

**Critical Issues in Philanthropy:
Power, Possibility, Paradox and the Private Foundation**

NMGM 5078, CRN 8203

Class Meetings: January 24 – May 15, Mondays 4:00 - 5:50

Location: 72 5th Avenue, Room 713

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Please e-mail to schedule an appointment

Course Description:

This course is an advanced level graduate seminar to examine popular debates and new academic scholarship on the politics of private philanthropy in the context of renewed philanthropic commitments to addressing poverty and inequality in the United States and around the globe. Recent empirical studies show how private foundations operate as key stakeholders in large-scale political reforms in major sectors ranging from public education, global health, agriculture, criminal justice and women's rights. Through a deep reading of new books in this field and in class engagement with practitioners and scholars, students will explore the following questions: If philanthropy is broadly understood as the mobilization of private assets for public benefit, then how is this public benefit assured and by whom? Recently, inequality has become an organizing framework for a few major foundations and the projects they choose to fund. What kinds of work is enabled and disabled by such a framework and with what consequences? In their focus on inequality, many foundations seek to promote broader social change. Yet foundations often require short-term measureable impact when social change is a slow, non-linear, and uneven process. How might foundations support long-term movement building in our current political economic moment? And what are the specific limits they face as institutions created by private wealth produced in capitalist markets that produce inequality?

Course Goals: In this course students will learn to think critically about contemporary social, political, and economic issues that the field of philanthropy currently seeks to address. By reading both popular journalism and new books in this field students will gain a broad analysis of current debates and a deep understanding of the empirical realities explored in the academic texts assigned. Specific course goals include:

- An understanding of the critical issues facing social justice philanthropy today.
- An understanding of the contested history of American philanthropy, and the institutional form of the private foundation.
- In depth knowledge of specific philanthropic institutional strategies and theories of change.
- Skills in collaborative critical thinking and group work.
- Practice using the 'Strategic Questioning' method of personal and collective growth.
- Qualitative research and report writing skills.
- Capacity to conduct research, write, edit, and publish compelling OpEds

Required Readings: We will read journalistic essays and blogs (links provided in the syllabus), book chapters and academic journal articles (posted on our class Canvas site), and the following books. Please purchase these books with plenty of time to read by the assigned date. Amazon has new, used, and kindle options for most of these books. Please let me know if you need assistance in purchasing the following:

Willoughby-Herard, Tiffany, 2015. *Waste of a White Skin: The Carnegie Corporation and the Racial Logic of White Vulnerability*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press.

McGoey, Linsey. 2015. *No Such Thing As a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy*. London, New York: Verso Press.

Adams, Vincanne. 2013. *Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith: New Orleans in the Wake of Katrina*. Durham, London: Duke University Press.

Arena, John. 2012. *Driven from New Orleans: How Nonprofits Betray Public Housing and Promote Privatization*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Tompkins-Stange, Megan. 2016. *Policy Patrons: Philanthropy, Education Reform, and the Politics of Influence*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Education Press.

Callahan, David. 2017. *The Givers: Wealth, Power and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age*. New York: Knopf.

Lentfler, Jennifer and Cothran, Tanya. 2017. *Smart Risks: How Small Grants are Helping to Solve Some of the World's Biggest Problems*. London: Practical Action.

Relevant Blogs and News Sources

Chronicle of Philanthropy	http://philanthropy.com/
HistPhil	https://histphil.org/
Nonprofit with Balls	http://nonprofitwithballs.com/
Inside Philanthropy	http://www.insidephilanthropy.com/
Nonprofit Quarterly	https://nonprofitquarterly.org/
How Matters	http://www.how-matters.org/
Philanthropy News Digest	http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/
National Committee on Responsive Philanthropy	https://www.ncrp.org/
Nonprofit Law Blog	http://www.nonprofitlawblog.com/
Transformation: a journal of OpenDemocracy	https://www.opendemocracy.net/transformation

Selected Journals with a Focus on Nonprofit Organizations and Philanthropy

- Antipode: a Radical Journal of Geography
- Nonprofit Management & Leadership
- Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly
- Public Administration Review
- Journal of Policy Analysis and Management
- Social Work
- Annals of Public Analysis and Management
- New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising
- Research in Higher Education
- Journal of Applied Behavioral Science
- American Sociological Review
- American Economics Review
- Stanford Social Innovation Review
- International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing
- Voluntas: The International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations
- Social Forces
- Social Problems

University Resources

The university provides many resources to help students achieve academic excellence. These resources include:

- a) The University (and associated) Libraries: <http://library.newschool.edu>
- b) The University Learning Center: <http://www.newschool.edu/learning-center>
- c) University Disabilities Service: www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services/
In keeping with the university's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At that point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course.

