Soc/Law 596f: Theory and Research on the Nonprofit Sector  
Fall, 2012  
Wednesday, 3:30-6:00 PM  
Social Science 415

Instructor:

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Office hours: Tuesday, 1:00 to 5:00 PM

Overview

Course Overview: This course examines the nonprofit sector as a social institution. It focuses primarily on the American nonprofit sector, but we also look at how the sector ‘plays’ in other parts of the world. Different disciplines have looked at the sector from different perspectives. In part one we review how history, law, economics, and political science view the sector (conspicuously absent is a sociological perspective). The second part of the course reviews theory and research on stakeholders, e.g., government, corporations, members, volunteers, donors, and foundations. The final part of the course looks at international non-governmental organizations.

Requirements: The first course requirement is that you attend every session and do the required readings. You should be able to offer some insights on all the required readings in the course of the class discussion, but you will not be graded on your participation or attendance.

Second, you are required to write four one-page, single spaced critical essays. Each will cover an article; books can count for two. These essays will be graded and count for 60% of your grade (15% each). In these essays you should summarize the content and describe how the readings contribute to the literature, complement each other, and approach issues in a different way. You should also touch upon their shortcomings. You need to select your readings by the second week of class.

Third, you are expected to lead the class discussion on the reading for that week. I would advise you to check with the instructor a few days before the class to go over the format for the class.

Finally, you are required to write a research paper (20 pages including text, references, tables, figures, etc.). It may take the form of a literature review, a research proposal, a case study, or a research note (e.g., analysis of secondary data). The grade on the paper will count for 40% of your grade. You need to have your topic approved by the instructor at the beginning of the semester (one page outlines due September 19th). You will make a brief report (5 minutes) to class on your topic on October 24th or October 31st and present a short summary of your paper (5 minutes) to the class on December 5th. The final paper is also due December 5th, but I will accept incompletes if need be. Students may take the course pass/fail, but must do all the assignments and receive an overall grade of “B-” or better to receive a passing grade.
Basis for Grading Student Performance: Critical review essays (60%) and research paper (40%).

Readings: The four books (Powell and Steinberg, Ostrower, Gidron and Hasenfeld, and Salamon) can be purchased from the bookstore or you can go on-line and order them yourself (e.g., half.com or amazon.com). The articles and chapters are on D2L.

Readings (Items WITHOUT an asterisk are required readings for the class)

August 22

Overview of the Sector


Disciplinary Perspectives on the Nonprofit Sector

August 29

Historical Perspectives on the Nonprofit Sector (U.S.)


September 5

Political Perspectives on the Nonprofit Sector


September 12 Public Administration Perspectives on the Nonprofit Sector


**September 19 Economic Perspectives on the Nonprofit Sector**


**September 26 Legal Perspectives on the Nonprofit Sector**


Organizational Issues

October 3  Institutional Forces


October 10  Commercialization and Competition


October 17 Social Enterprises: An Alternative Form


Stakeholder Relations

October 24  Volunteering


October 31  Individual Donors


*“Giving by Individuals.” Giving USA, 2008. Glenview, IL: Giving USA Foundation. p. 43-55


**November 7 **

Foundation Donors


November 21 Corporate Donors


**Global Dimensions**

**November 28 Comparative Perspectives**


December 5  International Non-governmental Organizations

Final Papers Due


