

## **WHY DO WE CARE?**

### **THE AMERICAN TRADITION OF PHILANTHROPY**

Honors H304

Tuesdays, Thursdays 11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Hutton Honors College HU108

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#### **Description**

In 2009, a year in which the United States economy suffered from one the worst economic downturns since the Great Depression, Americans gave over \$300 billion to charities, more than one of every 50 dollars they produced. Nearly 64 million Americans over the age of 16 volunteered, 26.8 percent of the population. Within a month after the earthquake that devastated Haiti, more than three-quarters of a billion dollars had been donated for the relief effort in the United States, about as much as was contributed after the attacks of September 11, 2001 in a comparable period of time.

Examples of American generosity such as these are not hard to find and usually stand in sharp contrast to how people in other countries behave. This course will examine why Americans care as much as they seem to, the various ways in which philanthropy in the United States occurs, what it has accomplished, and the challenges it faces. Readings will be drawn from a wide range of humanities and social science disciplines and a comparative perspective used to highlight significant differences (and similarities) with other countries.

The instructor, Leslie Lenkowsky, is professor of public affairs and philanthropic studies

at Indiana University. His career has included serving as chief executive officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Federal government organization which sponsors AmeriCorps.

### **Course Requirements**

In addition to attending and participating in class, as well as completing assigned readings, students will be required to pass a final exam. The exam will be given during final exam week in December.

Each student will be required to write two, short essays, reflecting on his or her own experience with philanthropy. The first will be a philanthropic autobiography in which you will discuss what makes you interested in philanthropy, how you have expressed your interest (and why), what lessons you have learned about philanthropy from doing so, and how you think your experience so far will affect your thinking about philanthropy in the future. The second will be a philanthropic biography in which you will try to answer similar questions about someone you know well: parents or grandparents, brothers or sisters, other relatives, best friends, fraternity or sorority leaders, teachers or clergymen, and so on. You should try to explain what they have done that made you admire them as philanthropists, why you think they did it, what lessons you have learned about philanthropy from them and how you think you will apply those lessons in the future. Each essay should be about 1000 words in length (c. 4 double-spaced pages) and reflect good writing skills. Further information about the topics will be provided in class.

Each student will also be asked to complete a term paper, not to exceed 10 double-spaced pages in length. The paper should apply concepts we will be discussing in this course to an event, an historical figure, an organization, or something else of interest to you. For example, if you are volunteering at an organization in Bloomington or your home town, you might want to look at how it recruits and uses volunteers, why people do (or do not!) give their time, and so forth. Or you might take a closer look at one of the many figures who have contributed to the American philanthropic tradition, such as Andrew Carnegie or Jane Addams, and examine what might have made them philanthropic and how well their thinking holds up today. Or, if you are an international student or have had international experience, you might want to write a paper comparing philanthropy in another country to that in the United States. There are also any number of public policy issues that could be explored. Again, further information about this assignment will be provided in class. Topics must be approved by the instructor and students will be asked to present an oral report to the class on what they have been studying toward the end of the semester. Papers will be due on the final day of class. Students are permitted to work in small groups if they wish (and with approval of the instructor), but the same grade will be assigned to all members of the group.

In *Democracy in America*, Alexis deTocqueville – who would undoubtedly have been a blogger, if he were alive today -- noted the close connection between the American tradition of volunteering and newspaper readership. (See Volume II, Part 2, Chapter Six.) Since many of the topics covered in this course, as well as others that are relevant to the course's themes, are frequently discussed in widely available publications, the instructor has created a Class Blog in the Forums section of OnCourse for students to post clippings that they believe other members of

the class would be interested in. Students should also include a brief explanation of the relevance of the clipping to understanding philanthropy in the United States or other countries. (Simply summarizing the clipping is not sufficient.) Students are encouraged to comment on the clippings and a few minutes of each class will be devoted to those that are the most interesting. Students who post 10 original and relevant clippings or comments that add a new dimension to the discussion during the semester will receive an “A” for this portion of the course, with fewer clippings resulting in proportionately lower grades. Clippings from publications that primarily serve the philanthropic or nonprofit world, such as *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* (to which you will be getting a free subscription), newsletters, think-tank studies, and public relations releases will not gain points, though students should not refrain from posting them, if they merit doing so.