Course Requirements/Grading:

- 1. Class Participation:** Regular participation in online and in class discussion is a core requirement of this course. Participation should be based in the readings, with a focus on the theoretical questions and practical implications raised. Students are expected to come to class ready to take risks in communicating ideas and to be supportive and responsive to others. **Everyone is required to post weekly 'reading responses' on our Canvas page by 6:00pm the day before class.** These responses are not summaries but rather should include a key question, dilemma, discovery or problem raised for you in the readings. **Reading your fellow students' postings is also required.** Each reading response will be counted as one point towards your overall participation grade. (30%)
- 2. Personal Account, 5-7 pages (double spaced). Due in print form in class, February 6.** This first paper is intended as a personal narrative that engages in a critical analysis of your own experience with foundations, philanthropy, charity, or the simple act of giving and helping others. Please base this analysis within the context of experiences, realities and perceptions of inequality, poverty, and / or relationships of power. You may be a giver, receiver, manager, bystander, or indirect participant in this story. What is most important is that you tell a story about your relationship to the experience of philanthropy and /or charity and critically analyze what this means to you today, how it makes you feel, and what your thoughts are (if you have any) about the possibilities and challenges of using philanthropy, charity, or wealth to address inequality and/or poverty. You are not required to conduct academic research or use academic citations for this paper. (10%)
- 3. Foundation Case Study, 12-15 pages (double spaced). Due April 17th.** This is an academic research paper designed to explore the three modes of philanthropic critique (plutocracy, philanthrocapitalism, and nonprofit industrial complex) through the lens of one foundation. You may select a foundation, of any size or region, to study and may also select an area of grantmaking to investigate as long as you are able to explore how the grantmaking of this foundation approaches funding to address poverty and / or inequality. For this paper you are required to conduct primary and secondary research. Primary sources may include interviews with foundation staff or grantees, foundation annual reports and archives, or media. Secondary sources may include journalistic accounts but must also include at least three peer reviewed academic books or journal articles, not listed in our course syllabus. These articles must shed light (not necessary in agreement with) the main theories presented in this course about plutocracy, philanthrocapitalism and the nonprofit industrial complex. This paper should be carefully annotated, using the Chicago style manual. (30%)

4. **Publishable Op-Ed or Blog Post (1,500 words):** For the final assignment for this class each student will produce a compelling, timely, well researched and well written opinion piece focusing on current debates about the role of philanthropy in addressing poverty and / or inequality. This assignment will involve conducting research, writing, editing, investigating media outlets, and possibly submitting your piece for publication. You may write about one specific foundation, initiative, or problem or you may choose to write about a more broad trend or problematic. You may also write as a critic, advocate, or scholar of the issues you choose to focus on. (30%)

Late papers, without sufficient explanation, will be penalized a full grade. This is a participatory discussion based seminar so class attendance, promptness, and participation in class time is critical. The final course grade will be computed as follows:

Class attendance and participation	30%
Personal Account	10%
Foundation Case Study	30%
Op Ed	30%

Quick Look - Course Overview

DATE	TOPIC	DUE
January 23	Course Introduction / Syllabus Review	
January 30	The Foundation: Understanding the Institution and Its' Controversial History	
February 6	History of the Foundation: Continued	Personal Account
Feb 13	Three Major Critiques: plutocrats, philanthrocapitalists, and the nonprofit industrial complex	
Feb 20	Presidents Day Holiday – No Class	
Feb 27	Philanthropy, Race and Colonialism Book 1: <i>Waste of a White Skin</i>	
March 6	Philanthrocapitalism Book 2: <i>No Such Thing as a Free Gift</i>	
March 13	Charity and Disaster Capitalism Book 3: <i>Markets of Sorrow</i>	
March 20	SPRING BREAK	
March 27	Nonprofit Industrial Complex and Housing Book 4: <i>Driven from New Orleans</i>	
April 3	Philanthropy and Education Reform Book 5: <i>Policy Patrons</i>	
April 10	Student Presentations: Foundation Case Studies	
April 17	Student Presentations: Foundation Case Studies	Foundation Case Study
April 24	Philanthropy in the Trump Era: renewing the call for progressive philanthropy	Guest Speaker: TBA
May 1	Philanthropy and Democracy Book 6: <i>The Givers by David Callahan</i>	Public Lecture: David Callahan, Author OpEd Draft Due
May 8	New models of giving & radical philanthropy Book 7: <i>Smart Risks</i>	Guest Speaker: TBA
May 15	Future of Philanthropy Continued	OpEd Due/Presentations

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:

Week 1 - January 24: Course Introduction and Overview

Reading:

Strategic Questioning: An Approach to Creating Personal and Social Change, by Fran Peavy. (Posted on Canvas)

Week 2 - January 31: Understanding the Foundation & Its Controversial History

Dowie, Mark. 2001. *American Foundations: An Investigative History*. Chapter One. The MIT Press. (Posted on Canvas).

