# THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

**School of Social Work**

**Course Number:** SOWO 884

**course title:** Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations

**semester and year:** Spring 2015

**Credits:** Three credit hours

**Instructor:** Mat Despard, MSW

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**Office Hours:**  Mondays & Tuesdays 11am – 2pm and by appointment

**Course Website:** is available through <http://sakai.unc.edu>

**Course Description**: This course will help prepare students for various leadership roles in nonprofit organizations, emphasizing critical thinking and communication skills applied to a range of organizational challenges.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Explain the unique role that nonprofit organizations play in meeting community needs and promoting positive social change.
2. Distinguish governance, leadership and management needs and behaviors within nonprofit organizations.
3. Evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses as a potential nonprofit manager and identify strategies for improving core skills.
4. Critically examine and assess nonprofit organizations’ business models, including mission, vision, theories of change and sustainability.
5. Describe key organizational competencies of nonprofit organizations and how leadership and management skills may be used to effectively strengthen organizational performance.
6. Identify and analyze ethical dilemmas that confront nonprofit leaders and frameworks for ethical leadership in nonprofit organizations.
7. Develop effective communication and conflict management strategies to strengthen individual and group performance.
8. Develop strategies for recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse paid and volunteer workforce.
9. Identify effective measures for strengthening the role of the nonprofit board.

**Expanded Description:** Nonprofit leadership is conceptualized as *the ability to motivate and influence others to articulate and implement strategies to improve people’s quality of life and create social change*. Implicit assumptions of this definition and guiding course themes include:

* How well a nonprofit operates and is managed is irrelevant if it is not creating meaningful change in the lives of people and communities;
* Leadership is a shared enterprise that includes meaningful participation from the Board of Directors and senior staff and input from various stakeholders;
* Effective leaders influence and motivate others to work toward shared goals, constructively manage conflict, communicate clearly, and strive to enhance their emotional and social intelligence;
* Seldom can a nonprofit create meaningful change when it does not partner with other organizations and does not hold itself accountable to community stakeholders;
* Boundaries between non- and for-profit corporations are becoming increasingly blurred;
* The challenges that confront a particular nonprofit are defined by its field of practice, the community it serves, and its organizational life stage;

Class sessions are organized into two major units:

Unit 1 – Organizational Strategy & Change: The outcomes and community impact that nonprofits are trying to achieve and their strategies and change efforts for achieving them.

Unit 2 – Relationships & Influence: How to engage, influence, and motivate people to develop, implement, and change strategies to achieve outcomes and impact.

Nonprofit leaders must develop many different skills to be effective. This course does not cover all of these skills, yet focuses on higher-level skills (i.e. analytical) and organizational processes that are most important for promoting community and social impact.

**Required Texts/Readings:**

Students are not required to purchase a textbook for this course, yet students are required to read several chapters from the following book, which is available as an e-book, accessible by entering the title in the search bar of the UNC Libraries website:

Agard, K. A. (Ed.). (2010). *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook* (Vol. 1). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional assigned readings are available via Sakai under Course Readings.

**Teaching Methods:**

A team-based learning approach will be used. Each student will be assigned to a team of 4 to 5 students that will engage in problem solving exercises, lead a case study exercise, and offer feedback concerning course assignments. Students will engage with the full class for simulations, videos, interactive presentations, and group discussion. This is a course that depends on a high level of engagement and critical thinking by students. Lecture will be used sparingly to introduce a topic, present key concepts, offer practice examples, and/or review research findings.

**Class Assignments:**

Students will be evaluated based on the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Points** | **Date Due** |
| Class Attendance | 10 | Ongoing |
| Class Participation | 10 | Peer and self assessments due 4/24/15 |
| Case Study Facilitation | 20 | Varies by team |
| Mid Term Quiz | 20 | 3/16/15 |
| NPO Impact Assignment | 40 | 4/27/15 |

**Class Attendance** **(10 points)**

To pass this course, students cannot miss more than three class sessions. Students will be awarded attendance points as follows:

No more than one class missed 10 points

Two classes missed 3 points

Three or more classes missed 0 points

More than three classes missed F course grade

In extenuating circumstances (medical or family emergency, though not common illness), absences will be considered excused. Being on time for class is very important and is a sign of respect for the learning environment. A pattern of being late and/or leaving early and/or missing substantial portions of classes may result in the loss of class attendance points.

