Course Description

This course focuses on resource development in nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits receive support from three major sources: 1) federal, state, and local governments, 2) fees for service and other earned revenue, and 3) donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations. This course will provide an overview of these different revenue sources – government, earned revenue, and private philanthropy – and explore how nonprofits can access them. The course will also consider how nonprofits manage the fundraising process within their organizations. Class format will vary and include occasional lectures, regular discussion of readings and cases, student presentations, and guest speakers. Overall, this class will feature high levels of student participation. Students are assumed to have some prior knowledge of nonprofit organizations through completion of PUAD 502 or 505 or another nonprofit course.

Learning Objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Deepen their understanding of the major sources of support for nonprofit organizations in the U.S.: earned revenue; federal, state, and local government; and individual, foundation, and corporate philanthropy (through readings, class sessions, current events, case studies, papers).
- Sharpen their resource development skills; that is, increase their ability to raise funding for nonprofits from different revenue sources (readings, class discussions, case studies, papers).
- Increase their capacity to participate in and oversee the overall resource development function in a nonprofit organization (readings, class sessions, case studies, papers).
- Improve their written and oral communication skills (papers, presentations, class discussions).

Course Requirements

There are two major requirements for the course:
1. **Active Engagement:**
   Students are expected to engage actively in the course in the following and related ways:
   
   - **Regular Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to arrive on time. Attendance will be noted. If at all possible, students should email the instructor beforehand when they expect to miss class because of illness or another reason.
   - **Completion of Reading:** Students are expected to complete all assigned reading before class. It is especially important that case studies receive a close reading. In fact, if at all possible, cases should be re-read just before class.
   - **Active Participation:** Students are expected to participate actively in all class sessions. In addition to contributing to regular class discussions, students may be asked to make a presentation or lead a discussion on a relevant issue. The instructor will occasionally cold call on students. To facilitate active engagement, cell phones, computers, and other electronic devices should be turned off during class.
   - **News Briefs:** Students will sign up at the beginning of the semester to lead a 5-10 minute discussion about one relevant news article on nonprofit resource development they have identified. Articles should relate to the topic we will be discussing in class and/or be focused on a nonprofit resource development issue that is receiving important, new media attention. Especially good places to look for articles are: *Chronicle of Philanthropy, New York Times, Washington Post,* and the *Wall Street Journal.*

   Student engagement will count for 20% of the course grade.

2. **Written Assignments:**
   Students are also required to complete the following:
   
   - **Short, Reaction Papers:** To facilitate students’ learning of important material and preparation for class discussion, the instructor will generally assign short (1-2 pages, 12-point font, double spaced) papers to prepare for class. Strong papers will connect (multiple) course readings to the issue being addressed. For example, if a reaction paper focuses on an analysis of a particular case, a good paper may reference some of the other readings for the week. These papers must be handed in at or before class, and will generally not be accepted late. Students who miss class for any reason have the option of handing in these papers before the class session for which they are assigned. The two lowest grades will be dropped. The reaction papers will count for 25% of the course grade.
   
   - **Short Memos on Fundraising Challenges.** Students are required to prepare two short (approx. 5 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) memos on a nonprofit organization of their choice. Ideally, each student should “adopt” one nonprofit organization to write about for both memos. In the memos, students will explore the possibility of increased government funding, earned revenue, or philanthropic support for their selected nonprofit. Each memo should address one type of revenue source (e.g., federal government funding, foundation support, corporate funding, etc.). Both memos should
start with a brief overview of the nonprofit, including a description of its major programs and budget (including both spending and revenues). Students may assume the memos are being written for a new board member or executive director who is new to the organization and is not very familiar with the organization or its funding environment. Memo #1 is due **March 9**, and Memo #2 is due **April 13**. Each memo will count for 15% of the course grade. Additional guidance on the memos is given in Appendix A of this syllabus. Students will give a short presentation on their memos on either March 9 or April 13.

- **Term Paper.** In a longer, more ambitious paper or memo (approx. 10 pages, 12 point font, double spaced), students have the option of developing a new fundraising plan for their selected nonprofit; critiquing the organization’s existing fundraising activities; writing a proposal seeking funding from government, a foundation, or a corporation; or writing on some other topic related to nonprofit resource development. Students should submit a short description of the planned term paper on **March 30**. The term paper itself, which will count for 25% of the grade, is due on **May 4**.

Please note that unexcused late submissions on any assignment will be marked down.

