

Trachtenberg School  
of Public Policy  
& Public Administration

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Rev. 5/14/14

**The George Washington University  
Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration**

**PPPA 6034 Managing Nonprofit Boards  
Summer, 2014**

**GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

PPPA 6034 Managing Nonprofit Boards  
Summer, 2014, Monday and Wednesday, 6:10 – 8:20 pm  
May 19, 2011 – June 25, 2011

**PROFESSOR INFORMATION**

Michael J. Worth  
Professor of Nonprofit Management  
601-S 805 21<sup>st</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20052  
(202) 994-3902  
E-mail: [mjworth@gwu.edu](mailto:mjworth@gwu.edu)

Summer, 2014 office hours: By appointment only (E-mail professor to schedule)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an overview of the responsibilities, roles, and management of nonprofit boards. The emphasis is on governing boards, but advisory councils and boards of other types are also considered. Among the topics considered are legal responsibilities of boards; the board's role; models for board organization and operation; governance reforms; characteristics of effective boards; causes of board failure; the board's role in fundraising, the relationship between the board and the CEO; and strategies for board development.

**INTENDED AUDIENCE**

This course is appropriate for students planning or considering careers in the nonprofit sector as well as individuals employed in nonprofit organizations who seek to expand their knowledge in order to advance to more senior management roles. It may also be useful to students who expect to serve as members of nonprofit boards.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students completing this course will 1) understand the functional responsibilities of governing boards in the nonprofit sector, 2) possess a basic knowledge of the legal requirements of nonprofit governance, 3) understand various theories, approaches, principles and best practices in governing nonprofit organizations, 4) be familiar with various views on the relationship between boards and chief executive officers in nonprofit organizations, and 5) be able to identify strengths and weaknesses in a nonprofit organization's governance and recommend actions to improve board performance.

## **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

Most classes will include a lecture portion and a discussion portion. Class discussion generally will be based on the assigned readings for the session. Students are expected to have read the assigned reading before the class meeting and are encouraged to identify points in the readings or in current news that they wish to bring up in class.

## **METHOD OF EVALUATION**

- **Mid-term paper, 40% of course grade**

Take home exam. Students will be provided with five (5) questions, based on assigned readings and class discussions, and will be asked to write answers to three (3) questions of their choice.

- **Final paper, 40% of course grade**

Take home exam. Students will be provided with five (5) questions, based on assigned readings and class discussions, and will be asked to write answers to three (3) questions of their choice. Questions will require students to integrate concepts from assigned readings and class discussions covered *throughout the course*.

*[NOTE: Papers are due on the dates indicated and should be submitted to the professor as an e-mail attachment (Word format preferred) at [mjworth@gwu.edu](mailto:mjworth@gwu.edu). Students may wish to print a hard copy for their own reference during class discussion, but the professor will only read the electronic version.*

- **Class attendance and participation, 20% of course grade**

Students are expected to attend class and participate in discussion. Attendance will be taken in each class session. Attendance policies follow those of the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration.

## **REQUIRED READING**

### **Books (purchase):**

The Handbook of Nonprofit Governance. Washington, DC: BoardSource, 2010.  
ISBN: 978-0-470-45763-4

Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards  
Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan, Barbara E. Taylor  
Wiley, 2004  
ISBN: 0-471-68420-1

**Other required readings:**

All other readings are posted on Blackboard or can be accessed directly from a website at the URL provided below.

**RECOMMENDED READING**

On some topics, the professor has posted materials on Blackboard as recommended reading for students who may wish to pursue greater depth. They will not be directly covered on exams.

**RECOMMENDED WEBSITES**

Students are not required to view these websites, but they are recommended as valuable sources of additional information and resources related to nonprofit boards. The sites also provide useful links.

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges ([www.agb.org](http://www.agb.org))

AGB is an organization of governing boards in higher education institutions. It offers programs and resources related to governing boards in private as well as public institutions and to the boards of institutionally-related foundations.

BoardSource ([www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org))

BoardSource serves governing boards of nonprofit organizations, generally excluding those in higher education. Its website offers an array of resources related to governance.