**Class Participation (10 pts.)**

Participation points will be awarded based on instructor, peer, and self assessment concerning the extent to which the student a) was prepared for class having completing the readings; b) made active and thoughtful contributions to class discussions and learning activities; and c) contributed to a positive and constructive team learning environment and experience. Peer assessment will be conducted through assigned learning teams.

**Quiz (20 pts.) Due March 16 by 5pm**

Students will complete a time-limited, open-book, quiz on the course Sakai site that covers content from assigned readings for class sessions 1-7. Items will be in multiple-choice, short answer, and short essay format. The purpose of the quiz is to assess students’ understanding of major concepts and practice principles, not to recall specific details from readings.

**Case Study Facilitation (20 pts.) Due date varies by team**

Students will work in small teams to facilitate discussion and problem solving in class related to an assigned case study. This will be done in class sessions 3 through 7 (see schedule below). Each team will come up with a set of questions that frame and guide the key decisions the nonprofit must make and engage small groups of students in answering these questions. Subsequently, each team will help facilitate a class discussion in which small groups’ decisions are shared, justified, compared and contrasted.

**NPO Impact Assignment (40 pts.) Due April 27 by 5pm**

Students will have three options for completing this assignment, which will focus on ways in which NPOs can build capacity to increase their community and social impact.

For **Option A,** a team of 3 or 4 students will complete a *draft* **business plan** for one or more NPOs[[1]](#footnote-1) based on a review of the NPOs’ documents and interviews with NPO leaders. The core idea with this assignment is to *translate existing information about the NPO and its operating environment into a strategic framework* that the NPO can then modify and use to improve its strategic decision making and better communicate with current and prospective stakeholders.

For **Option B,** a team of 2 or 3 students will conduct an **assessment** of and develop an **improvement plan** with a NPO. Students will work with the leaders of the NPO to assess leadership, adaptive, management, and operational capacity, and develop well targeted recommendations for how improvements in these domains will increase the ability of the NPO to achieve community and social impact.

For **Option C,** students will work independently to conduct an in-depth review of research and practice evidence about an issue of strategic importance to NPOs and translate findings from this review into a practice brief that provides concrete guidance to NPOs. Students will select one of the following topics or they may propose a topic:

* Strategic planning and thinking
* Program evaluation & evidence-informed practice
* Strategic partnerships
* Harnessing information technology
* Board development
* Social enterprise
* Social entrepreneurship
* Human resource management
* Volunteer management

We will use class time for students to discuss their project ideas and receive feedback from each other and from the instructor.

*Detailed requirements and instructions for the above assignments are posted on the course Sakai site in the assignments folder.*

**Grading System:**

All grades are based on the following scale:

94 and above H

80-93 P

70-79 L

69 and below F

**Policy on Incompletes and Late Assignments:**

Assignments are considered late if it is handed in any later than the start of class on the day it is due. The grade for late papers will be reduced 5% per day, including weekends. Similarly, a paper due at 6pm on Monday handed in at 7pm will be considered 1 day late.

A grade of **Incomplete** is given only in exceptional and rare circumstances that warrant it, e.g. family crisis, serious illness. It is the student’s responsibility to request and explain the reasons for an Incomplete. The instructor has no responsibility to give an Incomplete without such a request.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty:**

It is the responsibility of every student to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing in actions involving the academic processes of this class. Students will properly attribute sources used in preparing written work and will sign a pledge on all graded coursework certifying that no unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of the work**. All written assignments should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, “I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.”** Credit will not be awarded for unpledged work.

Please refer to the *APA Style Guide,* The SSW *Manual,* and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the University’s Disabilities Services (<http://disabilityservices.unc.edu>) and provide documentation of their disability. Disabilities Services will notify the instructor that the student has a documented disability and may require accommodations. Students should discuss the specific accommodations they require (e.g. changes in instructional format, assignment format) directly with the instructor.

