POLS 421/521: Introduction to the Nonprofit Sector
Fall 2017
Dr. Rich Braunstein

I. Instructor Contact Information
Office: Farber House 104
Office Hours: By appointment
Cell Phone: 605.670.0117
E-mail: <click on my name in the D2L Classlist tool>

II. Course Description
The goal of the course is introduce students to the nonprofit sector and issues of social entrepreneurialism, public/private partnerships, nonprofit leadership and development. This course is designed to offer students a strong understanding of the role that nonprofit organizations play in contemporary American society.

By the end of the course, students will have studied the nonprofit sector, its relationship with the public and private sectors, the planning in administrative needs of a nonprofit organization, and understand how to assess the effectiveness nonprofits. Students will also have a strong sense of how to contribute to existing nonprofit organizations through their newly developed understandings and skills.

It is important to note that this course was initially designed for the USD Graduate Certificate Program in Nonprofit Management, and so every effort will be made to have pragmatic discussions of applied materials. This includes our assignments, which are designed to help certificate students merge their professional and academic interests this semester. For those not in the nonprofit certificate program, it is hoped that these practical assignments will give insights into the kind of work done at and for nonprofits in the US.

III. Course Prerequisites
For information about the university’s technical, academic, and student support services, as well as how to take advantages of these services, please refer to the Online Student Handbook in the Getting Started widget on the course home page. This document also contains important information pertaining to minimum technology requirements, registration information, as well as other university services and policies.

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IV. Student Learning Outcomes

The following table presents the desired learning outcomes and the strategies used in this course to assess them.

Table One: Learning Outcomes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Enhanced knowledge of the nonprofit sector, public/private</td>
<td>Discussion thread postings (initial and response postings);</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sector, public/private partnerships, leading and managing</td>
<td>response to practical scenarios in Blackboard Collaborate sessions;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>existing organizations.</td>
<td>written assignments.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Use of interactive tools to identify best practices in</td>
<td>Responses to practical scenarios in Blackboard Collaborate sessions;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nonprofit organization management.</td>
<td>discussion thread postings (initial and response postings).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Understanding how to overcome ethical and practical challenges</td>
<td>Responses to practical scenarios in Blackboard Collaborate sessions;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of administering nonprofit organizations.</td>
<td>discussion thread postings (initial and response postings).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Increased ability to analyze the challenges and opportunities</td>
<td>Written assignments.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>facing public and nonprofit organizations and the key stakeholders they impact.</td>
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</table>
V. Course Expectations

The following table presents the desired learning outcomes and the strategies used in this course to assess them.

**Table Two: Course Expectations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
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</table>
| 1. Students       | • Familiarize yourself with all course procedures, assignments and web etiquette.  
• Participate in each discussion thread. Through this, it is expected that you will help each other succeed in this class -- and beyond where possible.  
• Follow course calendar to remain current with the rest of class.  
• Check D2L e-mail three times each week to remain current with rest of class.  
• Complete assignments and quizzes on time and contact the instructor prior to scheduling conflicts to seek alternative approach if schedules cannot be kept. |
| 2. Instructor     | • Be accessible to students through D2L. Student e-mail, discussion thread and other types of questions will be addressed twice daily on most weekdays. The instructor will check for student correspondence each morning and evening, likely between the hours of 9:00-10:00am and again from 10:00-11:00pm.  
• Give feedback on all class assignments (quizzes, exams, discussion threads and research papers) within one week of submission deadline.  
• Help students identify topics for written assignment and provide feedback, as requested, to assignment related questions.  
• Give advice about how to present the most successful written assignments and, more generally, how to succeed in the course. |
| 3. University of South Dakota | • Answer all technical D2L questions through the USD helpdesk, which can be accessed at helpdesk@usd.edu or via telephone at 605-677-5028 or 877-225-0027. Help desk hours are as follows:  

| Fall/Spring Hours |  
| Monday - Thursday | 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
| Friday | 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
| **Holiday Hours** |  
| Monday - Friday | 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. |
VI. Assignment Instructions and Evaluation Procedures

Table Three below shares essential information for each of our course assignments this semester. Grades for each assignment are given on a standard grade scale, where a 100-90 is an A, 89-80 is a B, 79-70 is a C and 69-60 is a D and lower than a 60 is an F. Final grades for the semester are calculated on the same 100-point scale.