**Contacting the Instructor**
Please feel free to set up an appointment to talk with the instructor either in-person or on the phone. Dr. Abramson can be reached at the following:
- **Office Address:** George Mason University – Arlington Campus, Founders Hall, 3351 Fairfax Drive, Room 608, Mail Stop 3B1, Arlington, VA 22201
- **Email:** aabramso@gmu.edu
- **Office Phone:** 703-993-8189
- **Cell phone:** 202-262-5204

**Course Readings**
Course readings are available through Blackboard, are on-line, or are in the following book that is available for purchase at GMU’s Arlington campus bookstore:

**Additional Background Information on the Nonprofit Sector**
Students are encouraged to consult the background material on the nonprofit sector listed in Appendix B of this syllabus and to use information on nonprofit management available through the GMU Library at: [http://infoguides.gmu.edu/content.php?pid=8814&sid=57930](http://infoguides.gmu.edu/content.php?pid=8814&sid=57930).

**Academic Integrity**
GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely
on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in
the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas.
Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all
aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives,
and traditions. When in doubt of any kind, please ask for guidance and clarification.

**GMU Email Accounts**
Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive class-related information.

**Office of Disability Services**
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see the
instructor and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic
accommodations must be arranged through the ODS: [http://ods.gmu.edu](http://ods.gmu.edu)

**Other Useful Campus Resources**
- Writing Center: [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)
- University Libraries “Ask a Librarian”: [http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html](http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html)
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; [http://caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)

**University Policies**
The University Catalog, [http://catalog.gmu.edu](http://catalog.gmu.edu), is the central resource for university
policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

**Course Outline and Reading Assignments**

Please note that the instructor will add case study and other readings during the course of the
semester. **Please be sure to look for emails from the instructor and your classmates that
contain course-relevant information.**

1. **JANUARY 26: Overview of Course and Overview of Nonprofit Revenues**

  Suggested:
  Center, 2012, Ch. 2 – What Is the Nonprofit Sector?, pp. 9-17; Ch. 3 – Scope and Structure, pp.
  27-65.
  --Sarah L. Pettijohn, “The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Public Charities, Giving, and Volunteering,
  --“Giving USA 2013: Highlights.” Researched and written by the Lilly Family School of
2. FEBRUARY 2: Planning for Resource Development


3. FEBRUARY 9: Government Funding I: Overview and Trends


Suggested:
4. FEBRUARY 16: Government Funding II: Accessing Government Funding

5. FEBRUARY 23: Earned Revenue I: Overview and Trends

6. MARCH 2: Earned Revenue II: Accessing Earned Revenue

7. MARCH 9: Individual Philanthropy I: Overview and Trends


**MARCH 16: Spring Break – No Class**

**8. MARCH 23: Individual Philanthropy II: Gathering New Donors and Accessing Gifts from Discretionary Income**


--Kim Gattle, “Personal Solicitation,” ch. 18, in Tempel, Seiler, and Aldrich, eds., *Achieving Excellence in Fund Raising*.


--Roberta L. Donahue, “Special Events,” ch. 21, in Tempel, Seiler, and Aldrich, eds., *Achieving Excellence in Fund Raising*.


Suggested:


**9. MARCH 30: Individual Philanthropy III: Accessing Major Gifts**


--Dean Regenovich, “Establishing a Planned Giving Program,” ch. 9, in Tempel, Seiler, and Aldrich, eds., *Achieving Excellence in Fund Raising*.

--Vicky Martin, “Prospect Research,” ch. 11, in Tempel, Seiler, and Aldrich, eds., *Achieving Excellence in Fund Raising*. 
10. APRIL 6: Foundation Philanthropy I: Overview and Trends
--Foundation Center, “Key Facts on U.S. Foundations: 2013 edition.” Available at:

11. APRIL 13: Foundation Philanthropy II: Accessing Foundation Funding

12. APRIL 20: Corporate Philanthropy I: Overview and Trends and Accessing Corporate Philanthropy

13. APRIL 27: Corporate Philanthropy II: Accessing Corporate Philanthropy

14. MAY 4: New Forms of Support and Managing Resource Development
http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/blog/accelerating-impact-achievements- -
Appendix A: Guidelines for Short Memos on Fundraising Challenges (Memos #1 and #2)

Memos #1 and #2 should explore the possibility of increased government funding, earned income, or philanthropic support (i.e., from individual, foundation, or corporate donations) for the selected nonprofit. **Each of the memos should examine the prospects of increased funding from one kind of income source.** So, for example, Memo #1 might address the potential for increased government funding of your nonprofit, and Memo #2 might examine the possibility of increased earned income. For the purposes of the memos, the different types of philanthropy can count as one type or multiple types of funding – your choice. For example, you can write one memo on individual philanthropy and another memo on corporate funding, or you can write one memo on philanthropy generally.