**Use of Laptops or other electronic devices:**

Electronic devices are fine to use in class as a learning aid, but not for any other purpose. For some class sessions, you will need to have a laptop.

**Expectations for written assignments/APA Formatting:**

Students are expected to use good academic English; grades will be lowered for poor grammar, syntax, or spelling. Those who have difficulty writing can use online resources of the School of Social Work (<http://ssw.unc.edu/students/writing>) or campus Writing Center (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/>). Students in the School of Social Work can also see Diane Wyant or Susan White for personal assistance. Please follow **APA format** for in-text citations and references.

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American*

*Psychological Association, 6th Edition*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

**READINGS AND COURSE OUTLINE**

**Class 1 - January 12 Introduction**

**Objectives**

* Review students’ nonprofit-related experiences and learning goals and course content , process and expectations
* Identify key characteristics and dynamics of the nonprofit sector
* Explore basic assumptions about leadership and effectiveness in nonprofit organizations

**Readings**:

Carlson, K., & Schneiter, S. (2011). Roles, responsibilities, and characteristics of nonprofit leadership. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 329-337). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.4135/9781412979320.n38>

Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation. (2010). *A vision of organizational health: Components of an effective organization.*

(Optional Reading if you are unfamiliar with nonprofit organizations):

Dicke, L. (2011). A nonprofit organization. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 29-38). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.4135/9781412979320.n4>

**\*\*\* NO CLASS ON JANUARY 19, 2015 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday \*\*\***

**UNIT 1: Strategy**

**Class 2 – January 26 Strategy Development**

**Objectives**

* Understand how nonprofits can achieve clarity about their intended outcomes and impact and their theories of change
* Explain how NPO strategic and business planning works and why it is important
* Analyze the strategic clarity and implementation feasibility of a NPO strategic plan

**Readings**:

Brest, P. (2010). The power of theories of change. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, 8*(2)*,* 46-51. Retrieved from <http://www.kipp.org/news/stanford-social-innovation-review-the-power-of-theories-of-change->

Campbell, K., & Haley, B. (2006). *Business planning for nonprofits: What it is and why it matters.* Retrieved from the Bridgespan website <http://www.bridgespan.org/getattachment/9dd26c28-8f86-412b-9f29-b2bde2859d71/Business-Planning-for-Nonprofits-What-It-Is-and-Wh.aspx>

Colby, S., Stone, N., & Carttar, P. (2004). Zeroing in on impact: In an era of declining resources, nonprofits need to clarify their intended impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall,* 25-33.

First Place for Youth. (2008). *2009-2013 strategic plan.* Retrieved from <http://www.firstplaceforyouth.org/Document.Doc?id=52>

**Class 3 – February 2 Strategy Implementation**

**Objectives**

* Explain how NPOs implement strategic plans
* Understand key organizational and leadership competencies and functions in implementing strategic plans

**Readings**:

Hadley, J., Lanzerotti, L., & Nathan, A. (2012). *Living into your strategic plan: A guide to implementation that gets results* (Read **Introduction** and **6 Steps to Implementation** and skim links to various “tools to use”). Retrieved from the Bridgespan Group website: <http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Strategy-Development/Living-Into-Your-Strategic-Plan/FeaturedPublications1/Living-Into-Your-Strategic-Plan-A-Guide-to-Imp-%281%29.aspx#.UM_hKKxGOdw>

**Case Study #1**

Campbell, R., & Louh, R. (2005). Managing growth: How a Boston educational-services nonprofit is realizing its own potential for growth so that scholars can realize theirs. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer,* 55-61. Retrieved from <http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/managing_growth>

**Class 4 – February 9 Evaluation & Organizational Learning, Part 1**

**Objectives**

* Explain various ways in which nonprofits are held accountable for measuring outcomes and impact and strategies nonprofits can use to demonstrate social performance
* Describe how NPOs engage in evaluation and the differences among formative, process, and outcome evaluations

**Readings**:

Bradach, J. L., Tierney, T. J., & Stone, N. (2008). Delivering on the promise of nonprofits. *Harvard Business Review, 86*(12), 88-97.

