PPPA 6058: NGO MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Time: Tuesdays 6:10p-8:00p      Fall 2016
Location: Philips Hall 415
Instructor:
Derick W. Brinkerhoff
Tel: 202/728-2479
E-mail: dbrink@gwu.edu
Office hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
The course provides an overview of nongovernmental organization (NGO) management, highlighting those features of NGO management that are particular to NGOs active in international development. NGO roles as project implementers, technical assistance providers, intermediaries, partners, and policy advocates are analyzed. Particular attention is given to NGO-government, NGO-donor, and North-South relations. The objectives of this course are to: a) understand the conceptual and analytic issues related to successfully managing international development NGOs (both US- and developing country-based), b) explore the implications of those issues for NGO operations, and c) build skills in applying management frameworks and tools. Class sessions explore the critical tasks associated with managing NGOs working in international development, humanitarian assistance, and intervention in conflict-affected countries. Internal operational efficiency, strategic management, program performance, and sustainability of NGOs are examined. Features of NGO management are compared and contrasted with management in the public and private sectors; highlighting issues such as funding, scale of operations, accountability, local participation, comparative advantage, and effectiveness. The impacts on NGOs of political and policy factors in the developing and developed worlds are assessed; including topics such as foreign aid trends, democracy and governance, North-South relations, humanitarian and human rights policies, and globalization.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Through course discussions, readings and class exercises, students will develop knowledge and skills to:
1. Assess NGO management structures and procedures for efficiency and effectiveness
2. Solve management problems with NGO staff, volunteers, and board members
3. Develop funding strategies that respond to NGO needs and funder requirements
4. Identify NGO performance issues and appropriate improvement measures
5. Analyze current and future challenges facing NGOs in international development.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
As a seminar class, substantial emphasis is put on collaborative discussion and analysis of assigned materials. Students are expected to participate fully in all class discussions. Case studies and exercises engage students in small group discussions. Class participation grades are
assessed based on the extent to which your contributions to discussions demonstrate that you have read and reflected on the assigned readings, and that you have engaged thoughtfully in exploring the topics discussed in class. If you have difficulty speaking up in class, one option is to highlight a key quotation or point from the readings and be prepared to explain why it is meaningful to you.

Course requirements are designed to build skills relevant for the kinds of activities and written products that students are likely to encounter in professional settings and the workplace. All products should be submitted electronically to the instructor’s email address. Memoranda and papers are required to be submitted in Word; do not send PDF versions. Presentations can be submitted in either PowerPoint or Prezi.

**Organization Interview and Feedback Memo**

Each student is expected to contact a leader/manager in an NGO that focuses on international development and interview her/him on one of the course topics, starting from Topic #3 (sign-up required). Students are required to: a) write a memorandum of 4 pages (typed double-spaced) summarizing and commenting on their findings, and b) prepare and deliver a 7-10 minute presentation of their memo in class using PowerPoint or Prezi. The memo should begin with a very brief description of the NGO and your interviewee’s position. The body of the memo provides a summary of the key points your interviewee made related to the topic along with analytic commentary on them drawing on the readings applicable to the topic. The memo should end with a short paragraph of concluding observations. Neither the memo nor the presentation should offer summaries of the readings. The memo and presentation are due in the class session of the week that the topic is covered. Guidelines on the format and contents of the memo can be found in Annex 1.

To prepare for the interview and for writing the memo, students need, at a minimum, to read the required readings for their chosen topic to gain familiarity with it and associated issues. The memorandum needs to demonstrate this familiarity, as well as present and interpret the NGO interview results.

**Reaction Papers**

Students are required to write two reaction papers of 4 pages each (double-spaced) on their choice of two of the weekly topics covered in the course. The only rules are that: 1) the introductory topics are not available for selection, and 2) the topics selected may not include students’ topic choices for their NGO interviews. These papers are succinct critical reflections on the required readings for the topic. They are not summaries of the readings. Students are expected to: a) identify the key issues and arguments in the readings, b) comment on and critique them, and c) present implications and conclusions for you as an NGO manager (the “so what?” factor). The key learning objective is to develop critical thinking that informs practical application, expressed clearly and concisely. Examples of the types of commentary and critique include, but are not limited to, the following: agreement/disagreement/contradiction among the readings’ treatment of the topic, resonance with your experience in NGOs and international development, gaps or unanswered questions, and conceptual or practical adequacy of management solutions offered by the readings. Reaction papers are due the week after the topic is covered in class. Follow the same format guidelines for the reaction papers as for the memo (Annex 1).

**Reflection Memo**

For the final class session students are required to prepare a 1-2 page (double-spaced) memorandum that offers your reflections on the most important learnings you took from the course, why you consider those learnings significant, and how you anticipate applying them in your current or future positions. The memo is due on the day of the final class session.
COURSE GRADING

Final grades for this course will be based on the following:

- Class Participation: 20%
- NGO Interview Memo and Presentation: 25%
- Reaction Papers (25% each): 50%
- Reflection Memo: 5%

The Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration has a set of formal policies concerning attendance, written work, and incompletes. Further, George Washington University has policies regarding plagiarism. It is the responsibility of the students to make sure that they understand these and act accordingly (see Annex 2). To contest a grade a student must submit a brief, professional memo stating the grade they believe is warranted and justifying the case for a changed grade with specific examples from her/his work.