## **Grading**

The grade each student receives in this class will reflect a balanced appreciation of the totality of his or her work. However, the various course requirements will count approximately as follows:

- Class attendance and participation -- 10 percent
- Clippings – 10 percent
- Autobiography – 10 percent
- Biography – 10 percent
- Term Paper – 25 percent
- Final exam – 35 percent

While the instructor encourages students to discuss the course, exchange ideas, and critique each other’s work as much as they desire, he also expects that all work submitted for grading will be done in a manner consistent with the university’s rules on plagiarism. A link to IU’s academic policies will be found on OnCourse.

Students who have special needs that might affect their participation in this class should alert the instructor to them. He will try to make appropriate accommodations or direct students to IU resources that might be helpful to them. Information about the Writing Center is posted on OnCourse.

## **Readings**

Neither the topics covered in this course nor the assigned readings come close to exhausting the wealth of material relevant to an examination of the American philanthropic tradition. Nor is there any single book one can read for an overview of the subject, not least of all because on many issues, different writers have widely differing viewpoints.

The instructor has tried to select readings that are manageable in quantity, reasonably accessible to busy students, and worth studying and discussing. Students who are interested in learning more about particular issues (including viewpoints that might be at odds with those presented in the assignments or class), or, in doing their paper, find themselves addressing issues that are not covered in the syllabus, should not hesitate to contact the instructor for additional citations. The

instructor also welcomes student visits during scheduled office hours or by appointment.

The following books should be available in the bookstore or other booksellers:

Peter Singer, *The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty*, Random House, 2009.

Amy Kass, ed., *The Perfect Gift: The Philanthropic Imagination in Poetry and Prose*, Indiana University, 2002.

Arthur Brooks, *Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth about Compassionate Conservatism*, Basic, 2007.

David Rieff, *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis*, Simon and Schuster, 2003.

I will also be assigning a number of articles and studies that will be available electronically.

All students should be familiar with and comfortable using OnCourse and the library electronic reserve system. The course will make extensive use of these tools. Students should also plan on reading *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* regularly. Although it is available in university libraries, the instructor, who is also a regular contributor to that publication, has arranged for students to have an electronic subscription to it for the duration of the course.

Students are expected to have completed assigned readings before attending class, including for topics covering more than one session. For each topic, I will be asking two or three students to help lead the discussion.

## Syllabus

August 31, September 2

### **Introduction: Is it Rational to Care?**

Dan Seligman, "Is Philanthropy Irrational?" *Forbes*, June 1, 1998, pp. 94 ff. Online at OnCourse.

Tyler Cowen, "EconomicScene: Investing in Good Deeds Without Checking the Prospectus," *The New York Times*, June 15, 2006. Online at OnCourse.

Sara Mosle, "The Vanity of Volunteerism," *The New York Times Magazine*, July 2, 2000, pp. 22 ff. Online at OnCourse

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "In Memoriam A.H.H.," Cantos 54-56 and last section. Online at OnCourse.

Dwight F. Burlingame, "Altruism and Philanthropy: Definitional Issues," *Essays in Philanthropy*, 10, The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. Online at <http://indiamond6.ulib.iupui.edu/u?/PRO,32021>.

September 7, 9

### **How Much Do We Care?**

Giving USA 2010, *Executive Summary*, Online at OnCourse.

Corporation for National and Community Service, *Volunteering Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974*. Online at OnCourse.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, *Volunteering in the United States – 2009*. Online at OnCourse.

The Urban Institute, *The Nonprofit Sector in Brief*, Online at OnCourse

September 14, 16, 21

### **Do We Care Enough?**

Peter Singer, *The Life You Can Save*

Carol Loomis, "The \$600 Billion Challenge," *Fortune*, June 10, 2010. Online at: <http://features.blogs.fortune.cnn.com/2010/06/16/gates-buffett-600-billion-dollar-philanthropy-challenge/>

Kim Dennis, "Gates and Buffett take the Pledge," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 20, 2010. Online at OnCourse.

