
NONPROFITS, PHILANTHROPY & SOCIETY

EDUC 321/SOC 321/PUBPOL 321

Monday | 2:30-4:20 | Spring 2024

What will you learn?

At the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Discuss where you would draw the boundaries of the nonprofit sector
- Understand the differing roles of nonprofits, business, and government, and how they vary across countries
- Reflect on the many ways in which the sector contributes to society, as well as how it may deepen inequality and dampen civic participation

Is this course for me?

We consider the social, political and economic dynamics of philanthropy and the nonprofit sector, focusing mainly (but not exclusively) on the US. The class is best suited for graduate and professional students looking for an advanced analytic understanding of the sector as well as those wishing to conduct research in the field; it is not intended to provide training in nonprofit management.



What is it about?

Over the past several decades nonprofit organizations have grown in prominence, and with this increased importance the role of the sector has become entangled with business, government, and philanthropy. Additionally, the social consequences of nonprofit and philanthropic activities are frequently subject to criticism. Our goal in this class is to advance understanding on a number of fundamental and pressing questions relevant to the sector:

- What counts (or should count) as a nonprofit organization?
- Why do nonprofits exist? Why should they exist?
- What roles do nonprofits play in different societies, including democratic and autocratic countries?
- When do nonprofits and philanthropy erode rather than enhance civic capacity?
- Who do the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors represent?

Instructor

Woody Powell
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Office hours: After class and
by appointment
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Assistant,
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Format

This course is set up as a discussion-based graduate seminar. Most weeks will begin with a short lecture to kick off discussion about the readings.

Course Policies

Disability Accommodations Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with Stanford's Honor Code, available at: <https://communitystandards.stanford.edu/policies-and-guidance/honor-code>.

Use of AI: All ideas, reflections, and analyses you present in your coursework must be your own. AI tools are only permitted to help you brainstorm starting points, develop prototypes and placeholders, and revise your work. Use AI tools only in the ways you might get help from a classmate or TA— to brainstorm suggestions or practice skills, but not to generate ideas or arguments or to create final products.

Late assignments

Will lose one letter grade per day (e.g. an "A" to an "A-").

How will I be graded?

Short essays

You will write seven short (~3 pages double-spaced) essays due before class (by 10am) for Weeks 2-9, reflecting on the readings and raising questions for either future research or public policy. You can choose which week you want a break. Memos need to address the material we cover that week (e.g. your memo due in Week 2 needs to reflect on the readings for Week 2).

Participation

We learn better together. Your participation is crucial to the success of the class and our learning as a group. Class participation involves fully engaging with the readings and reflecting on the discussion themes in advance of class, sharing your reactions every session, and learning from each other.

	Points	Due date
Short essays	80 (10 each)	Before class, Weeks 2-9
Participation	20	Continuously

What materials do I need?

Textbook

Powell, W.W. & P. Bromley (2020). *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook, 3rd edition*. Paperback copies have been ordered through the Stanford bookstore, or electronic copies are available through Stanford University Press, if you prefer that format.

Supplementary Materials

You are responsible for obtaining other materials listed on the syllabus, easily found online and through Canvas.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topics	Reading
1 April 1	Why Should We Care About Civil Society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 1. Powell. "What is the Nonprofit Sector?" • Ch. 2. Soskis. "A History of Associational Life and the Nonprofit Sector in the United States" • "8 Myths of US Philanthropy," <i>Stanford Social Innovation Review</i>, Fall 2019, 26-33. <p>Additional Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 5. Hemel. "Tangled Up in Tax: The Nonprofit Sector and the Federal Tax System" • Lichterman, Paul, and Nina Eliasoph. 2014. "Civic Action." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 120(3): 798–863. <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nonprofit sector is deeply entangled with government; how does it obtain autonomy? • How do nonprofits differ from business enterprises? • In what ways is the history of the US nonprofit sector embedded in religion and its place in US society? • How are nonprofits stamped by the political debates of different eras?

