



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

JOHN GLENN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PUBAFRS 7970: CAPSTONE: International Issues for Civil Society Organizations (3 credits)

Spring 2016

Tuesday 5:45-8:30pm

Hagerty Hall 071

Professor Mary Tschirhart, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: By appointment and Wednesday 11:15-12:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this capstone course is to provide students with an opportunity to integrate and synthesize ideas and tools from previous coursework in a project focused on the international context and civil society actor(s). While pursuing the project, students will delve deeply into one or more international settings as the operational base for civil society (roughly defined as voluntary collective action). Students may have real or hypothetical clients, though efforts will be made to secure real ones for all course projects. Having a client focus will provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate project development and relationship management skills. A real world policy or management challenge will be the impetus for each project. Students will identify and build knowledge about the challenge, consider alternative approaches, and recommend a response to the challenge thereby demonstrating problem-solving, analytical, and communication skills.

Course sessions will have a combination of workshop and seminar formats. There will be some shared readings to give all students a common base of knowledge and terminology and to help prepare for in-class seminar-style discussions. The major course project may be conducted by one person or in a group and will require a customized reading list and investigation proposal approved by the professor. In addition to the major course project, students will contribute to the learning environment by leading a class session on aspects of civil society within a specific geographic region.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Critically examine and make recommendations regarding a policy or management challenge
- Understand international settings for civil society action
- Produce a professional, high quality analysis incorporating informative figures, diagrams and other visual aids that help to concisely convey information and arguments
- Be responsive to varied needs and objectives of clients
- Apply diverse tools and theoretical frameworks drawn from prior coursework
- Acknowledge limitations of their approach and assumptions.

COURSE NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

The work in this course is commensurate with graduate-level study. Given the client-based nature of the course, students will be expected to demonstrate professional values of confidentiality of information and respect for the time and interests of fellow students and clients. Advance reading and active participation is critical to the success of this course. While some core readings will be provided, students are expected to take initiative in discovering useful resources for their customized projects.

COURSE ELEMENTS

In-class Discussion: Students will be assessed on their in-class contributions to discussions. High quality comments add to the group's understanding of the assigned reading material, challenge and/or clarify the ideas expressed by others, connect material from past classes or other courses, and show evidence of analysis and reasoned argument.

Small Student Group Leadership of Discussion on a Geographic Area of Civil Society: The student group should (1) provide a presentation with a summary of the civil society activity and environment dimensions in their assigned region, (2) give the class one reading to supplement the instructor assigned reading on the geographic area, (3) share a reference list with the class on sources of information on civil society on the area consisting of at least five sources, and (4) present questions to the class and facilitate discussion.

Major Project Activity: Proposal and Class Workshops: In addition to small group presentations and discussion of readings, some class time will be in a workshop format devoted to advancing course projects. Students will share aspects of their project for counsel from the instructor and classmates. The instructor also will be available outside class as a resource for projects. A formal proposal for the project midway through the course will serve as the midterm and Capstone Assessment.

Proposal: The proposal will be written individually as a take-home exam, even if the major project is a group effort. It will serve as the Capstone Assessment and be reviewed by the instructor for a portion of the course grade and by a committee (see below) for the MA or MPA capstone requirement. The questions include the following:

- 1) Clearly define the problem addressed by your project. Why is this problem worthy of attention? Who are the stakeholders interested in this problem and what are their roles, influence, and likely stakes in the problem? (consider presenting this in a table or stakeholder map format)
- 2) Critically assess previous treatments of the same or a similar problem. What were their conclusions and the methods used to reach these conclusions? Evaluate the rigor and limitations of their approaches and findings.
- 3) Discuss how you plan to address the problem and justify your approach. What knowledge gap(s) will your approach to the problem be designed and implemented to fill? Discuss any limitations you recognize in your approach and how, if at all, you plan to recognize and mitigate them.

- 4) Discuss any policy or managerial alternative or complementary recommendations you are examining. What are the criteria you will use to evaluate potential recommendations?
- 5) Choose one of your potential recommendations. What are the issues that may affect its implementation and the success of the effort? Be sure to consider possible spillovers and the political, cultural, legal, economic and other conditions that may affect acceptance, implementation, and ultimate value of your recommendation.

