

**The George Washington University
Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration**

PPPA 6034 MANAGING NONPROFIT BOARDS

Summer, 2023

(Rev 4/12/23)

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

PPPA 6034 Managing Nonprofit Boards

CRN 50429

Summer, 2023, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:10 – 8:20 pm

May 23, 2023 – June 29, 2023

PROFESSOR INFORMATION

Michael J. Worth

Professor of Nonprofit Management

601-S 805 21st Street, NW

Washington, DC 20052

E-mail: mjworth@gwu.edu

The professor will be available for individual meetings with students in person, by phone, and on Zoom. (Email professor to schedule.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of the responsibilities, roles, and management of governing boards in various types of nonprofit organizations and institutions. The emphasis is on governing boards, but advisory councils and boards of other types are also considered. Among the topics considered are legal responsibilities of boards; the board's role in the organization; models for board organization and operation; governance reforms; characteristics of effective boards; causes of board failure; the board's role in fundraising; the relationship between the board and the CEO; and strategies for board development.

APPENDICES

Students should review the Appendices to this document, which provide important information and are an integral part of this course syllabus.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Mid-term exam, 35% of course grade

Students will be provided with 5 questions, based on assigned readings and class discussions, and will be asked to write answers to 3 questions of their choice. The paper will be written outside of class and students may use books or other materials to complete their answers. The paper should be about 5 pages in length.

Final exam, 35% of course grade

Students will be provided with 5 questions, based on assigned readings and class discussions, and will be asked to write answers to 3 questions of their choice. The paper will be written outside of class and students may use books or other materials to complete their answers. Questions will require students to integrate concepts from assigned readings and class discussions covered *throughout the course*. The paper should be about 5 pages in length,

[NOTE: Exams should be submitted to the professor as an e-mail attachment (Word format preferred) at mjworth@gwu.edu.]

Group mini case study (10%)

The class will be divided into 2-3 groups. Each group will select a nonprofit organization and undertake research on its board, using resources available online. [Note: The organizations selected may not be those for which case studies are otherwise assigned. The groups will discuss their findings with the class in the class session indicated.] The presentations may be informal and it is not necessary to develop PowerPoint presentations or other materials.

Class participation, 20% of course grade

Students are expected to attend class sessions. If a student is unable to participate in a class session, they should inform the professor in advance and provide an explanation. Students should prepare for class by completing the reading and noting points or questions that they wish to bring up for class discussion.

REQUIRED READING

Books:

NOTE: All three books are available without charge on ProQuest Ebook, which is accessible through Gelman Library. CHECK THE TAB FOR "READING ONLINE." IF YOU CHECK "DOWNLOAD BOOK" YOU WILL HAVE ACCESS FOR ONLY 21 DAYS AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RENEW.

The Handbook of Nonprofit Governance. Washington, DC: BoardSource, 2010.
ISBN: 978-0-470-45763-4

Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards,
Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan, Barbara E. Taylor.
Wiley, 2004
ISBN: 0-471-68420-1

The Practitioner's Guide to Governance as Leadership. Cathy A. Trower. Wiley, 2012.
(*Selected chapter only, as indicated in syllabus*)

Other reading/viewing:

Other reading will be available on Blackboard. The professor may add some additional reading related to guest speakers or breaking news during the course, i.e., newly-published articles of high relevance. For some topics, this syllabus lists recommended reading for students who may wish to pursue a topic in greater depth. This recommended reading includes chapters in the assigned books and materials posted on Blackboard. It is optional and will not be required to answer questions on the exams.

Cases: Most class session will include discussion of cases. The cases are on Blackboard and can be found under the tab labelled "Cases" in the left menu. *In most class sessions, the class will be divided into groups, which will read different cases and then lead discussion of those cases in class.*

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

SESSION 1

Tuesday, May 23, 2023

INTRODUCTIONS AND COURSE OVERVIEW

There is no assigned reading in advance of the first class session. The session will include introductions, the professor's overview of the course, and presentation of some introductory points.

SESSION 2

Thursday, May 25, 2023

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNING BOARDS

Reading:

Handbook: Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 7

Blackboard/Cases:

Group #1 read: *Sweet Briar College*

Group #2 read: *Hershey Trust*

Recommended reading (not required):

Handbook: Chapters 1*, 10, 11

*This chapter provides an overview of the nonprofit sector and nonprofit management. Students who have taken a previous course on the topic or who have experience in the sector may wish to just skip it. Others may wish to read to gain an understanding of these topics. The content will not be on the mid-term or final exam.