Ebrahim, A., & Rangan, V. K. (2010). *The limits of nonprofit impact: A contingency framework for measuring social performance* (Working Paper 10-099). Retrieved from the Harvard Business School website: <http://www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/10-099.pdf>

First Place for Youth. (2012). *More is possible: My First Place, a program of First Place for Youth* (Formative evaluation findings: June 2010 to March 2012)*.* Retrieved from <http://www.firstplaceforyouth.org/document.doc?id=160>

Stid, D., Neuhoff, A., Burkhauser, L., & Seeman, B. (2013). *What does it take to implement evidence-based practices?* Retrieved from <http://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/f31d19f3-a782-424a-a04f-8a44edd8fe34/What-Does-It-Take-to-Implement-Evidence-based-Practices.aspx>

**Class 5 – February 16 Evaluation & Organizational Learning, Part 2**

**Objectives**

* Describe what it means for NPOs to use evidence-informed practices and analyze the extent to which this is done to achieve greater impact
* Devise strategies for how NPOs can increase their use of evidence-informed practices

**Readings**:

Milway, K. S., & Saxton, A. (2011). The challenge of organizational learning. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer,* 44-49.

Risley, J. (2011). Using data to make decisions. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 683-688). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412979320.n76>

Winkler, M. K., Theodos, B., & Grosz, M. (2009). *Evaluation matters: Lessons from youth-serving organizations* (Urban Institute and World Bank report). Retrieved from the Urban Institute website <http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411961_evaluation_matters.pdf> (**Read Introduction pp. 1-5)**

**Case Study #2:**

Winkler, M. K., Theodos, B., & Grosz, M. (2009). *Evaluation matters: Lessons from youth-serving organizations* (Urban Institute and World Bank report). Retrieved from the Urban Institute website <http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411961_evaluation_matters.pdf> (**Read Metro TeenAIDS Case Study pp. 26-31)**

**Class 6 – February 23 Adaptation, Innovation, & Scale, Part 1**

**Objectives**

* Describe the challenges of innovation for NPOs and develop strategies for how NPOs can overcome these challenges
* Explain the difference between innovation and scale, including the different organizational and leadership competencies and functions needed to be successful at each

**Readings**:

The James Irvine Foundation. (2009). *The strong field framework: A guide and toolkit for funders and nonprofits committed to large-scale impact.* Retrieved from <http://irvine.org/images/stories/pdf/pubs/strongfieldframework.pdf>

Khan, Z., & Joseph, K. (2013). Embracing the paradoxes of innovation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer,* 21-23.

Seelos, C., & Mair, J. (2013). Innovate and scale: A tough balancing act. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer,* 12-14.

**Case Study #3:**

Rammohan, S. (2010). Fueling growth. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer,* 68-71.

Retrieved from <http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/fueling_growth>

**Class 7 – March 2 Adaptation, Innovation, & Scale, Part 2**

**Objectives**

* Understand key distinctions between advocacy and lobbying in NPOs
* Describe effective strategies for nonprofits to engage in social change at the community and policy levels

**Readings**:

Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest. (2006). *Make a difference for your cause: Strategies for nonprofit engagement in legislative advocacy.* Retrieved from <http://www.clpi.org/images/stories/content_img/Make_a_Difference_RG%5B1%5D.pdf> **(Read pp. 6-18)**

MacIndoe, H. (2011). Advocacy organizations. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 155-163). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412979320.n18>

**Case Study #4:**

Building Movement Project (n.d.). *Case study: Bread for the City*. Retrieved from

<http://www.buildingmovement.org/artman/uploads/making_social_change_-_bread_for_the_city.pdf>

**\*\*\* NO CLASS ON MARCH 9, 2015 – SPRING BREAK \*\*\***

**UNIT 2: Relationships & Leadership Influence**

**Class 8 – March 16 Strategic Partnerships**

**Objectives**

* Explain the continuum of partnership options from cooperation to mergersand describe conditions under which partnership is ideal
* Describe characteristics of successful collaboration

**Readings**:

La Piana, D. (2010). Merging wisely. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, 8*(2)*,* 28-33.