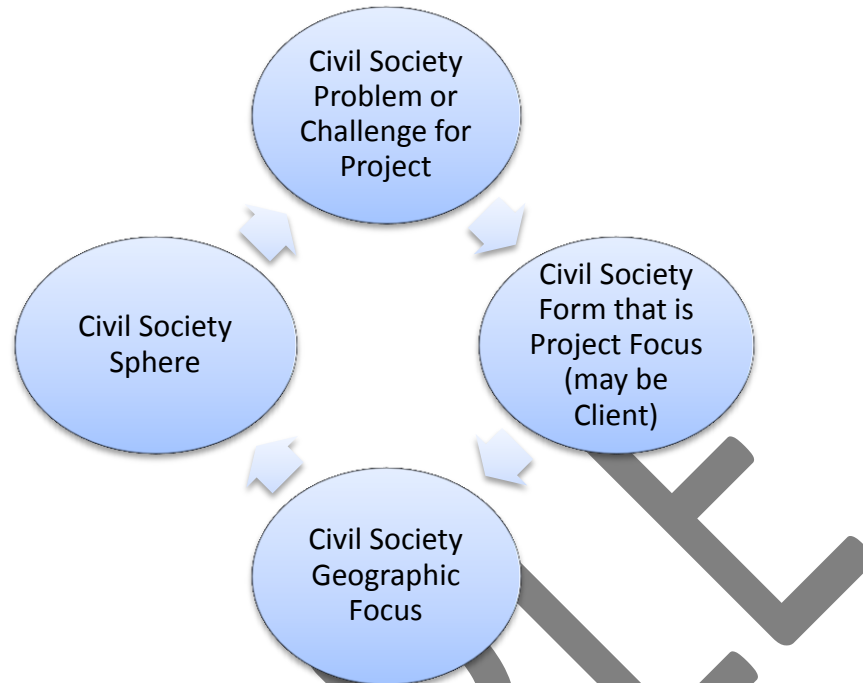
Major Project Final Deliverables: Students will prepare a written report for their client. They also will summarize their project in a presentation for the course and potentially their client. The final report should be modeled after professional reports with visual, graphical display of information (tables, charts, etc.). Given the unique nature of each project, there will be variation in some sections of the report but all should include:

- Title Page
- Executive Summary (one page)
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures and Tables
- References

There are a range of possible topics to use for the major project. The chosen topic must have a focus on some aspect of civil society (voluntary collective action perceived to be for public benefit) outside of the United States, though the client may be based in the States while operating or considering operating outside US borders. The topic must address a policy, managerial, or governance concern. The topic chosen should be framed as a question to answer through some form of analysis. Stakeholders interested in your report might include:

- Donors (e.g., corporations, service association like Rotary, individual philanthropists) or grant-makers (e.g., private foundations or government agencies like USAID) interested in funding a NGO/CSO operating/considering operating outside the US
- An NGO/CSO operating/considering operating outside the US
- Government or for-profit partner of NGO/CSO operating/considering operating outside the US
- A collaboration or coalition of organizations which includes a nonprofit member that is operating/considering operating outside the US (e.g., the Sustainability Consortium)
- Policy-makers that are interested in understanding and or shaping the civil society sector in a particular country or region
- Advisors to actors participating or wishing to participate in civil society activities (e.g., university offices of sponsored services advising faculty on whether to pursue funding for a project outside the US involving nonprofit partners; support offices for international internships, club service activities, personnel exchanges or sabbaticals, or mission trips)
- Grassroots activists or social movement representatives interested in understanding civil society dynamics and how to forward their cause
- Scholars, media representatives and others interested in better understanding of an aspect of civil society

The project topic may be viewed as a set of choices as outlined in the figure on the next page.



Civil Society Problem/Challenge: Area for policy, managerial, or governance recommendations

Civil Society Forms: Examples include NGO/CSO, grassroots association, social movement, social enterprise, global civil society, civil society support organization, philanthropic entity

Civil Society Geographical Focus: transnational or a country or part of country outside US, client may be a US organization if works with international partners or in international context

Civil Society Sphere: Examples include but are not limited to peace, poverty reduction, arts and culture, environment conservation, democracy, economic development, health, equality, education, and religion. Project could examine an influence on civil society like civil liberties, public journalism, or social capital.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENT DETAIL

Class Participation (General contribution to class learning environment): 10%

Small Group Session Leadership (Civil Society in an Assigned Geographic Area): 15%

Major Project Proposal: 30%

Major Project Interim Reports including draft of final written report: 5%

Major Project Final Written Report: 30%

Major Project Presentation: 10%

Grading scale: 93-100 A, 90-92 A-, 88-89 B+, 83-87 B, 80-82 B-, 78-79 C+, 73-77 C, 70-72 C-

COURSE POLICIES

College Requirements and the Capstone Assessment: Students are required to earn a grade of “B” or better to successfully fulfill the capstone requirement, which is necessary to graduate from both the MA and MPA programs. Students with a grade lower than B or an incomplete will be required to take a second capstone course. A student has only two chances to achieve a grade of “B” or better in the capstone course.

