evaluate your work with fairness and honesty, and to provide you with constructive and timely feedback to assist you in your development as a student. If you feel that I have failed in my responsibilities to you, within 48 hours of receiving graded materials, you should:

- 1) Submit in writing, via e-mail, an explanation of your disagreement with the grade you have received, and a proposal for the grade that you believe you deserve.
- 2) Schedule an appointment with me. When we meet, you should bring a copy of the graded material and your written submission.

Additional Policies:

Attendance & Participation:

Much of the work of this class will be done in the class. Attendance and participation is expected and essential. As members of a classroom community, we are all responsible for our own and each other's learning. In order to fulfill your responsibility to yourself and your fellow classmates, you are expected to come to class on time, fully prepared, and ready for discussion.

Laptop Policy:

Students may not have out their laptops during classroom instruction or discussions. You should bring your laptops to class because some classroom activities and exercises will require them, however, you should keep them put away until the professor instructs otherwise. If you have questions about this policy or the research that supports it, please see: Barbash, F. (2014). Why students using laptops learn less in class even when they really are taking notes. Washington Post, April 28.

Academic Honesty:

For this course, you are bound by the terms of the Vanderbilt University Honor Code. Any breach of academic honesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or failing to report a known or suspected violation of the Code will be reported to the Honor Council. In particular, creative work including papers and presentations must assign credit to the sources you use. Material borrowed from another--quotations, paraphrases, key words, or ideas-- must be credited following appropriate citation procedures (footnotes and bibliography). Individual assignments should be your own work; group assignments should be the work of the group.

Students Needing Course Accommodations:

Vanderbilt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities that may affect your ability to complete course assignments or otherwise satisfy course requirements. If you may require accommodations, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services at Baker Building, Suite 108 (615) 322-4705 (V/TDD) to discuss and determine any accommodations. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in Vanderbilt University classes and have not contacted them, please do so as soon as possible. You are also encouraged to see me privately about your needs, ideally no later than the second week of the semester, so that I can ensure that your needs are met appropriately and in a timely manner.

Students Needing Schedule Accommodations:

If you need a schedule accommodation due to a religious holiday, please note this on the information card filled out in the first class. If a later need arises, please let both me and (if it affects group work) the other members of your group know as soon as possible.

Respect for Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation,

disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. I call on you to be respectful of your fellow students and encourage you to let me know how to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

Policies adapted from other HOD faculty and from: <https://education.uiowa.edu/coe-policies/syllabus-checklist>)

Course Calendar and Readings

Jan 10 Introduction, course structure and goals

Part 1. Problem Identification

Jan 12 ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE: Issues Areas; complete pre-course survey

Carnegie, A. (1900). *The gospel of wealth and other timely essays*. New York Century Co. pp 1-43. In the public domain: <https://archive.org/details/cu31924001214539>

Singer, P. (2013, August 10). Good charity, bad charity. *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/11/opinion/sunday/good-charity-bad-charity.html?pagewanted=all>

Gates, B. (2007). Remarks at Harvard Commencement, 2007. <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2007/06/remarks-of-bill-gates-harvard-commencement-2007>

Jan 17 – 19

Frumkin, Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-50).

Brest & Harvey, Chapters 1-2 (pp. 3-36).

Reich, R. (2005, Winter). A failure of philanthropy. American charity shortchanges the poor, and public policy is partly to blame. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/a_failure_of_philanthropy

Part 2. Approaches to Change

Jan 24 – 26

Jan 24 ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE: Problem Pitch. Be prepared to convince your group.

Metro Social Services (2015) 2015 Executive Summary Community Needs Evaluation <http://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/SocialServices/docs/cne/2015ExecSumCNEcombined030216.pdf>

O'Connor, A. (2001). *Poverty knowledge: Social science, social policy, and the poor in Twentieth-Century US history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Introduction).

Burton, D O. & Barnes, B.C.B (2017, Jan 3.) Shifting philanthropy from charity to justice. Stanford Social Innovation Review.

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/shifting_philanthropy_from_charity_to_justice

OPTIONAL: You may find the additional detail in the full Metro Social Services Needs Assessment useful for your problem pitch:

<http://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/SocialServices/docs/cne/2015CNE-SurveyLink.pdf>

See also slide presentation March, 2016:

http://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/SocialServices/docs/plann_coord/2015CNEpresentationslides.pdf

Davidson County Community Health Needs Assessment 2016

http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/documents/main/files/Davidson%20Summit%20Slides%20-%209_10.pdf

Jan 31 – Feb1

Rappaport, J. (1977). *Community psychology: Values, research, action*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, pp. 160-166. (Strategies and tactics of social intervention)

Seidman, E. (1983). Unexamined premises of social problem solving. In E. Seidman (Ed.) *Handbook of social intervention* (pp. 48-67). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications;

Frumkin Chapter 3 (pp 51 – 76).

Brest & Harvey Chapter 3 (pp. 37-57).

Feb 7 – 9

Frumkin Chapter 4 (pp. 77-103).

Brest & Harvey Chapters 11-14 (pp. 167-239)

Feb 14 – 16

Feb 16 ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE: Alternative approaches

Christens, B.D., Hanlin, C.E., & Speer, P.W. (2007). Getting the social organism thinking: Strategy for systems change. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 39 (3-4), 229-238.

Brest & Harvey Chapter 4-5 (pp. 59-85)

Part 3. Evaluating Organizational Approaches

Feb 21 – 23

Read Assignment 3 papers from your group

Brest & Harvey Chapters 6-8 (pp. 87-134)

START ASSIGNMENT 4: Visits to candidate agencies: See resources at www.bridgespan.org

Feb 28 – Mar 2

Brest & Harvey Chapters 9-10 (pp. 135-164)

Schmidt, B. (2014). All enterprise is social: Measuring the impact of endeavors across the profit boundary. *Non-Profit Quarterly*.

Fitzsimmons, K. (2015, March 16). Getting the most out of evaluation. *Non-Profit Quarterly*
<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2015/03/16/getting-the-most-out-of-evaluation/>

Frumkin excerpt: Functions and forms of evaluation (in chapter 7, pp. 159-162).

SPRING BREAK

Mar 14 (No class March 16: Conduct visits)

Barkan, J. (2013, Fall). Plutocrats at work: How big philanthropy undermines democracy. *Dissent*.

Knight, B. & Ruesga, A. (2013, June 11). The view from the heights of Arnstein's Ladder: Resident engagement by community foundations. National Civic League.

Reich, R. (2013, Mar. 1). What are foundations for? *The Boston Review*.

Schambra, W. (2013). Escaping philanthropy's house of mirrors: Foundations and engagement. *Nonprofit Quarterly*.

Mar 21 (No class March 23: Conduct visits)

Frumkin Chapters 5 – 7 (pp. 105-171).

Mar 28 – 30

Brest & Harvey Chapters 15-16, Afterword (pp. 243-287).

Apr 4 – 6

April 4 ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE: Draft Briefing Book

Apr 11 – 13

April 11 – 13 (date to be assigned) ASSIGNMENT 6 DUE: Group Presentation to Class

Part 4. Decisions

Apr 18 Class Deliberation

Read Draft Briefing Books from OTHER groups

Apr 20 Presentation of checks

April 24 ASSIGNMENT 7 DUE: Final Briefing Book