

Course Syllabus  
Community and Voluntary Organizations  
LDSP 305--Spring 2005

Instructor: Dr. Suzanne Morse

Class Time and Room: Monday 7:00-9:40 pm, Jepson Hall 108

Purpose of the Course: This course will explore the role of the nonprofit sector in American society. The range and depth of systemic issues facing communities requires that nonprofit organizations increase their ability to respond in more successful ways. This requires that organizations specifically and the sector generally reconsider mission, impact, and leadership development as they relate to their role in society. Students will gain a thorough understanding of the nonprofit sector, its challenges, and its opportunities.

Course Objectives:

1. To develop an understanding of the breadth and depth of the nonprofit sector.
2. To understand the role of nonprofits in our community and national lives.
3. To develop a typology of success criteria of nonprofits.
4. To prepare class members to enter the nonprofit field.

Required Texts:

- Morse, Suzanne W. *Smart Communities: How Citizens and Local Leaders Can Use Strategic Thinking to Build a Brighter Future*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- Light, Paul C. *Making Nonprofits Work*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2000.
- Letts, Christine W., William P. Ryan, and Allen Grossman. *High Performance Nonprofit Organizations*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1999.
- Occasional articles posted online.

Attendance Policy and Office Hours: Each class meeting is the equivalent of a week's class time. Therefore attendance at every class is expected. Only one absence is allowed. Office hours are by appointment.

Grading:           Mid-term 30%  
                      Final 30%  
                      Class Participation 10%  
                      Project 30%

## **Overview of Class Session and Assignments:**

*The nonprofit organizations are one of the three legs of our shared world with government and business. According to former Senator Bill Bradley, democratic society is like a three-legged stool—with government, the marketplace, and civil society each representing one leg of the stool. The realm of civic society and the context of nonprofit organizations are vast and complex yet our democracy will not work without them. It our assignment in this class to unpack some of the complexity and prepare ourselves to interact with the nonprofit world as a volunteer, contributor, or leader. The sessions of this course are designed for lecture, discussion, and practical application. While new material will be introduced in every class session, you should be prepared to discuss the assignments in detail. Each class will have an experiential assignment.*

### **January 10, 2005 Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations and the Voluntary Sector**

In this session we will lay the groundwork for the course with an overview of the field, students' current understanding and exposure, and the topics that will be covered during the semester and how they will relate to the success typology. Finally, we will also discuss the framework for the project assignment.

### **January 17, 2005 The Role of Nonprofits in our National and Community Lives**

This session will examine the roles that nonprofits play, the variety of issues they address, and the diversity of their organizational structure.

Assignments: Morse, chapters 1, 3, and 4  
Light, chapter 2  
Reporting back on tsunami relief agencies

### **January 24, 2005 The Challenges of the Nonprofit Sector**

This session will examine the challenges that the sector faces internally and externally.

Assignments: Light, chapter 3  
Morse, chapter 7  
Letts, et al, Introduction

### **January 31, 2005 Let's Start Thinking about Tomorrow—What to Do?**

This session will focus on the tides of reform that nonprofit sector must undertake.

Assignments: Light, chapter 4  
Letts et al, chapters 1 and 2

February 7, 2005 **Building Organizational Capacity—Client Needs and Products**

Ultimately the issue for the sector lies with how the thousands of nonprofits that operate everyday with limited funding and mounting demands. How do they better achieve their mission and objectives?

Assignments: Letts et al, chapters 3-4

February 14, 2005 **Making a Difference—Benchmarking and Evaluation**

Nonprofits like for-profit organizations have to accountable for their services and their products. Lack of resources, however, often makes this an afterthought. We will look at the tools, practices, and approaches to nonprofit evaluation.

Assignments: Letts et al, chapter 5  
What is a Solution? (to be distributed)

February 28, 2005 **Mid-term Exam**

March 7, 2005 **Spring Break**



March 14, 2005 **Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations: Who Gets the Jobs and what do they need to know?**

The outcomes of nonprofit organizations ultimately rest with leadership, leadership, leadership. No longer does the role of the nonprofit executive begin and end with heart. It requires skilled management and leadership. What does these leaders need to know?

Assignments: Letts et al, chapter 6  
Article  
Job description

March 21, 2005 **Stakeholders of Nonprofit Organizations**

The success of nonprofit organizations and voluntary organizations rests on their ability to use and garner the support of a group of stakeholders. Who are the primary, secondary, and even tertiary stakeholders and partners that must be considered? How do we reach them?

Assignments: Letts et al, chapter 7  
Partnership Profile  
Communication Plan

March 28, 2005 **Making the Budget—How to Control the Bottom Line?**

At the end of the day, money is the major issue for most nonprofits. While funding sources are important, it is equally important to hone your mission to facilitate fundraising and sustainability. Where do we start?

Assignments: Letts et al, chapter 9  
Article

April 4, 2005 **Nonprofit Case Studies—Class Presentations**

April 11, 2005 **Nonprofit Case Studies—Class Presentations**

April 18, 2005 **Course Review: Building Nonprofit Organizations that Work  
Finalizing Typology of Success Factors**

Assignments: Letts et al, chapter 10  
Light, chapter 5

April 25, 2004 **Final Examination (7:00-10:00 pm)**