Following is general guidance for writing a memo on “government funding,” which can be adapted for a memo on the other possible funding sources.

A memo on government funding should explore the possibility of increased government funding for your selected nonprofit. Note that your memo may conclude that your organization should **not** pursue increased government funding.

In referring to government funding, memos should be clear about whether the reference is to federal, state, and/or local government support.

In particular, a government funding memo should address the following kinds of questions/issues:

**Background Information:**
- Please start both Memo #1 and Memo #2 with a half-page or so of general background information on the organization, including its mission, a description of its major programs, an overview of the organization’s budget (total expenses and major spending categories, total revenues and sources of revenue, and trends over time for spending and revenue).
- Feel free to reuse background information from Memo #1 in Memo #2.

**Current Government Funding:**
- How much government funding does the organization currently receive? What percentage of overall organizational revenues derives from government support?
- Through what specific government programs does the organization currently receive support?
- What has been the organization’s experience regarding its government funding? What have been trends in government funding? Has government support been a positive or negative experience?
- How does the organization’s experience with government funding compare to the experience of other organizations in the same field?
Possible Increase in Government Funding:

- What are the prospects for the selected organization to secure increased government funding? Is the organization well-positioned to receive increased government support? How does the organization stack up against its competitors?
- What specific government programs, if any, should the organization target for increased funding?
- What are likely future budget prospects for relevant government programs? Are relevant government programs likely to be funded at increased, decreased, or stable levels in coming years?
- What would be the likely costs and benefits for the organization of increased government funding?
- How should the organization go about seeking increased government funding?
- What challenges is the organization likely to face in seeking increased government funding? How can these challenges best be addressed?

As far as format:

- Imagine you are writing for a new executive director or new board member who is not very familiar with the organization.
- If possible, use “memo” format; use bullets where appropriate.
- Double spacing; 12-point font; approximately 5 pages in length.
- Use short, 3-5 sentence paragraphs to make the memo easier to read.
- Use section headings to help the reader follow your argument.
- Use charts and figures where appropriate to make your presentation easier to understand.
- Provide the “right” amount of detail. For example, don’t give revenue and expense numbers to the last dollar; round off instead.
- Footnote where appropriate
- Write a coherent, interesting memo that provides relevant information and, if possible, tells a story. Please do not just respond to the bullet points above.
- Write well. Watch your grammar and spelling. Proofread your paper before turning it in.
Appendix B: Resource Guide for the Nonprofit Sector (Selected Resources)

Newspapers/Journals – Practitioner-Oriented
- Chronicle of Philanthropy
- Nonprofit Quarterly
- Nonprofit Times
- Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR)

Journals – Research-Oriented
- Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly (NVSQ)
- Nonprofit Management and Leadership (NML)
- Nonprofit Policy Forum
- Voluntas

E-Newsletters - National
- Blue Avocado
- IS Daily Media Digest (Independent Sector)
- NPQ’s Nonprofit Newswire (Nonprofit Quarterly)
- Philanthropy News Digest (Foundation Center)
- Philanthropy Today – Daily Update from the Chronicle of Philanthropy

E-Newsletters – Local
- The Daily WRAG (Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers)

National Organizations
- Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA)
- Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP)
- BoardSource
- Council on Foundations
- Foundation Center
- Independent Sector
- International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR)
- National Council of Nonprofits
- Nonprofit Finance Fund

Local Organizations
- Center for Nonprofit Advancement (CNA)
- Foundation Center Library – Washington, DC
- Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
- Venture Philanthropy Partners (VPP)
- Washington Grantmakers
- Young Nonprofit Professionals Network – DC (YNPNdc)
Statistics on the Nonprofit Sector

- Foundation Center
- Giving USA
- GuideStar
- Listening Post Project at Johns Hopkins University, Center for Civil Society Studies
- National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute
- Nonprofit Almanac

Job Openings

- Chronicle of Philanthropy
- Idealist.org
- The Daily WRAG
- YNPNdc

Indexes to Nonprofit Research

- Catalog of Nonprofit Literature (Foundation Center):
- Philanthropic Studies Index (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy)

Blogs

- Beth’s Blog – Beth Kanter
- Cohen Report – Rick Cohen
- A Fine Blog – Allison Fine
- Huffington Post – contributions by on nonprofits and philanthropy
- Philanthropy 2173 – Lucy Bernholz
- White Courtesy Telephone – Albert Ruesga and others