Web: Standards for Excellence Institute <https://standardsforexcellence.org/>

SESSION 3

Tuesday, May 30, 2023

BOARD ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

Reading:

Handbook: Chapters 4, 14, 15, 16

Blackboard: Sample bylaws (Just look around, no need to read every word)

Blackboard/Cases: *Trouble in Paradise* (It would be useful to read in advance of class, but the professor also will provide 10 minutes for the class to read this brief case in the class session.)

Recommended reading (not required):

Web: (1) Leading With Intent: A National Index of Nonprofit Board Practice (BoardSource, 2021) <https://leadingwithintent.org/> (2) Leading With Intent: Reviewing the State of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on Nonprofit Boards (BoardSource, 2021) <https://leadingwithintent.org/> (3) What Kind of Board Member Are You? (AGB, 2021) <https://agb.org/trusteeship-article/what-kind-of-board-member-are-you/>

First mini case study group meeting (about 10-15 minutes at end of class session)

Discuss organizations the group is interested in researching and assign roles.

SESSION 4

Thursday, June 1, 2023

THE BOARD AND THE CEO

(Part 1: Policy Governance and Board-Centered Leadership)

Reading:

Handbook: Chapter 5 (pay special attention to the summary of Herman and Heimovics board-centered leadership)

Blackboard: Carver, Chapter 2

Blackboard/Cases: *Hull House*

Blackboard/Cases: *Board-centered leadership mini cases* (It may be useful to read these before class but the class also will be given time to read these brief scenarios during the class session.)

Recommended reading (not required):

Handbook, Chapter 12

Blackboard: 1) Research on Carver model; 2) Carver policy manual sample; 3) Herman, Chapter 6: Executive Leadership

MID-TERM EXAM QUESTIONS ASSIGNED

SESSION 5

Tuesday, June 6, 2023

THE BOARD AND THE CEO

(Part 2: Governance as Leadership Model)

Reading:

Book: Governance as Leadership, Chait, Ryan, and Taylor (chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Blackboard/Cases:

Group #1 read: *Corcoran Gallery of Art*

Group #2 read: *Newseum*

Recommended reading (not required):

Blackboard: My Last Board Meeting (on Blackboard)

Book: Other chapters in Chait, if of interest

Second mini case study group meeting (about 10 minutes at end of class session)

Discuss what you have found in your research and decide on how you will present your report to the class in the later session indicated.

SESSION 6

Thursday, June 8, 2023

GUEST SPEAKER

Aristide Collins, Vice President, Chief of Staff to the President, Secretary of the University, George Washington University

Group presentations on mini case study (following departure of guest)

These presentations will likely be 10-15 minutes each.

SESSION 7

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

**BOARD'S ROLE IN FUNDRAISING, FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT, PLANNING/
ADVISORY COUNCILS AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS**

Reading:

Handbook: Chapters 8, 9.10

Blackboard/Cases:

Group #1 read: **NYC Opera**

Group #2 read: **charity: water**

Recommended reading:

Blackboard: Advisory Councils in Higher Education (monograph)

MID-TERM EXAM DUE THIS SESSION

(Email to professor in advance of class.)

SESSION 8

Thursday, June 15, 2023

BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM

Reading:

Handbook, Chapter 6, Chapter 13, Chapter 16

Trower book: Chapter 4

Blackboard/cases:

Group #1 read: *Silicon Valley Community Foundation*

Group #2 read: *River Farm*

SESSION 9

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

DISCUSSION OF CASES

PREPARATION FOR EAST COAST ORCHESTRA MEETING

The class will be divided into 3-4 groups (depending on class size). Each group will read one of the cases listed below. The group will have time in class to discuss the case and then lead a discussion.

All students should read the case of *East Coast Orchestra* and consider the role you wish to play in the board meeting scheduled for Session 11.

Reading:

Blackboard/Cases: (one for each group) *American University, Smithsonian, University of Maryland*

Blackboard/Cases: Read the case of *East Coast Orchestra* in preparation for its board meeting, which the class will role play next week. Decide which of the key board-member roles you might wish to play in the meeting of the board in our next session. Assignments will be made in this class session.