- **MA Students:** The Proposal Assessment constitutes the University's required master's examination for the Master of Arts degree. It will be evaluated by a Capstone Assessment Committee (approved by the Dean and including at least one core faculty member plus the instructor of this class. While the instructor assigns the grade for the assignment as part of the course grade, the Capstone Assessment Committee evaluates separately whether the student achieves a successful pass ("Pass" or "Marginal Pass"). Students who fail are required to take an oral examination by the Committee during which they will have the opportunity to expand further on their written assessment. This oral exam takes place soon (i.e. a day or two) after the committee has determined that the written assessment is insufficient. At the oral exam, the advisor serves as the chair and all members of the Committee are present. MA students failing the oral examination are required to take a new capstone in a future semester and also successfully pass its Capstone Assessment. An MA student only has two chances to pass the Assessment. Students passing the Assessment but failing to achieve a "B" or higher in the course will be required to take another capstone class. Both criteria ("B" in the course and passing the Assessment) are required to graduate.
- **MPA Students:** For MPA students, the completion of a capstone class with a grade of "B" or higher satisfies the College's capstone exit requirement for the Master of Public Administration degree. All other degree requirements also must be successfully met in order to graduate (See Master's Handbook for full requirements.)

Academic Integrity: The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#) and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's *Code of Student Conduct* may constitute "Academic Misconduct." Sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. In the Ohio State University's [Code of Student Conduct](#), Section 3335-23-04 defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#) is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me or the relevant university official.

Accommodation Policy: Students with disabilities certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. Students should inform instructor as soon as possible of needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Mental Health Statement: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns

or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292- 5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 4th Floor of the PAES Building. 24 hour emergency help is also available through the National 24/7 Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org

SHARED READINGS

All course readings will be available on-line and free to access. The primary repository for readings will be Carmen. There are no required textbooks to purchase.

KEY ASSIGNMENT DATES

Due Date	Assignment
Jan. 19	Sign up for geographic area for small group session leadership
Feb. 9 to April 5	Small group presentations on civil society geographic area
March 8	Masters Exam/Major project proposal (individual submission)
March 29	Submit draft of major project report (group submission) to prof for feedback
April 12	Submit draft of presentation (group submission) to prof for feedback
April 19	Major project group presentations
April 26	Submit final major project report (group submission)

COURSE OUTLINE

- January 12:** Course overview, introductions
- January 19:** Class discussion of introductory material on civil society, Geographic area assignments, Broad country comparisons
Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
- January 26:** Project management and client relations
Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
- February 2:** Project challenges discussion (Problem Definition and Argument for Importance)
Student Group Session Leadership: Geographic Area 1
Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
Group Assigned Reading (available on Carmen)
- February 9:** Project challenges discussion (Evaluation of Previous Treatments of Topic)
Student Group Session Leadership: Geographic Area 2
Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
Group Assigned Reading (available on Carmen)
- February 16:** Project challenges discussion (Approach to Problem and Justification)
Student Group Session Leadership: Geographic Area 3

- Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
 Group Assigned Reading (available on Carmen)
- February 23:** Project challenges discussion (Evaluation of Alternative Recommendations)
 Student Group Session Leadership: Geographic Area 4
 Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
 Group Assigned Reading (available on Carmen)
- March 1:** Project challenges discussion (Argument for Your Recommendation)
 Student Group Session Leadership: Geographic Area 5
 Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
 Group Assigned Reading (available on Carmen)
- March 8:** The Spaces of Civil Society
 Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
Take-Home Exam Due: Major Project Proposal
- March 15: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK**
- March 22:** Project challenges discussion (Written Report Design)
 Student Group Session Leadership: Geographic Area 6
 Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
 Group Assigned Reading (available on Carmen)
- March 29:** Project challenges discussion (Presentation Design and Delivery)
 Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
 Group Assigned Reading (available on Carmen)
Draft of Major Project Report due to professor (can be turned in earlier)
- April 5:** Project challenges discussion (Final Touches)
 Instructor Assigned Reading: TBA
 Group Assigned Reading (available on Carmen)
- April 12:** **NO FULL CLASS MEETING**, Use April 12 class time to ensure that know how to operate classroom technology and to time presentation. Also, finalize presentations and report. During this or prior week, project group should meet with prof as needed.
- April 19:** **Project Presentations**
- April 26:** **Project Presentations, Final report due via Carmen or in instructor mailbox**