Nonprofit organizations play an increasingly important role in the provision of health, educational, and social services, cultural development, and the promotion of advocacy, civil rights, and civil society, in the U.S. and also abroad. They also provide fascinating examples of mission-driven organizations that engender theoretical and empirical questions of interest to students of organizations coming from various disciplines. Their voluntary aspects raise further questions of interest to social scientists and practitioners (such as motivation, satisfaction, and retention of volunteers, as well as development of social capital). The growing interest in nonprofits and the dedication of pioneering scholars has spurred increased empirical research to better understand and document its parameters, components and dynamics.

This course, offered for the second time\(^1\), seeks to enhance graduate student interest, expertise, and scholarly productivity in empirical nonprofit research. It will present:

(1) an overview of the nonprofit sector in the United States and abroad, and a survey of major research and policy issues;

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\(^1\) This course is a new research initiative of the University of Michigan Nonprofit & Public Management Center, (a collaboration of the Schools of Business, Public Policy, & Social Work). It is supported by a grant from the U-M Office of the Vice President for Research for Distinguished Faculty and Graduate Student Seminars.
(2) current research via sessions with leading scholars in the field, as well as reading and
discussion of pertinent scholarly literature, drawn primarily from sociology, psychology,
applied economics, organizational studies, public policy, and inter-disciplinary inquiry, and,

(3) exposure to new research opportunities utilizing existing data resources.

These datasets will include:

- Various large-scale U.S. social surveys that include relevant NOVA variables not analyzed by past
  investigators. (Most of these datasets are archived at the Institute for Social Research’s Inter-
  University Consortium on Political and Social Research; and

- Newly available computerized databases, including such sources as the U.S. Internal Revenue
  Service’s information on tax-exempt entities, and other datasets examining the nonprofit sector in
  the U.S. and around the world.

The intended audience of this course is doctoral and other research-oriented graduate students
interested in such theoretical and empirical NOVA topics. Ultimately, the course seeks to encourage new
research initiatives and studies, and to develop interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration among
students and faculty from different academic units who share a mutual interest in some aspect of nonprofit
organizations and voluntary action.

Since this course is offered through the School of Social Work, special note will be taken of issues of
multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice, and the contribution of NOVA, and especially charitable
and advocacy nonprofits, to enhanced individual and social wellbeing through prevention, promotion,
treatment and rehabilitation.

Course Objectives:

As a result of completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate the following knowledge and
skills:

(1) Familiarity with and ability to discuss in an informed manner the general characteristics,
parameters, and types of nonprofit organizations found in the United States, and
comparatively, to at least some countries abroad.

(2) Familiarity with and ability to discuss in an informed manner the various types of NOVA
social science research covered in this course and some of the key theories and questions that
have been raised and investigated empirically in this field in the last five decades.

(3) Ability to demonstrate competent planning and writing of an interesting and informative
research proposal utilizing NOVA-relevant data that is currently or potentially available, and
according to usual professional and social science standards.

While there is a rich and growing research literature on NOVA conducted by historians, time limitations
do not permit our closely examining it in this course.
Primary Texts:

(* = available at local bookstores or through sources on the web)


2. Possible choice of one of several books using qualitative research to study nonprofit organizations and voluntary action (on reserve at SSW library).

In addition, other course readings will be available through a Ctools site. Additional books to purchase may be requested following the first class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Session #)</th>
<th>Date, 2005</th>
<th>Topics &amp; Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference Notes:</td>
<td>1. CT after reference=found on Social Work DOC 829 Ctools site 2. TEXT=Course Text, Salamon, Lester M. The State of Nonprofit America (2002), Brooking Institution Press, Washington, DC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>Jan 7</td>
<td>Introduction and Overview of the Course:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | | ✦ What are Nonprofit Organizations?  
| | | ✦ What is Voluntary Action?  
| | | ✦ What is the content of this course and what are the requirements for this course’s successful completion?  
| | | ✦ What particular interests, experiences, questions, and goals do the class’ participants bring to the course? |
| (2) | Jan 14 | History & Evolution of the Nonprofit Sector  
| | | Guest Speaker from ISR: JoAnne McFarland O'Rourke:  
| | | Introduction to the IUCPSR Data Archives |
| | | 1. 9-10 am: History & Evolution of the Nonprofit Sector  
| | | 2. 10-11am: Introduction to Data Sources: the IUCPSR Data Archives  
| | | 3. 11-12: Computer Lab-SSW Library |
## Required Readings:


## Recommended:


## Data Resources to Study U.S. Nonprofits

**January 21 (3)**  
Guest Speaker: Dr. Mark Hager, Senior Research Associate, Center on Philanthropy and Nonprofit Organizations, The Urban Institute, Washington DC

A review of the resources of the National Center on Charitable Statistics and other available databases

## Required Readings:


### Jan 28

**Major Research Questions in Nonprofit Research**
- 9-10:30 am: Overview of some major research questions in nonprofit research (using readings 1 & 2)

**Journalistic Approaches to Nonprofit & Voluntary Phenomena**
- 10:30-12: Journalistic Approaches to Analyzing NGOs and their leaders
  - Guest Speaker: David Bornstein, independent journalist (re reading 3)

**Required Reading:**
3. Either of the following books by David Bornstein

### Feb 4

**To be announced**

**Required Reading:**
- Chapter in TEXT on a subsector of your choice (e.g. social services, arts, health)

### Feb 11

**Social Capital I – National Perspectives**
- **NOTE: ICOS Session 1:30-3:00**

**Guest Speaker: Professor Robert Putnam**

**Required Reading:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Feb 18 | Social Capital II –Corporate & Community Perspectives | Guest Speaker: Prof. Jerry Davis, UM Ross School of Business & Dept. of Sociology  
Required Reading:  
| Feb 25 | Topic to be announced                      | Midterm Course Evaluation                        |
| Mar 4  | Spring Break                               | “Enjoy!”                                         |
| Mar 11 | Social Capital III – Special Communities   | Nonprofits & Associations in a Special Community: New findings from the Survey of Arab-Americans  
Guest Speaker: Professor Wayne Baker, U-M Ross Business School & Dept. of Sociology, and Faculty Associate, ISR  
Required Reading:  
2. Additional Readings to be announced |
| Mar 18 | Topic to be announced                      |                                                  |
| Mar 25 | Faith-Based Services/Community Networks    | Guest Speaker: Prof. Wolfgang Bielefeld, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University-Indianapolis.  
Readings to be announced |
### State-based Surveys of the Nonprofit Sector

Guest Speaker: Professor Kirsten Grønbjerg, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University-Bloomington.

Readings to be announced

### Student Presentations of Research Proposals

April 8

### Student Presentations of Research Proposals

April 15

### Course Evaluation

**Some Options for Sessions (with or without guest speakers):**

1. Holding session specifically on *qualitative* research, emphasizing observation and case studies regarding nonprofits and voluntary action. Typically students each read a book of this type and prepare copies of summaries and critiques for the others in the class: Examples could include:


Assignments:
There are several short assignments and one long assignment for this course, as described below. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy to the instructor. E-mail attachments are not accepted due to printing overload involved.

Three initial short “Think pieces” (20% of final grade)
The purpose of these assignments is to encourage you to read and critically explore the current literature on NOVA, integrate it with other knowledge you have gained in this course, and to begin to formulate interesting research questions in this area. Read the assigned readings for three of the sessions—and write a 2-3 page paper, following Sessions: 4, 7, 11, and/or 13. The paper should present your perspective on the following questions:

1. Compare the perspectives of the authors on the particular topic of the session—are they generally the same or different? How so?
2. Which do you find most interesting or informative? Why?
3. Think of at least one way in which one or more of these readings integrates, illuminates, contrasts, or contradicts something else you have read in this course.
4. What research applications, question(s), hypotheses, or at least research direction(s) do these reading suggest to you?

These assignments are due one week after the chosen session, at the beginning of class.