Letter grading is based on a four point scale as follows:

- **3.7-4.0 A:** Excellent and exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional professional quality.

- **3.6-3.7 A-:** Very Good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Shows signs of creativity and a strong understanding of appropriate analytical approaches, is thorough and well-reasoned, and meets professional standards.

- **3.3-3.6 B+:** Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, without serious analytical shortcomings. This grade indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of this graduate course.

- **3.0-3.3 B:** Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student with some evident weaknesses. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but the understanding or application of some important issues is less than complete.

- **2.7-3.0 B-:** Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student but meets minimal expectations in the course. Understanding of key issues is incomplete. (A B- average in all courses is not sufficient to sustain graduate status in good standing.)

- **2.3-2.6 C+:** Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; rarely meets minimal expectations for the course. Work is poorly developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues.

- **2.0-2.3 C:** Deficient – see above

- **1.7-2.0 C-:** Deficient – see above

- **Less than 1.7 F:** Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations or course credit for a graduate student. Performance has consistently failed to meet minimum course requirements. Weaknesses and limitations are pervasive.

REQUIRED TEXT

CLASS SCHEDULE

I. INTRODUCTION

August 30

1. OVERVIEW


Recommended:


September 6

2. INTRODUCTION TO NGOs AND MANAGEMENT


Recommended:


II. LOOKING IN: INTERNAL MANAGEMENT OF NGOS

September 13

3. NGO OPERATIONS, STRUCTURES, AND PROCEDURES


Recommended:


September 20

4. MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES IN NGOS


Recommended:

September 27
5. MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES CONTINUED: BOARD RELATIONS


Recommended:


III. LOOKING OUT: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF NGOS
October 4

6. ASSESSING NGO OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS


Recommended:


October 11

7. DONOR RELATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY


Recommended:


October 18

8. FUNDING/FINANCING OPTIONS AND PHILANTHROPY


Recommended:


November 1

9. LINKAGE MANAGEMENT: NGOs AS INTERMEDIARIES AND PARTNERS


Recommended:


IV. LOOKING AHEAD: NGOS AND PERFORMANCE

November 8

10. SCALING UP


Recommended:


November 15

11. MANAGING FOR PERFORMANCE, ASSESSING RESULTS


Review Crowley and Ryan, Ch. 6 (required reading for Session #7).

Recommended:


V. LOOKING AHEAD: NGOS AND KEY CHALLENGES

November 22

12. NGOS, HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION


Recommended:


Browse the NGO and security items on Blackboard.

**November 29**

**13. NGOS, GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY, AND RIGHTS-BASED DEVELOPMENT**


*Recommended:*


**VI. NGOS AND THE FUTURE: WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

**December 6**

**14. ANTICIPATING AND MANAGING CHANGE**


Recommended:


ANNEX 1. Guidance for Your Organization Interview Memorandum and Reaction Papers

The following describes the basic structural components of a memorandum: heading, opening, body, and closing. Do not use these as the substantive headings in your memo to help the reader to grasp your key points. You will need to come up with topic-specific headings that convey the substance of your memo/paper.

**Heading:**

Date: (current date)
To: (readers’ names)
From: (your name)
Subject: (what the memo is about, summary of the main idea of the memo)

The subject line serves a similar function as a title to an essay: it should tell the reader what you are writing about in clear terms and in few words.

**Opening:**

Begin with an opening that makes your purpose clear. The first sentence or two serves a similar function to the thesis statement of an essay: these state the purpose of the memo, and what information you want the reader(s) to know or act upon. This should be followed with a “roadmap” sentence that lays out the structure and flow of the memo. The opening should be brief.

**Body:**

The body of the memo, like the body of an essay, develops the main points presented in the opening. It includes information about the topic or issue/problem being addressed. The body should be organized in short paragraphs with a clear logical flow to the discussion. It also provides elaboration of, and justification for, findings, inferences, suggested actions or recommendations. Use a few substantive headings here to organize the presentation of material.

**Closing:**

The closing segment should offer a short conclusion to your memo. Here is where you should succinctly state implications that flow from your discussion, or—if appropriate—any follow-up actions. This segment addresses the “so what?” factor, in essence justifying why the reader should care about what you have discussed in the memo/paper.

**Sources:**

http://loyno.edu/wac/business-memo

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/590/03/
ANNEX 2. Policies in GWU Public Administration and Public Policy Courses

Incompletes: A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the SPPPA Student Handbook or visit http://bulletin.gwu.edu/university-regulations/ for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.

Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students can submit written work electronically only with the express permission of the instructor.

Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work: All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor. [Note: Instructors’ policy is that without prior approval, late work is reduced by one-half grade for every three days (or parts thereof) that it is late].

Academic Honesty: Please consult the “policies” section of the GW student handbook for the university code of academic integrity. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: “intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.” All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.

Changing Grades after Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.

The Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, change content and requirements during the semester.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, a student must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services, Marvin Center 436, 202-994-8250. Accommodations will be made based upon the recommendations of the DSS Office.