Table Three: Course Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D2L Discussions: Discussion thread instructions provided in related</td>
<td>200 (100 for each of 2)</td>
<td>12% (6% for each of 2 discussion threads).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate Ultra sessions. Consider material discussed in the Collaborate session. Pick a single element of the discussion and share your thoughts, reflections or questions on the topic. Keep thought papers to less than one page.</td>
<td>600 (100 for each of 6)</td>
<td>18% (3% for each of 6 Collaborate sessions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case statement on public/private/partnerships (Assignment One): Assignment instructions provided in the D2L module XXX content folder.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case statement on nonprofit organization policies (Assignment Two): Assignment instructions provided in the D2L module XXX content folder.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on Social Entrepreneurship: Assignment instructions provided in the D2L module XXX content folder.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VII. Course Requirements

A. Texts


Students can purchase new or used copies of this book at Amazon.com, BarnesandNobel.com, or other textbook distributors.

B. Content Covered

Module 1: The Nonprofit Sector and Context
Module 2: Partners in Public Service
Module 3: Leading Existing Institutions, The Board of Directors
Module 4: Leading Existing Institutions, Organizational Mission and Strategic Planning
Module 5: Managing Existing Organizations, Social Entrepreneurship and Resource Management

C. Course Policies and Procedures

This course is conducted online through the D2L and Collaborate Ultra learning environments. It is important to note that we will use online discussion threads in D2L and online conferences in Collaborate Ultra, as well as the D2L content area, to share and discuss material associated with each course module. In addition there are a series of writing assignments for the course, which will be described in greater detail below.

Each module of the course has a set of reading assignments and activities/assignments to complete. All course assignments are presented in our *Course Schedule, which is linked from our D2L course homepage and in the first folder in the D2L content area.*

Also, I will post current entries of our course schedule on our D2L homepage in the ‘News’ widget.

It is important to note that is a student’s responsibility to know when Collaborate Ultra sessions, discussion threads and written assignments are happening. These dates are presented in the *Course Schedule*, so please follow them closely. Because of the heavy reliance on the Course Schedule in the D2L content area, we will not use the D2L course calendar widget sometimes used in other online courses. I feel it is best to keep all the relevant information about scheduling in one location and our course schedule offers us more flexibility than the D2L calendar widget.

To tie together themes presented in each module, students are asked to participate in a series of discussion forums within D2L and Collaborate Ultra sessions that allow for rich
discussions of the material. The D2L discussions are asynchronous, meaning that each student and instructor post can be made at any time of the day during the time period the discussion is going on, and at independent times from other classmates’ posts. I suspect this approach is familiar to online students.

To go beyond asynchronous interactions we will use Collaborate Ultra conferencing software to hold live classes. While I realize that not everyone can make every session this semester, all of us must participate in Collaborate Ultra sessions this semester. You can participate by attending the live session or watching the recording of the session. Session recordings are typically available within an hour or two of the conclusion of each session. You can access the live sessions and recordings through the link on our main D2L course menu (it is listed under the “Communications” tab).

It is my experience from teaching online for the past 10 years that students come to truly enjoy these live class sessions. It adds a vitality to our time together and benefits the learning process through clear and personal discussions of the material and assignments. Please try your best to attend the sessions, and use the recordings only as necessary. Regardless of whether you attend a live session or watch the recording of it, each do is asked to write a brief thought paper reflecting on collaborate sessions for each course module. These thought papers are due 48 hours after each session ends to ensure that we stay on the same schedule together. In this context, your thought paper is confirmation that you have participated in the Collaborate Ultra session and that you are ready to proceed with related module assignments.

To fully participate in live Collaborate Ultra sessions, it is best if you have a working headset with microphone. A headset with microphone, rather than open mics on computers or cell phones, cuts down background noise and repeat transmissions. Headsets for your computer or cell phone typically run about $20-50 and can be a real benefit to our live discussions (and to other electronic conferences you participate in). You can find a reliable headset at Best Buy, Wal-Mart, Target and a variety of online vendors. Earbuds with microphones can also work on some computers. If you have trouble using your headset or earbuds during a Collaborate Ultra session, you can call into the session, using your cell phone as your audio devise. If you call in, you still have to be at a computer to participate in the session – the phone just takes the place of your headset. The Collaborate Ultra session call-in number is provided in the Collaborate Ultra menu inside of D2L.