Week	Topics	Reading
2 April 8	Philanthropy & Politics of the Public Sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 6. Lechterman & Reich. "Political Theory & the Nonprofit Sector" Francis, Megan Ming and John Fabian Witt. Forthcoming. "Movement Capture or Movement Strategy? A Critical Race History Exchange on the Beginnings of Brown v. Board." <i>Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities</i>, vol. 32. Hastings-Saunders, Emma. 2021. "Send back the blood-stained money: Frederick Douglass on Tainted Gifts." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 115 (3): 729-41. Karl, Barry D. and Stanley N. Katz. 1981. "The American Private Philanthropic Foundation and the Public Sphere, 1890-1930." <i>Minerva</i> 19(2):236-70. <p>Additional Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Connor, Alice. 2011. "Bringing the Market Back In: Philanthropic Activism and Conservative Reform." Pp. 121–50 in <i>Politics and Partnerships: The Role of Voluntary Associations in America's Political Past and Present</i>, edited by E. S. Clemens and D. Guthrie. Chicago. Clemens, Elisabeth. 2020. <i>Civic Gifts: Voluntarism and the Making of the American Nation-State</i>. Chapter 4 in <i>The Expansible Nation-State</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the role of private wealth in shaping the character of the public good? Can philanthropy be a society's risk capital? How do the ideas of capture, cooptation, and channeling differ?
3 April 15	Motivation Prosocial Behavior, And Mutual Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 23. Paxton. "What Influences Charitable Giving?" Ch. 25. Eliasoph. "What do Volunteers Do?" Maira Khwaja, Trina Reynolds-Tyler, Dominique James and Hannah Nyhart. 2021. "Our Year of Mutual Aid" <i>New York Times</i> (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/11/opinion/covid-mutual-aid-chicago.html) Solnit, Rebecca. 2020. "'The way we get through this is together': the rise of mutual aid under coronavirus" <i>The Guardian</i> (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/14/mutual-aid-coronavirus-pandemic-rebecca-solnit) Bénabou, R., & Tirole, J. (2006). Incentives and prosocial behavior. <i>American economic review</i>, 96(5), 1652-1678. FIRST TEN PAGES ONLY. <p>Additional Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andreoni, J. (1990). Impure altruism and donations to public goods: A theory of warm-glow giving. <i>The Economic Journal</i>, 100(401), 464-477. Harbaugh, William. 1998. "What do donations buy? A model of philanthropy based on prestige and warm glow." <i>Journal of Public Economics</i> 7: 269-84. <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What counts as giving/volunteering? (what is 'prosocial'?) What motivates giving/volunteering? (And do/should we care?) Do incentives matter?



Week	Topics	Reading
4 April 22	Nonprofits, Mission & the Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ch. 13. Ghatak. "Economic Theories of the Social Sector: From Nonprofits to Social Enterprise"• Ch. 14. Mair. "Social Entrepreneurship: Research as Disciplined Exploration"• Besharov, Marya et al. 2019. "The Many Roads to Revenue Generation." <i>Stanford Social Innovation Review</i> Fall: 35-39.• CASE: Patagonia: 'Earth Is Now Our Only Shareholder,' Harvard Business School Case 9-323-057. March, 2023. Must be purchased from Harvard Case Services. https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1164765ⁱ <p>Additional Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smith, Wendy and Besharov, M. 2019. "Bowing before Dual Gods: How Structural Flexibility Sustains Organizational Hybridity." <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>. 64(1): 1-44.• Bromley, P., & Meyer, J. W. (2017). "They are all organizations": The cultural roots of blurring between the nonprofit, business, and government sectors. <i>Administration & Society</i>, 49(7), 939-966. <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the most essential differences, if any, between a private nonprofit such as Stanford University, and a private business, such as Apple?• How does an organization, such as Patagonia, elide potential differences?• How do social enterprises vary cross nationally?• Does the outcomes movement make nonprofits more responsive and effective or just more like for-profit firms?