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS ASSIGNED

SESSION 10

Thursday, June 22, 2023

GUEST SPEAKER

Jennifer Hawkins, Corporate Secretary and Chief of Staff, American Red Cross

Recommended reading:

Blackboard/Cases: *Red Cross governance reform* (This is long but may be interesting to just peruse prior to our guest speaker.)

SESSION 11

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

EXERCISE: MEETING OF EAST COAST ORCHESTRA

SESSION 12

Thursday, June 29, 2023

FINAL SESSION – WRAPUP AND DISCUSSION OF TAKE-AWAYS

FINAL EXAM DUE

(Email to professor in advance of class session)

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APPENDICES

These Appendices provide important information and are an integral part of this course syllabus.

APPENDIX 1 - INTENDED AUDIENCE

This course is appropriate for students planning or considering careers in the nonprofit sector as well as individuals employed in nonprofit organizations who seek to expand their knowledge in order to advance to more senior management roles. It may also be useful to students who expect to serve as members of nonprofit boards. It is an approved elective course for the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management program.

APPENDIX 2 – LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students completing this course will be able to: 1) Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the legal requirements of nonprofit governance. 2) Describe the functional responsibilities of governing boards in the nonprofit sector. 3) Explain various theories, approaches, principles and best practices in governing nonprofit organizations. 4) Summarize various models regarding the relationship between boards and chief executive officers in nonprofit organizations. 5) Identify strengths and weaknesses in a nonprofit organization's governance and recommend actions to improve board performance. 6) Explain characteristics of effective boards. 6) Plan and execute an effective board meeting.

APPENDIX 3 – COURSE POLICIES

This course follows established policies of the University and Columbian College, including but not limited to the policy on class attendance (<http://registrar.gwu.edu/university-policies#attendance>), the policy on religious holidays (<http://registrar.gwu.edu/university-policies#attendance>), and the policy on disabilities (<http://registrar.gwu.edu/university-policies#attendance>). Students with disabilities are encouraged to seek

assistance from Disability Support Services (<http://www.gwired.gwu.edu/dss>). Any case of dishonesty will be referred to the Academic Integrity Council following the processes provided online. The Code states: "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating on any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information." For the remainder of the Code, see <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity.code/html>. Written assignments are due on the day indicated in this syllabus. Failure to meet the deadline may result in a lower grade than otherwise would have been assigned to the work. Extensions may be granted only under certain circumstances, consistent with the above policies.

Civility in the Classroom: Higher education works best when it becomes a vigorous and lively marketplace of ideas in which all points of view are heard. Free expression in the classroom is an integral part of this process. At the same time, higher education demands that all of us approach the enterprise with empathy and respect for others, irrespective of their ideology, political views, or identity.

Safety and Security:

- Monitor GW Alerts and Campus Advisories to Stay Informed before and during an emergency event or situation
- In an emergency: call GWPD/EMeRG 202-994-6111 or 911
- For situation-specific actions: refer to GW's Emergency Response Handbook and Emergency Operations Plan
- In the event of an armed intruder: Run. Hide. Fight.

APPENDIX 4 - TIME COMMITMENT

This is a three-credit graduate course. The semester is 6 weeks. Scheduled class sessions are each 130 minutes each, two sessions per week, totaling 260 minutes (about 4.5 hours). That makes total instruction time about 27 hours total for the course. Required reading and preparation of papers outside of class is expected to require, on average, 8 hours per week, a total of 48 hours for the course.

APPENDIX 5 - GRADING STANDARDS

Letter grading is based on a four-point scale as follows:

3.7-4.0 A: Excellent and exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional professional quality.

3.6-3.7 A-: Very Good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Shows signs of creativity and a strong understanding of appropriate analytical approaches, is thorough and well-reasoned, and meets professional standards.

3.3-3.6 B+: Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, without serious analytical shortcomings. This grade indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of this graduate course.

3.0-3.3 B: Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student with some evident weaknesses. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but the understanding or application of some important issues is less than complete.

2.7-3.0 B-: Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student but meets minimal expectations in the course. Understanding of key issues is incomplete. (A B- average in all courses is not sufficient to sustain graduate status in good standing.)

2.3-2.6 C+: Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; rarely meets minimal expectations for course. Work is poorly developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues.

2.0-2.3 C: Deficient - see above

1.7-2.0 C-: Deficient - see above

Less than 1.7 F: Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations or course credit for a graduate student. Performance has consistently failed to meet minimum course requirements. Weaknesses and limitations are pervasive.