Practitioner Interviews (5% of final grade)
The purpose of this assignment is to glean from the field and from active practitioners in nonprofit organizations the types of research questions whose answers they would find most helpful. The class will participate in the design of an interview instrument. Students will then interview a small number of such practitioners in their chosen field of interest. They will submit a 3-4 page paper that answers the following questions:

1. What are the most pressing areas of research which practitioners recommend in the chosen field?
2. How do these concerns or questions compare with the areas of research covered in the review article you read?
3. Is there findings or issues in the review article of this field that could address practitioners’ concerns? If yes, which are they? If no, what would you recommend?

Research Proposal (75% of final grade)
A major purpose of this class is to encourage the development of new NOVA empirical research. Toward that goal, the major assignment for the course is the submission of a research proposal. In order to give students experience in seeking funding for such research, we will be using an adapted version of the Aspen Institute’s Nonprofit Sector Research Fund’s past guidelines (www.nonprofitresearch.org)³.

³ This site also include summaries of past research funded that may be relevant or of interest in development of the proposal.
Topics can include research examining the overarching characteristics and impact of nonprofit organizations, voluntary action, and philanthropy. This includes the basic legal framework for nonprofit organizations and foundations; the distinct contributions—if any—that nonprofits, philanthropy, and philanthropic institutions make to society; and, a comparison of the functions that the philanthropic, nonprofit, governmental, and business sectors perform separately and collaboratively. Proposal can focus on nonprofits in a circumscribed geographical area, in a particular subsector (e.g., arts, human services, and ecology), those providing a particular function (service provision, advocacy).

Students are not required to develop a budget or submit institutional information required in a formal submission for funding. Students are encouraged to use databases that have been discussed in the course.

Proposals will include:
1. A relevant, cogent, but not necessarily exhaustive literature review,
2. Hypotheses or research questions to be investigated,
3. Description of the population or data being investigated, reliability of measures to be used,
4. Proposed method of investigation and statistical analysis, and,
5. Potential contribution to knowledge or practice in the field.

Further details of the assignment will be provided later in class.

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Aspen Institute’s Nonprofit Sector Research Fund’s guidelines—Frequently Asked Questions:

Are there any length requirements for a proposal to the Fund?
Proposals must be double-spaced, in a 12 point font, and should not exceed 10 pages. Proposals that exceed this length limit will not be removed from the process, but as this limit is designed to preserve the sanity of reviewers, we strongly recommend that a proposal be as close to the 10 page limit as possible.

You require a one page summary. What are you looking for in the summary?
This should be a clear, concise, and readable explanation of the project, written so that someone wholly unfamiliar with the details of your discipline or work would be able to understand it. It should also make a good case for the importance of the topic, and clearly indicate who will benefit from the results of the research. The Fund is particularly interested in projects that inform practice or policymaking.

How should I present my research questions?
Following your summary, you should clearly lay out your central research hypothesis (or hypotheses). Avoid presenting a lengthy laundry list of every possible question relating to the topic, as reviewers view this as a sign of a project that is unfocused. Also, be sure to clearly define the key terms you use in your study. Reviewers may not be familiar with them.

In what way should I describe the methods I’ll be using?
You should be as specific as possible in this section, as this is what tells reviewers how you intend to answer your research questions. For example, if case studies are planned, the proposal should state why those particular organizations (or types of organizations) were selected. If surveys are planned, the proposal should say who will be surveyed and why. If possible, random sampling should be used.

Be sure to link your methods to the research questions you pose. It should be clear to reviewers that the research you are undertaking is specifically designed to answer those questions.

All proposals must explicitly state the types of organizations or populations targeted by the research and indicate, as appropriate, the impact of demographic factors--race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, disability, etc.--on the questions being studied.

You ask for a statement of the project's relevance to people and institutions interested in the field. What does that entail?