Week	Topics	Reading
5 April 29	Are Nonprofits Becoming too Business-Like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 3. Horvath & Powell. "Seeing Like a Philanthropist: From the Business of Benevolence to the Benevolence of Business" • Ch. 16. Brest. "The Outcomes Movement in Philanthropy and the Nonprofit Sector" • Hwang, Hokyu and W. Powell. 2009. "The Rationalization of Charity: The Influences of Professionalism in the Nonprofit Sector." <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 54: 268–98. • Mitchell, Maurice. 2022. "Building Resilient Organizations." <i>The Forge</i>. • Lawrence, William and Dyanna Jaye. 2023. "Understanding Sunrise: Structure and Governance," <i>The Forge</i> <p>Additional Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fong, Benjamin Y. and Melissa Naschek. 2021. "NGOism: The Politics of the Third Sector," Catalyst</i> 5 (1): 93-134. <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What trends are contributing to the professionalization of the nonprofit sector? • How does the subtle control of money operate?
6 May 6	Governance, Civic Capacity & Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 9. Marwell, "Towards a Governance Framework for Government- Nonprofit Relations" • Ch. 10. Mosley, "Social Service Nonprofits: Navigating Conflicting Demands" • Ch. 12. Bloemraad et al. "Immigrant Organizations: Civic (In)equality and Civic (In)visibility" • Horvath, Aaron, C. Brandtner, W.W. Powell, 2018. "Serve or Conserve: Mission, strategy, and multilevel nonprofit change during the Great Recession," <i>Voluntas</i>, 29,5: 976-93. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-017-9948-8 <p>Additional Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marwell, Nicole, E.A. Marantz, and D. Baldassarri. 2020. "The Microrelations of Urban Governance." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>. 125(6): 1559-1601. <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do nonprofits collaborate effectively with governments without being mere sub-contractors or organizations without voice? • How do nonprofits express the hopes of the voiceless?

Week	Topics	Reading
7 May 13	Access & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 17. Horwitz, “Charitable Nonprofits and the Business of Health Care” • Ch. 18. Arum & Kepins, “Education and the Nonprofit Sector: Schools and Organizational Intermediaries” • Ch. 19. Ostrower, “Nonprofit Arts Organizations: Sustainability and Rationales for Support” • Podcast “Nice White Parents”; Episode 1 “I still believe in it” (51 mins) and Episode 5 “We know it when we see it” (52 mins). • News article: https://www.wsj.com/articles/darren-walker-interview-ford-foundation-philanthropy-pandemic-11604679844?st=3wyefcf65pt4s8o&reflink=share_mobilewebshare <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the notable differences across different forms of health care provision? • How do public schools differ from nonprofit ones? <p>Consider the implications of the insight that countries that have strong public provision of the arts also have public health services and strong public higher education systems, whereas private arts institutions, private universities and private health care tend to cohere.</p>
8 May 20	Social Movements & Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 20. Suárez. “Advocacy, Civic Engagement, and Social Change” • Chapter 21, Walker & Oszkay. “The changing face of nonprofit advocacy: democratizing potentials and risks in an unequal context” • Goss, K. 2016. “Policy plutocrats: How America’s Wealthy seek to Influence Governance.” <i>Political Science & Policy</i> July 442-448. • Marantz, Andrew. 2023. “What Should You Do With An Oil Fortune?” <i>The New Yorker</i> Aug. 7. • Sherman, Rachel. 2021. “Against Accumulation: Class Traitors Challenge Wealth and Worth.” <i>Sociologica</i> 15(2): 117–42. <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are social movements the tools of elites or a bubbling up of grassroots demand? (Can compare/contrast BLM & marriage equality, or other movements .) • What makes a movement successful – both strategies and thinking about what counts as ‘success’? (Again, can compare/contrast BLM & marriage equality, or other movements. #metoo, Fridays for the Future, and OWS are also good ones for thinking about ‘success’ objectives.) • Why is there a rise of right wing and conservative movements in the US (and in other countries)?

Week	Topics	Reading
9 June 3	Global Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 4. Bromley. “The Organizational Transformation of Civil Society” • Ch. 27. Schofer & Longhofer. “The Global Rise of Nongovernmental Organizations” • Ch. 28. Dupuy & Prakash. “Global Backlash against Foreign Funding to Domestic Nongovernmental Organizations” <p>Additional reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • de Souza Leão, Luciana, and Gil Eyal. 2019. “The Rise of Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) in International Development in Historical Perspective.” <i>Theory and Society</i> 48(3): 383–418. • Ch. 30. Anheier, Lang & Toepler, “Comparative Nonprofit Sector Research: A critical assessment” <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did NGOs grow rapidly worldwide, and why are they now facing resistance? • Do you think national restrictions on international influence in NGOs are a good idea for the state? for citizens? • How do conceptions of civil society differ in democratic and autocratic contexts? What are the implications? • What are the power dynamics of international NGO activity? Does the involvement of NGOs in global governance increase equality?
10 Likely June 10 (but we may re-arrange We lose a Mon. due to Mem. Day)	What makes a good society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video of Danielle Allen lecture: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCnGXCMlKkw • Derek Thompson, “Why Americans Suddenly Stopped Hanging Out,” <i>The Atlantic</i>, Feb. 20, 2024. • The US Surgeon General’s 2023 report on America’s “epidemic of loneliness and isolation” • And for the way things used to be: Jane Jacobs, 1961. <i>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</i>. New York: Random House (“The Uses of Sidewalks: Contact” pp55–73, and “The Uses of City Neighborhoods” pp112–140) <p>Core Discussion Themes for the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes for a good society? • What are civic threads? • How does a society balance/navigate civic organizations with very different viewpoints? • How do we make sense of the challenges—both old and new—that plague civic life today?