September 23, 28, 30

### **How Did the United States Learn To Care?**

Peter Dobkin Hall, "A Historical Overview of Philanthropy, Voluntary Associations, and Nonprofit Organizations in the United States, 1600-2000" in Steinberg and Powell, *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Online at: <http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~.phall.hauser.ksg/Powell%20Essay-Final%20-%20rev.pdf>

Kass, *The Perfect Gift*, Part I:3; Part II: 6; Part III: 4, 5.

Peter Katel, "Philanthropy in America," *CQ Researcher*, December 8, 2006. Online at OnCourse.

Excerpts from David C. Hammack, *Making the Nonprofit Sector in the United States*. Online at OnCourse.

Henry David Thoreau on Philanthropy, from *Walden*, Chapter 1, "Economy." Online at OnCourse.

Julius Rosenwald, "Principles of Public Giving," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1929. Online at OnCourse.

John D. Rockefeller, "The Difficult Art of Giving," *Random Reminiscences of Men and Events*, chapter VI. [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17090/17090-h/17090-h.htm#CHAPTER\\_VI](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17090/17090-h/17090-h.htm#CHAPTER_VI).

Booker T. Washington, "Raising Money," *Up from Slavery*. Online at <http://www.bartleby.com/1004/12.html>.

"The American Heritage 40: A ranking of the forty wealthiest Americans of all time," compiled by Michael Klepper and Robert Gunther, *American Heritage*, October 1998. Online at OnCourse.

October 5

Philanthropic Autobiography Due

October 5

**Guest**

October 7, 12, 14

**Why Do We Care?**

Kass, *The Perfect Gift*, Parts I and IV

Robert Wuthnow, "Along the Road," *Acts of Compassion: Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves*, Chapter 6.

Electronic copy available at:

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/iupui/docDetail.action?docID=10035833>

James Q. Wilson, "Sympathy," *The Moral Sense*, Chapter 2. Online at OnCourse.

Michael P. Moody, "Pass It On: Serial Reciprocity as a Principle of Philanthropy," *Essays on Philanthropy*, 13,

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. Online at: <http://indiamond6.ulib.iupui.edu/u/?PRO,32383>.

October 19, 21

### **How Should We Care?**

Kass, Parts II and III

John Greenya, "National Service: Should Community Service be Required?" *CQ Researcher*, June 30, 2006. Online at OnCourse.

October 26, 28  
November 2

### **Who Really Cares?**

Arthur Brooks, *Who Really Cares*

Rob Reich, "A Failure of Philanthropy," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2005. Online at OnCourse.

Niki Jagpal, *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*. National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2009. Chapter1, "Values." Online at OnCourse.

Suzanne Garment and Leslie Lenkowsky, *Public Philanthropy? The Unpersuasive Case for More Government Control*. Washington Legal Foundation, 2009. Online at OnCourse.

November 2

### Philanthropic Biography Due

November 4, 9

### **Does It Matter Who Cares?**

George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara* Online at OnCourse

A video version of this play will be shown in class.

Book of Luke, "The Parable of the Rascally Steward." Online at OnCourse.

November 11

### **Guest**

November 16, 18

### **Is Caring Enough?**

David Rieff, *A Bed for the Night*

Victim Perceptions Studies (Java Earthquake and Hurricane

Katrina), Fritz Institute, 2006-07. Online at OnCourse.

November 23, 30

**Can We Learn to Care?**

Kass, Part V

Corporation for National and Community Service, *Youth Helping America: The Role of Social Institutions in Teen Volunteering*, November 2005. Online at OnCourse.

Corporation for National and Community Service, *Youth Helping America: Educating for Active Citizenship: Service-Learning, School-Based Service, and Youth Civic Engagement*, March 2006. Online at OnCourse.

December 2, 7, 9

**Student Reports**

December 9

Term Papers Due