“Examining the Past and Future of Foundation Philanthropy,” by Benjamin Soskis and Stanley Katz for the Hewlett Foundation. Posted on Canvas, or available here: <http://www.hewlett.org/examining-past-future-foundation-philanthropy/>

Week 3 – February 6: History of the Foundation: Continued

Personal Account Due

Faber, Daniel and McCarthy, Deborah. 2005. *Foundations for Social Change: Critical Perspectives on Philanthropy and Popular Movements*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Chapters One and Two. (posted on Canvas).

“Is Philanthropy Good for Democracy,” by Gara LaMarche for *The Atlantic*, October 30, 2014. Found here: <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/10/is-philanthropy-good-for-democracy/381996/>

“The Future of Philanthropy,” *The Nation*, July 21, 2016. Found here: <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-future-of-philanthropists/>

Week 4 – February 13: Three Major Critiques: plutocrats, philanthrocapitalists, and the nonprofit industrial complex

The Nonprofit Industrial Complex:

Ruth Wilson Gilmore on the Shadow State. Found here: <http://sfonline.barnard.edu/navigating-neoliberalism-in-the-academy-nonprofits-and-beyond/ruth-wilson-gilmore-in-the-shadow-of-the-shadow-state/>

Also from Scholars and Feminists Online, view selected videos from Queer Dreams and

Nonprofit Blues: Understanding the Nonprofit Industrial Complex:
<http://sfoonline.barnard.edu/navigating-neoliberalism-in-the-academy-nonprofits-and-beyond/dean-spade-hope-dector-queer-dreams-and-nonprofit-blues-understanding-the-npic/>

Plutocratic Power

Read the essays and responses to “What are Foundations For,” by Rob Reich in *The Boston Globe*. Found here: <http://bostonreview.net/forum/foundations-philanthropy-democracy>

Philanthrocapitalism

“The Philanthropy Hustle,” by Linsey McGoey in *Jacobin Magazine*, Issue 19, 2016. Found here: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/11/philanthropy-charity-banga-carnegie-gates-foundation-development/>

“Philanthrocapitalists Meet the World’s Poor: International Development in the FinTech Era,” in *Critical Macro Finance*, January 2017:
<https://criticalfinance.org/2017/01/19/philanthropy-meets-the-worlds-poor-international-development-in-the-fintech-era/>

Morvaridi B (2012) Capitalist philanthropy and hegemonic partnerships. *Third World Quarterly* 33(7):1191–1210

Feb 20	Presidents Day Holiday – No Class
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Week 5 – February 27: Philanthropy, Race and Colonialism

Book 1: *Waste of a White Skin* by Tiffany Wouloughby-Herard (2015)

Week 6 – March 6: Philanthrocapitalism

Book 2: *No Such Thing as a Free Gift* by Linsey McGoey (2016)

Week 7 – March 13: Charity and Disaster Capitalism

Book 3: *Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith* by Vincanne Adams (2013)

MARCH 20 – SPRING BREAK

Week 8 – March 27: Nonprofit Industrial Complex and Housing

Book 4: *Driven from New Orleans* by John Arena (2012)

Week 9 – April 3: Philanthropy and Educational Reform

Book 5: *Policy Patrons* by Megan Tompkins-Stange (2016)

Week 10 – April 10: Student Presentations

Foundation Case Studies

Week 11 – April 17: Student Presentations

Foundation Case Study Due, email to Instructor

Foundation Case Studies

Week 12 – April 24: Philanthropy in the Trump Era, Renewing the Call for Progressive Social Movement Philanthropy

Guest Speaker: TBA

Readings: Select at least three articles to read from the annotated bibliography of current debates (Posted on Canvas).

Week 13 – May 1: Philanthropy and the Future of Democracy

OpEd Draft Due to Editing Partner and Instructor

Book 6: *The Givers* by David Callahan (2017)

Guest Speaker: Author visit with David Callahan, *The Givers*

Week 14 – May 8: New Models of Giving, Philanthropy and New Social Movements

Book 7: *Smart Risks* by Jennifer Lentfler and Tanya Cothran (2017)

Please also review the websites of the following groups/networks:

- Solidaire: <https://solidaire.wpengine.com/>
- Resource Generation: <https://resourcegeneration.org/>
- Womens Donor Network: <http://www.womendonors.org/>
- IDEX / Movement for Black Lives:

- <https://www.idex.org/blog/2016/09/idex-and-black-lives-matter-announce-global-partnership/>
- <http://fundersforjustice.org/resourcing-movement-black-lives/>
- <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/11/major-donors-consider-funding-black-lives-matter-215814>

Week 15 – May 15: New Models and Future of Philanthropy Continued
OpEds Due/Presentations and Final Reflections