Just for fun:
Some nonprofit-
related pieces
from outside the
academy

HBO Comedy Series: *Insecure*. Created by Issa Rae. Touches on racial dynamics in Issa's workplace, the nonprofit "We Got Y'all" (<https://wegotyall.com/>).

Podcast: *Nice White Parents*. Includes issues at the intersection of school segregation, tensions of donor vs community wishes in fundraising, and the role of PTAs as sources of both inequality and school involvement for parents.

Film: *Hot Coffee*. 2011. Directed by Susan Saladoff. Award-winning documentary about tort reform in the US. The segment about prosecutions of then-Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice Oliver Diaz for bribery speaks to the issue of the power of 501c4s. It shows how judges were elected for their positive stance on tort reform and were influenced by campaign contributions. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce (the largest 501c4) funded negative campaign ads against judicial candidate Oliver E. Diaz and in support of candidate Keith Starrett. Oliver E. Diaz estimates ~\$1,000,000+ dollars was spent on Keith Starrett's behalf for the judicial election.

Book: *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*. Jane Mayer. Investigative journalist traces the network of extremely wealthy conservative Republicans, foremost among them Charles and David Koch, who have together funded an array of organizations that work in tandem to influence academic institutions, think tanks, the courts, statehouses, Congress, and the American presidency for their own benefit.

Articles: *A Failure of Philanthropy*. Rob Reich, in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Discusses how private fundraising in public schools in our area exacerbates inequality. Available at:

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/a_failure_of_philanthropy. Also see the related

NYT Op-Ed: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/05/opinion/not-very-giving.html>.

Interview: by Andrew Marantz of Anand Giridharadas on ultra-wealthy donors supporting progressive causes.

<https://www.newyorker.com/podcast/political-scene/the-one-per-centers-pushing-democrats-to-the-left>

This event on April 18, 5-6:30 pm may be of interest.

Book Talk: "Solidarity" with Leah Hunt-Hendrix & Astra Taylor

The Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society (PACS) presents a Book Talk featuring renowned organizers and activists Leah Hunt-Hendrix and Astra Taylor, as they delve into some profound insights from their latest work, "Solidarity." This book goes beyond a mere rallying cry, presenting "Solidarity" as a powerful political movement with the potential to effect lasting change. Alongside moderator Aaron Horvath, sociologist and research scholar at Stanford PACS, Leah and Astra will explore the pivotal role that philanthropy can play in supporting and sustaining the Solidarity movement.

This event is open to the public and free of charge.

Solidarity is often invoked, but it is rarely analyzed and poorly understood. Here, two leading activists and thinkers survey the past, present, and future of the concept across borders of nation, identity, and class to ask: how can we build solidarity in an era of staggering inequality, polarization, violence, and ecological catastrophe? Offering a lively and lucid history of the idea—from Ancient Rome through the first European and American socialists and labor organizers, to twenty-first century social movements like Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter—Hunt-Hendrix and Taylor trace the philosophical debates and political struggles that have shaped the modern world.

Looking forward, they argue that a clear understanding of how solidarity is built and sustained, and an awareness of how it has been suppressed, is essential to warding off the many crises of our present: right-wing backlash, irreversible climate damage, widespread alienation, loneliness, and despair. Hunt-Hendrix and Taylor insist that solidarity is both a principle and a practice, one that must be cultivated and institutionalized, so that care for the common good becomes the central aim of politics and social life.

Please note: RSVP is required but does not guarantee a seat.

Seating is limited and is first come, first serve.

Book Talk

with **Leah Hunt-Hendrix & Astra Taylor**
Moderated by **Aaron Horvath**

Thursday, April 18th | 4:00 - 7:00 PM

Paul Brest Hall
555 Salvatierra Walk,
Stanford, CA 94305



ⁱ When students first visit the Coursepack's unique **student link**, they must complete a short registration process if they don't already have an account with the Harvard Business Publishing Education website, then are immediately allowed to access the Coursepack.