Simply put, we want to know who will be interested in the results of your project. Will the final product of your study be of interest to a broad constituency, or will only a few individuals be affected? How generalizable is it?
Doc 829 – Empirical Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (NOVA)  
Instructor: Diane Kaplan Vinokur

**Winter 2005**

**CLASS SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENT DATES**  
Class is held Fridays, 9:10am -12:00 noon  
Room 1794 SSWB (School of Social Work Building)  
1080 South University (corner of East University), unless otherwise indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Sess. #) Date, 2005</th>
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<th>Assignments</th>
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| (2) Jan 14           | 4. 9-10 am: History & Evolution of  
  the Nonprofit Sector  
  5. 10-11am: Introduction to Data  
    Sources: the IUCPSR Data  
    Archives  
  6. 11 am-12 Computer Lab-  
    SSW Library | Ms. JoAnne McFarland  
  O'Rourke: Archivist, IUCPSR / ISR |             |
| (3) Jan 21           | 7. National Center on Charitable  
  Statistics Presentation  
  8. The Scope of the Nonprofit Sector  
    and Its Measurement | Dr. Mark Hager,  
  Senior Research Associate  
  Center on Philanthropy and  
  Nonprofit Organizations  
  The Urban Institute  
  Washington, DC |             |
| (4) Jan 28           | • 9-10:30 am: Overview of some  
    major research questions in nonprofit  
    research  
  • 10:30-12: Journalistic Approaches to  
    Analyzing NGOs and their leaders | Class discussion  
  Mr. David Bornstein,  
  Independent Journalist  
  (also at ICOS 1:30-3pm, | **Thinkpiece Due**  
  (1 of 3)  
  **Initial Proposal Topic Choice** |
<p>| 4212 SEB) | Due |</p>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Feb 4</td>
<td>tba</td>
<td>tba</td>
<td>(Initial proposal topics returned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Feb 11</td>
<td>Social Capital – Part I (national surveys)</td>
<td>Prof. Robert Putnam Department of Government Harvard University (also at ICOS) 1:30-3pm, 4212 SEB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Feb 18</td>
<td>Social Capital – Part II (in communities and on boards) Midterm Class Evaluation</td>
<td>Prof. Gerald F. Davis Business School &amp; Dept. of Sociology University of Michigan</td>
<td>Thinkpiece due (1 of 3) Developed Proposal Topic Chosen Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Feb 25</td>
<td>tba</td>
<td>tba</td>
<td>(Proposal topics returned)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(11) Mar 18</td>
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<td>tba</td>
<td>Thinkpiece due (1 of 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(12) Mar 25</td>
<td>Evaluations of Faith-based Programs</td>
<td>Prof. Wolfgang Bielefeld School of Public &amp; Environmental Affairs Indiana University-Indianapolis</td>
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<th>Topic:</th>
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</table>
| (13)  
April 1 | Statewide surveys of nonprofits | Prof. Kirsten Grønbjerg  
School of Public &  
Environmental Affairs  
Indiana University -  
Bloomington | Thinkpiece due  
(1 of 3) |
| (14)  
April 8 | New Possible Research Initiatives | Student Presentations | Presentations Due |
| (15)  
Apr 15 | New Possible Research Initiatives  
Course Evaluation | Student Presentations | Presentations Due |
|  | Last date to hand in Final Proposal |  | Wed.,  
April 20,  
4pm |

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1David Bornstein writes about social innovation. He is the author of *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* (2003) and *The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank* (1996), which chronicles the worldwide growth of the anti-poverty strategy “micro-credit.” *The Price of a Dream*, which drew on ten months of research in villages in Bangladesh, won second prize in the Harry Chapin Media Awards, was a finalist for the Helen Bernstein New York Public Library Book Award for Excellence in Journalism, and was selected by the San Francisco Chronicle as one of the best business books of 1996.

Bornstein's articles have appeared in The Atlantic Monthly, The New York Times, New York Newsday, Il Mundo (Italy), Defis Sud (Belgium) and other publications. He co-wrote the two-hour PBS documentary series "To Our Credit," which focuses on "micro-credit" programs in five countries.

Bornstein received a Bachelor of Commerce degree from McGill University in Montreal and a Masters of Arts from New York University. In addition to writing, he has worked as a computer programmer and systems analyst. He lives in New York City with his wife and son.