

Theories of Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Nonprofit Sector

Political Science 236
Spring 2007-08
5 units

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Course Description:

The historical development and modern structure of civil society, with special attention to philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. What is the basis of private action for the public good? How are charitable dollars distributed and what role do nonprofit organizations and philanthropic dollars play in a modern democracy? How do non-governmental organizations operate domestically and globally? Readings in political philosophy, political sociology, and public policy.

This course will provide an in-depth understanding of the nonprofit sector, including its historical development, structural elements, and modern operation as a driver of social change. By the end of the course, students will have knowledge of the history and structure of civil society, defining characteristics of the modern nonprofit sector, and key challenges facing nonprofit organizations today, including current issues in large philanthropic foundations and global civil society.

Reading Assignments:

Required texts: (available in bookstore)

Walter Powell and Richard Steinberg, *The Nonprofit Handbook*, 2nd edition. Yale University Press, 2006.

George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion and Major Barbara* (Bantam Classics, 1992).

Reader, Available from www.UniversityReaders.com

Format and Grading:

The course will feature a mixed lecture and seminar format, allowing for maximum student interaction and probing of the ideas contained in the readings and presented by the instructors.

Course Requirements and Assignments:

Class participation [15% of grade]

Class participation can take a variety of forms, ranging from the obvious (e.g., talking intelligently in class) to the less obvious (e.g., volunteering to co-teach). At a minimum, it is crucial that you come to class on time, having done the reading, and prepared to talk and engage your fellow classmates. Because the class will facilitate discussion every week, adequate preparation, willingness to contribute, and capacity for empathetic listening are all required. You are also required to attend a section every week. A portion of your grade will be based on your participation.

Writing [85% of grade]

The writing requirements of the course differ for undergraduates and graduate students. Undergraduates with significant background in political theory (and especially those currently or considering writing a senior thesis in political theory) may choose to fulfill the graduate student writing requirement, but only with permission of the instructors).

Undergraduate writing requirement

1. For undergraduates, this course is writing-intensive and fulfills the “Writing in the Major” (WIM) requirement for political science majors. Each student is expected to complete three papers, two 2-3 pagers and a larger paper of 12-15 pages. The first two papers will have assigned questions and ask you to explicate and interpret some particularly important concept or reading passage. The third paper is a straightforward seminar paper. In keeping with the requirements of WIM courses, revisions will be required.

Graduate student writing requirement

One long seminar paper required, on a topic of your own choosing. The guidelines are purposefully minimal so as to allow you to write on a topic relevant to your own scholarly interests. We expect only that the paper incorporates perspectives from political theory that we have addressed in the course, or if it does not, that you consult with us about your plans by mid-quarter.

Both undergraduates and graduate students are expected to submit paper proposals.

For both undergraduates and graduate students, please note that late assignments will only be accepted if prior arrangements have been made with the instructors.

2. Finally, students are expected to make contributions to a web-based discussion forum, the course blog. To be discussed in more detail in class.

Please note that paper extensions require prior arrangements with the instructor. There will be no exceptions to this policy, barring absolute emergencies. Late assignments will be penalized one grade per day.

Grading:

The class is available for pass/no pass or for a grade.

If the grading option is chosen, grades will be computed from the following:

Participation: [15%] On time attendance, adequate preparation, perceptive oral participation, and empathetic listening.

Assignment 1 [50%] Long Essay (25% each draft)

Assignment 2: [15%] Short essay 1

Assignment 3: [15%] Short essay 2

Assignment 4: [5%] Comments on course blog

Course Schedule

Tuesday, April 1

Introduction to the class

No required readings for the first session

I. History and Evolution of Civil Society and Philanthropy

What are the defining elements of civil society? Both contemporary and historical theorists have posited a wide range of features defining what we know today as civil society--the world comprising nonprofit organizations, the “third” or “voluntary” sector, and nongovernmental organizations. Following this development through a range of traditions and perspectives, we can begin to discern several key normative and institutional elements that constitute civil society--a coherent framework of a public sphere operating between the individual and the state.

Thursday, April 3

What is civil society?

Reading

Michael Edwards, *Civil Society*, pp. vi-ix and 1-36 (**Reader**)

Michael O’Neill, *Nonprofit Nation*, pp. 1-8 (**Reader**)

Michael Walzer, “A Better Vision: The Idea of Civil Society” (**Reader**)

Tuesday, April 8

Historical Development of Civil Society in the West

Reading

Antony Black, “Concepts of civil society in Pre-Modern Europe” from *Civil Society: History and Prospects*, pp. 33-38 (**Reader**)

Kevin Robbins, “The Nonprofit Sector in Historical Perspective: Traditions of Philanthropy in the West”, Ch. 1 in Powell and Steinberg

“The Statute of Charitable Uses” (**Reader**)

Thursday, April 10

Emergence of Civil Society and Philanthropy in the United States

Reading

Robert Gross, “Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy,” pp. 23-48 in Friedman and McGarvie (**Reader**)

Peter Dobkin Hall, “An Historical Overview of Philanthropy, Voluntary Associations, and Nonprofit Organizations in the United States, pp. 32-46 in Powell and Steinberg

Alexis de Tocqueville, “Political Associations in the United States” in **Reader**

Tuesday, April 15

Legal Foundation for Civil Society in American Law

Reading

Mark McGarvie, “The *Dartmouth College Case* and the Legal Design of Civil Society”, pp. 91-105 in Friedman and McGarvie (excerpted from book in **Reader**)

Evelyn Brody, “The Legal Framework for Nonprofit Organizations,” pp. 243-248 in Powell and Steinberg

John Simon, Harvey Dale, and Laura Chisholm, “Federal Tax Treatment of Charitable Organizations,” in Powell and Steinberg, pp. 267 –278.