O. Jarvis, O., & R. Marvel (2013, November 18). The rise of the radical mainstreamers: Why established nonprofits could hold the key to scaling social innovation. [Web log comment]. Retrieved from <http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/the_rise_of_the_radical_mainstreamers>

Shaefer, H., DeLand, M., & Jones, T. (2011). Leading collaboration: Creating strategic alliances and restructuring via mergers, acquisitions, and integration. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 559-568). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.4135/9781412979320.n62>

**Class 9 – March 23 Board Development**

**Objectives**

* Describe the role of the board of directors and board-staff relationships
* Understand how board diversity affects organizational effectiveness
* Describe strategies for effectively recruiting and engaging board members
* Explain how conflict may arise on boards of directors and how it can be well managed

**Readings**:

MacDonald, E. G. (2006). *Managing conflict: A guide for volunteer boards.* Non-Profit Sector Leadership Program, Dalhousie University.

Metelsky, B. (2011). Selection, functions, structure, and procedures of the nonprofit board. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 491-503). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.4135/9781412979320.n55>

Ryan, W. P., Chait, R. P., & Taylor, B. E. (2003). Problem boards or board problem? *Nonprofit Quarterly, Summer.* Retrieved from <http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/governancevoice/36-problem-boards-or-board-problem.html>

**Class 10 – March 30 Human Resources Strategy**

**Objectives**

* Describe the essential functions of a human resources system
* Identify ways for nonprofits to recruit diverse staff and develop internal talent
* Describe volunteer management challenges and strategies

**Readings**:

Bridgespan Group. (2008). *Recruiting diverse talent.* Retrieved from the Bridgespan Group website: <http://www.bridgespan.org/getattachment/1818328a-4a46-4ea6-8df0-c563225f6897/Recruiting-Diverse-Talent.aspx>

Bridgespan Group. (2010). *Building a talent pipeline.* Retrieved from the Bridgespan Group website: <http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Hiring-Nonprofit-Leaders/Hiring-Strategy/Building-Talent-Pipeline.aspx#.UNELpaxGOdw>

Eisner, D., Grimm, R. T., Maynard, S., & Washburn, S. (2009). The new volunteer workforce. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, 7*(1), 32-37.

Word, J. (2011). Human resource leadership and management. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 395-402). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412979320.n45

**Case Study #5:**

Bryson, D. (2013). Case study: Diversifying NGO leadership. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Spring,* 82-87. Retrieved from <http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/Spring_2013_Case_Study_Diversifying_NGO_Leadership.pdf>

**Class 11 – April 6 Leadership Styles & Skills, Part 1**

**Objectives**

* Identify and describe leadership strategies and behaviors that motivate others, promote diversity and teamwork, mutual accountability and clear communication, and constructively manage change and conflict.

**Readings**:

Heifetz, R. A., & Linsky, M. A. (2002). Survival guide for leaders. *Harvard Business Review, 80*(6), 65-74.

Ronquillo, J. (2011). Servant, transformational, and transactional leadership. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 345-354). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412979320.n40>

Strmic-Pawl, H. (2011). Attracting leadership from across diverse communities. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 274-283). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.4135/9781412979320.n32>

**Class 12 – April 13 Leadership Styles & Skills, Part 2**

**Objectives**

* Identify and describe leadership strategies and behaviors that motivate others, promote diversity and teamwork, mutual accountability and clear communication, and constructively manage change and conflict.

**Readings**:

Armstrong, A., & Ashraf, S. (2011). Leadership competencies in a diverse culture. In K. Agard (Ed.), *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook.* (pp. 267-274). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.4135/9781412979320.n31>

Fernandez, C. (2008). Managing the difficult conversation. *Journal of Public Health Management Practice, 14*(3), 317-319.

Fernandez, C. (2007). Emotional intelligence in the workplace. *Journal of Public Health Management Practice, 13*(1), 80-82.

Goleman, D., & Boyatzis, R. (2008). Social intelligence and the biology of leadership. *Harvard Business Review, September,* 74-81.

Schwarz, R. (2006). Does your leadership reduce learning? *Leader to Leader*, 40-47.

**Class 13 – April 20 Student Project Discussion & Wrap-up / Course Review**

**Readings**: None.

1. The number of NPOs will range from 1 to 3 and depend on the number of team members, size and tenure of the NPO, and the amount of information that is available for each NPO. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)