

# The Politics of Nonprofit Organizations

PMGT 265, Sec 17  
Wednesday Evenings, 7:10pm-9:40pm  
January 16 – April 30, 2008  
Room 208 MPA Building

## Instructor

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Office hours by appointment (usually before class)

## Course Overview and Objective

Nonprofit organizations play an integral role in the economy of the United States and have an increasing impact in public policy decisions. Nonprofit organizations constitute over a million organizations and 4 percent of national income. Every American, in one way or another, is affected by the work and activities of nonprofit organizations. Many participate in them either as employees, volunteers or contributors.

This course will provide a better understanding of the nonprofit sector including its roots, origins, activities and structures. Particular attention will be given to the role of nonprofits in political and public policy arena in Washington, D.C. Special guests from nonprofit organizations will join the class discussions from time to time.

Over the years, nonprofits have played an increasingly important role in the formation of public policy and as participants in the electoral process. With the election season in full progress, we will examine how nonprofits continue to be key players both in the selection of candidates and in the crafting of the laws waour laws and regulations.

Each student is expected to participate in all the discussions, write two small opinion essays, take a mid-term exam and complete a case study of a nonprofit organization and its strategies in advocating its mission.

The overall objective for the course is for each student to have a clearer appreciation for the purpose, operation and impact of nonprofit organizations in the United States.

## Text Book

*Understanding Nonprofit Organizations, Governance, Leadership and Management*, by J. Steven Ott

*Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principles and Practices*, by Peter Drucker

Reference books on reserve or from instructor

*Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management*, by Robert D. Herman & Associates,  
*Managing Nonprofit Organizations*, by Diane Borst and Patrick J. Montana  
*Strategic Management of Public and Third Sector Organizations: A Handbook for Leaders*, J.  
by Paul C. Nutt and Robert W. Backoff

Grading Policy

Grades will be based on four components:

- 1) participation (15%)
- 2) two small papers (20%)
- 3) a mid-term essay exam (25%)
- 4) a case study (40%)

Any graduate seminar discussion is enlivened by the thoughtful contributions of all of the students in class. You shortchange yourself and your colleagues by not being prepared or opting out the discussions. Your grades are affected, too. Organization, clarity and precision in the spoken and written word are expected of graduate level work. Thorough, factual documentation and the application of critical judgment demonstrate superior effort.

The Case Study and Recommendations

The case study requires a profiling and evaluating a current nonprofit organization of your choosing. The case study includes a plan of action to improve performance over the next five years. The case study should be about 20 double-spaced pages, with a one paragraph, single-spaced executive summary at the beginning and a bibliography at the end. Each student will make a 10 minute oral presentation of the case study and recommendations.

Students who wish to have their graded papers returned should provide a self-addressed stamped document-sized envelope when submitting the final paper.

Statement on Scholarly Ethics

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, as in all courses, students are expected to be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, recycled assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Report any violations you witness to your instructor. You may also consult director of the program or the associate dean of the college.

## Class Assignments and Schedule (08a)

### **1. January 16**

Introductions  
Discussion of expectations, assignments and policies  
The history of the nonprofit organization

Assignment for next class:  
Ott, Chapters 1-3

### **2. January 23**

The nonprofit organization in society

Assignment for next class:  
Ott, Chapter 4  
Handout #1

### **3. January 30**

Governance and management

Assignment for next class:  
Ott, Chapters 5-6  
Handout #2

### **4. February 6**

Leadership, integrity and ethics

Assignment for next class:  
Small paper #1  
Ott, Chapters 10-12

### **5. February 13**

**Small paper #1 due**

Strategic planning

Assignment for next class:  
Ott, Chapters 13-19

## **6. February 20**

Entrepreneurship  
Fund-raising  
Grant-writing

Assignment for next class:  
Ott, Chapters 20-23  
Prepare for mid-term

## **7. February 27**

Mid-term examination  
  
Government grants and contracts  
  
Assignment for next class:  
Ott, Chapter 24-26

## **8. March 5**

Financial management  
Fiduciary responsibilities  
  
Assignment for next class  
Small paper #2  
Ott, Chapters 27-30

## **9. March 12**

**Small paper #2 due**  
  
Managing volunteers  
Community relations  
  
Assignment for next class:  
Drucker, complete the book  
Ott, Chapters 31-33

## **10. March 19 (Spring Break, no class)**

### **11. March 26**

Accountability  
Evaluation and performance

Assignment for next class:  
Ott, Chapters 34-36  
Handout #3

### **12. April 2**

Advocacy and Lobbying

Assignment for next class  
Handout #4

### **13. April 9**

Political organizations  
Election activities

Assignment for next class:  
Prepare oral reports

### **14. April 16**

Oral reports, Part I

### **15. April 23**

Oral reports, Part II

#### **Final case study papers due.**

Remember to provide a stamped self-addressed and document-size envelope if you wish your papers returned with comments.