*****First short paper assignment distributed; due on Friday, April 18*****

Thursday, April 17

Emergence of the Private Foundation in the United States

A key component of the nonprofit sector is the foundation community, we will examine how the unprecedented growth of wealth at the turn of the 20th century led to the emergence of a new form of philanthropy: the huge, general purpose, private foundation. This week we will examine the aspirations and the challenges represented by these new players in civil society.

Reading

Peter Dobkin Hall, pp. 46-58 (remainder of chapter in Powell and Steinberg)

Judith Sealander, “Curing Evils at Their Source: The Arrival of Scientific Giving, pp. 217-239 in Friedman and McGarvie (excerpted from book in **Reader**)

Andrew Carnegie, “The Gospel of Wealth” in **Reader**

Kenneth Prewitt, “Foundations” in Powell and Steinberg, pp. 355-377.

Tuesday, April 22

Melinda and William Gates Foundation case study

Reading

Gates Foundation case study (in **Reader**)

Peter Singer, “What Should a Billionaire Give?” New York Times, Dec. 16, 2006.

II. SIZE AND SCOPE OF CONTEMPORARY GIVING

Today, more than 1.8 million registered nonprofit organizations populate civil society in the United States. These organizations operate in every field of social interest—religion, arts, environment, human services, civil rights, education, among many others. The size, scope, finances, and distributional effects of the U.S. nonprofit sector will be the topic of the next section of class.

Thursday, April 24

Scope of the Modern Nonprofit Sector

Reading

Michael O’Neill, *Nonprofit Nation*, pp. 8-34 (in **Reader**)

Elizabeth Boris and Eugene Steuerle, “Scope and Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector”, pp. 66-75 in Powell and Steinberg.

Tuesday, April 29

Giving and Distribution in the Nonprofit Sector

Reading

Excerpts from GIVING USA reports 2007

Excerpts from John Havens, Mary O’Herlihy and Paul Schervish, “Charitable Giving: How Much, By Whom, to What, and How?” in Powell and Steinberg.

David Sidorsky, “Moral Pluralism and Philanthropy” in *Social Philosophy and Policy* (4:2, Spring, 1987) (**Reader**)

III. THEORIES OF THE SECTOR

Contemporary theorists have analyzed the nonprofit sector through the disciplinary perspectives of economics and political science. From the view of economists, the nonprofit sector fills gaps where the market does not perform well. From the perspective of political science, nonprofits compensates for failures in government performance. This class will view the modern nonprofit sector functionally through a range of disciplinary perspectives.

Thursday, May 1

Economic Theories of the Nonprofit Sector

Reading

Richard Steinberg, “Economic Theories of the Nonprofit Sector,” in Powell & Steinberg

Tuesday, May 6

Political Theories of the Nonprofit Sector

Reading

Elisabeth Clemens, "The Constitution of Citizens: Political Theories of Nonprofit Organizations" in Powell & Steinberg

James Douglas, "Political Theories of Nonprofit Organizations" (in **Reader**)

*****Second short paper assignment distributed; due on Friday, May 9*****

PART IV: CASES

We apply theories to real world cases.

Thursday, May 8

Case Study: Civil Society Organizations and Nondiscrimination

Reading

Boy Scouts of America et al. v. Dale, [530 U.S. 640](#) (2000)

Bob Jones University v. United States, [461 U.S. 574](#) (1983)

Tuesday, May 13

Charity versus Justice

Reading

Will Kymlicka, "Altruism in Philosophical and Ethical Traditions: Two Views" from *Between State and Market* (McGill-Queens University Press 2001) in **Reader**

Michael Walzer, "Socialism and the Gift Relationship," *Dissent Magazine*, Fall 1982 in **Reader**

Thursday, May 15

Civil Society, Nonprofits, and Social Capital

Reading

"Associational Life and the Nonprofit and Philanthropic Sector", from *Democracy at Risk: How Political Choices Undermine Citizen Participation, and What We Can Do About it* (Brookings Institution Press, 2005) (**Reader**)

E.J. Dionne, Jr., "Service, Citizenship, and the New Generation" (Reader)

Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone" *Journal of Democracy* (1995)

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v006/6.1putnam.html

*****First Draft of Seminar Paper due Monday, May 19*****

Tuesday, May 20

Case Study: Major Barbara

Reading

George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara* (Bantam Classics, 1992).

Thursday, May 22

New Forms of Philanthropy: Social Entrepreneurship and For-Profit Foundations

Reading

Christine Letts, "Virtuous Capital," Harvard Business Review (Vol. 72, No. 2, 1997).

Bruce Sievers, "'If Pigs Had Wings: The Appeals and Limits of Venture Philanthropy"

PART V. GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

Tuesday, May 27

Global Civil Society

Reading:

Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier, "The Nonprofit Sector in Comparative Perspective" in Powell and Steinberg, pp. 89-114

Sunil Khilnani, "The Development of Civil Society" (**Reader**)

Thursday, May 29

Civil Society in Other Traditions

Reading:

Hasan Hanafi, "Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society: A Reflective Islamic Approach" (**Reader**)

Richard Madsen, "Confucian Conceptions of Civil Society" (**Reader**)

Geoffrey Hawthorn, "The promise of civil society in the South" (**Reader**)

Tuesday, June 3

Concluding Thoughts

*****Final WIM Seminar Revision due Friday, June 6*****