Topics for your thought papers should Consider material discussed in the Collaborate session. Pick a single element of the discussion and share your thoughts, reflections or questions on the topic. If you present questions in your thought paper, or if you would like to continue discussing your topic, look for response from me in the D2L Dropbox folder where your submit your thought paper. Thought papers should be less than one page, and must be submitted to D2L Dropbox – available under the “Assessments” tab on our course menu.
As noted above, the D2L discussions are asynchronous – you can do these anytime within the posted time-frame for this activity. The D2L discussion is evaluated according to the criteria in the following rubric. You can see from the rubric that more than one entry for a discussion is required for full credit. Discussion thread participate is assessed on three criteria for which there are three possible points. This results in 9 possible points for each discussion thread. Scoring a 9/9 is equal to a 100% on a discussion – 8/9 would be an 88% and so on for other scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points:</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation:</td>
<td>Consistently plays an active role in discussions.</td>
<td>Usually plays in active role in discussions.</td>
<td>Sometimes plays an active role in discussions.</td>
<td>Rarely or never plays an active role in discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension:</td>
<td>Consistently makes comments that reflect familiarity with the assigned cases and readings.</td>
<td>Usually makes comments that reflect familiarity with the assigned cases and readings.</td>
<td>Sometimes makes comments that reflect familiarity with the assigned cases and readings.</td>
<td>Rarely or never makes comments that reflect familiarity with the assigned cases and readings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction:</td>
<td>Consistently responds to peer comments and makes substantive contributions to the discussion.</td>
<td>Usually responds to peer comments and makes substantive contributions to the discussion.</td>
<td>Sometimes responds to peer comments and makes substantive contributions to the discussion.</td>
<td>Rarely or never responds to peer comments and makes substantive contributions to the discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please consider some additional factors that might not be obvious from the above table:

1. Read all of the postings as part of your participation in each discussion. D2L logs how many postings you read, how many you author, how many you respond to, and the like. With this information, I am able to make pretty good assessments of how engaged you are in the threads.

2. If you post 3 or 4 messages and read 10 or 15 out of 150 postings for an individual discussion thread you cannot expect to get a "consistently" participates or consistently interacts. This performance might better be described as usually or sometimes (depending on how many posts there actually are). Though the 3 or 4 postings might be sufficient, reading only 10 or 15 of 150 entries is not.

3. When making your contributions, think carefully about their fit with the actual assigned discussion topic. For instance, if a thread asks that "Your answer should
make reference to course material and how it relates to your professional lives as administrators," your postings should make explicit mention to this. It should be said that the highest grades, particularly in the comprehension area, will be given to students who think through the substantive fit of their posts and the topic itself.

4. Comments like “good point Jane” or “I agree with Jim, who said that E=MC²” will not receive any credit at all. In order to get points, you have to add some substance to these comments. Think of why you think Jane’s point is good and try your best to connect your assessment of Jane’s comment to the class materials, additional research and the like. In short, add something more than a confirmation that Jane is thoughtful. I do, however, like when students encourage each other. The point is to make contributions to the class beyond making each other feel good.

5. Do not let poor performance in class discussions hinder your grade or feeling of accomplishment in this class. Too often students do very well in their other assignments but drop a grade (or two) because they simply did not participate (or participate very well) in these discussions. If you enjoy facebook, twitter or other social networking sites, you might come to enjoy these discussions. The short story here is to try and enjoy these discussions. They are a meaningful way of communicating your understanding of course material and helping each other succeed in a collaborative environment.

The writing assignments this semester are designed to be deeply practical assignments. That is, they focus on both the substance needed for work in the nonprofit sector and also the presentation methods that are common in the field. Instructions for these assignments are found in the D2L content area, within the module content folders for the modules these assignments relate to.
D. University Policies

In addition to the specific policies for this class, the University of South Dakota offers policies that apply to all classes at the University. Those are:

1. Freedom in learning. Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the dean of the college or school that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

2. Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

Ernetta L. Fox, Director
Disability Services, Room 119 Service Center
(605)677-6389
Web Site: www.usd.edu/ds
E-mail: dservices@usd.edu

3. In this course we will follow the College of Arts and Sciences Cheating/Plagiarism Policy, which states: The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The College supports the imposition of penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the “Conduct” section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook.

No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty may be:

   a. Given a zero for that assignment.
   b. Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
   c. Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
   d. Dropped from the course.
   e. Failed in the course.