Independent Sector ([www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org))

Independent Sector is a coalition of nonprofit organizations, based in Washington. Its website includes various materials related to governance and other issues in the nonprofit sector.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Session 1**  
**Mon., 5/19/14**

**Introductions and course overview**

**Session 2**  
**Wed., 5/21/14**

**Responsibilities and duties of governing boards [Lecture]**

Reading: Handbook, Chapter 1\*, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 7

\*This chapter provides an overview of the nonprofit sector and nonprofit management. Students who have taken a previous course on the topic or who have extensive experience may wish to just skim this chapter; others should read it more carefully.

Recommended reading (on Blackboard): (1) Hopkins, Chapter 8, “Governance: Board Duties and Liabilities” (2) Ostrower, “Nonprofit Governance in the United States” (3) AGB Conflict of Interest Statement, 2009 (4) “Divided Loyalties” (Chronicle of Higher Ed 3-14-10) (5) Hershey case articles (file on Blackboard) (6) Handbook, Chapters 8, 10, 11, 13

## **Monday, 5/26/13 – MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS**

**Session 3**  
**Wed., 5/28/14**

### **Board Organization and Operation**

Reading: Handbook, Chapter 4, Chapter 14, Chapter 15

Recommended reading (on Blackboard): Eadie, Chapter 3, “Board Standing Committees and Other Structural Questions” (2) Sample bylaws (file on Blackboard); (3) Forming a Nonprofit in the District of Columbia:

<http://www.citmedialaw.org/legal-guide/district-columbia/forming-nonprofit-corporation-district-columbia>

***First portion of class:***

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Mark V. Hughes,  
Retired Group President of Science Applications International Corporation and board member, various nonprofit organizations

***Second portion of class:***

Discussion of readings

**Session 4**  
**Mon., 6/2/14**

### **The Board and the CEO, Part I [Lecture]**

Reading: Handbook, Chapter 5, Chapter 12; Herman & Heimovics, “Executive Leadership” (Blackboard); Carver, chapters 1-3 (Blackboard); Daring to Lead (Blackboard)

Recommended reading: (1) Research on Carver model (Blackboard); (2) Carver policy manual sample

**Session 5**  
**Wed., 6/4/14**

### **The Board and the CEO, Part II**

Reading: Chait, Ryan, and Taylor book (all); Jaffe, “Let Them Eat Truffles” (on Blackboard)

***First portion of class:***

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Nelson Carbonell, Jr., Chair, George Washington University Board of Trustees

***Second portion of class:***

Discussion of Chait book

**MID-TERM EXAM ASSIGNED**

**Session 6**  
**Mon., 6/9/14**

**Board Development and Reform [Lecture and discussion]**

Reading (all students): Handbook, Chapter 6, Chapter 16; “Principles for Good Governance” (on Blackboard) [It is not essential to read every word of this report, but be familiar with the principles that are recommended.]

**NOTE**: The class will be divided into two groups for the following reading. Each group will summarize the reading and lead discussion in class on its assigned case. These reports are posted on Blackboard.

Group 1: (1) “Red Cross Governance Report” [Read the whole report, but don’t get bogged down by the extensive footnotes or appendices. Focus particularly on Sections 3 and 4 of the report.]

Group 2: (1) “Smithsonian Governance Report” (2) Also read the brief articles on Blackboard under the file “Small departure,” which help set the context for the governance reforms. (3) Also review the items in the Blackboard file “Smithsonian reform updates”

**Session 7**  
**Wed., 6/11/14**

**GUEST LECTURER**  
**Susan Meier, Meier & Associates**  
**Board consultant**

**MID-TERM EXAM DUE**

**Session 8**  
**Mon., 6/16/14**

*First portion of class:*  
**GUEST SPEAKER**: Scott Schenkelberg, President and CEO, Miriam’s Kitchen

*Second portion of class:*  
Discussion of Mid-Term questions and other topics

**Session 9**  
**Wed., 6/18/14**

**The Board’s Role in Fund Raising [Lecture/discussion]**

Reading: Handbook, Chapter 9\*; Worth, “Fielding a Fund-Raising Team” (Blackboard); Worth, “Sounding Boards” (Blackboard)

\*Students who have taken a course in fundraising or have extensive fundraising experience may just skim this chapter.

Recommended reading (on Blackboard): Henderson, “The Trustee’s Role in Fund Raising”

**FINAL EXAM ASSIGNED**

**Session 10**  
**Mon., 6/23/14**

**Exercise:** East Coast Orchestra Role Play

**Session 11**  
**Wed., 6/25/14**

**Wrap-up and discussion of final exam**

**FINAL EXAM DUE**