COURSE NUMBER: SOWO 884
COURSE TITLE: Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations
SEMESTER AND YEAR: First Summer Session, 2009
CREDITS: Three credit hours
INSTRUCTOR: Mat Despard, MSW
TTK 402-E; 919-962-6467
despard@email.unc.edu
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment
COURSE WEBSITE: is available through http://blackboard.unc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will help prepare students for various leadership roles in nonprofit organizations, emphasizing critical thinking and communication skills applied to a range of organizational challenges.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. Explain the unique role that nonprofit organizations play in meeting community needs and promoting positive social change.
2. Distinguish governance, leadership and management needs and behaviors within nonprofit organizations.
3. Evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses as a potential nonprofit manager and identify strategies for improving core skills.
4. Critically examine and assess nonprofit organizations’ business models, including mission, vision, theories of change and sustainability.
5. Describe key organizational competencies of nonprofit organizations and how leadership and management skills may be used to effectively strengthen organizational performance.
6. Identify and analyze ethical dilemmas that confront nonprofit leaders and frameworks for ethical leadership in nonprofit organizations.
7. Develop effective communication and conflict management strategies to strengthen individual and group performance.
8. Develop strategies for recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse paid and volunteer workforce.
9. Identify effective measures for strengthening the role of the nonprofit board.

EXPANDED DESCRIPTION: Students will learn about a range of challenges to nonprofit organizations concerning key capacity areas such as board development, human resources, organizational learning and sustainability and how their role as leaders can help facilitate effective responses. Leadership is expressed in many different ways, certainly not limited to an exercise of position-based authority. This course will emphasize particular leadership styles that are seen as more applicable to nonprofit organizations. Leadership is also viewed as being highly contextual; it is
affected and shaped by gender, race/ethnicity, culture, community needs and circumstances, the organization’s mission and life stage and other factors. Leadership is also construed as a shared enterprise – what Jim Collins refers to as “legislative leadership” – among key staff and volunteers, not the sole domain of the CEO. Nonprofit leadership can broadly be understood to include three key skill areas: 1) strategic assessment, analysis and decision-making; 2) communication and engagement in interpersonal processes, including conflict; and 3) support and mobilization of staff, volunteers and other constituents.

**REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS:**

**RELATED READINGS:**
Required readings, which are listed in the class schedule and reading assignments section below, will come from the required text and from other sources such as academic journals. These additional readings can be accessed in the following ways:

1) At the URL stated in the reading list;  
   OR
   OR
3) Via Blackboard ([http://blackboard.unc.edu/](http://blackboard.unc.edu/)) “BB” (login and find SOWO 884, choose “Assignments” and “Course Readings” folder);

**TEACHING METHODS:**
Lecture and powerpointing will be used sparingly in this course – typically only to provide a topic introduction and conceptual framework. Problem-based learning exercises, case studies, role plays and simulations will be emphasized. These methods are used to accomplish two important goals, to: 1) sharpen your critical thinking about leadership challenges confronting nonprofits and 2) increase your ability to effectively communicate with other people concerning these challenges.

Students are expected to participate actively in role plays and simulations; this is how relevant skills can be developed in a classroom setting. Learning can only truly occur in a space where all participants feel respected and safe. We will work to create such an environment.

*Simulation*
A fictional organization, “Durham Opportunity” (DO) and its fictional Executive Director will provide a simulated learning context. The Executive Director will present different challenges he is facing as Executive Director and ask students to come up with solutions. This means that at certain times, the Instructor or a student may play the role as the Executive Director and
either relate to the students as consultants helping him work through a problem OR as staff members and volunteers of DO.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:
Students will be evaluated based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief Response Papers (3 total)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Development Project</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Self-Analysis (extra credit - optional)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLASS ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:
Because of the summer session format that offers fewer instructional hours than regular semester courses, attendance at all class sessions is very important. Lack of attendance for any three hour class session (i.e. 9-12noon or 1-4pm) will result in a 10% reduction in your final, cumulative grade. Thus, if you finish with a grade of 90% and missed an entire day of class (two class sessions), you would finish with a 70%, a grade of L (low pass). Only in highly unusual and extenuating circumstances might an absence be determined excused. Even so, such an absence will either require make-up course work proposed by the student and approved by the instructor or a course grade of an Incomplete.

Students are expected to come prepared for class having completed the readings and able and willing to contribute to our learning experience through active participation in problem-solving exercises, role plays, simulations, and class discussions.

Student Led Discussion Component
The class participation grade includes a small group assignment. In groups of three, students will be assigned a set of focus questions or a case scenario of a nonprofit facing a challenge. During the following class (one week later), each group will present their recommendations and facilitate class discussion related to the readings for that week.

BRIEF RESPONSE PAPERS:
Students will answer focus questions in brief (2-4 page, double spaced) papers. Focus questions for each paper will be posted on Blackboard in the Assignments folder. Students will complete a total of three papers (10 points each), choosing from the following topics:

1. The context of nonprofit leadership (due May 14, 2009)
2. Nonprofit growth, business models (due May 21, 2009)
3. The interpersonal side of leadership (due May 28, 2009)
4. Human resource strategies (due June 4, 2009)
Organizational Development Project:

Objective: To identify and analyze key challenges confronting nonprofit organizations and articulate effective organizational and leadership strategies and skills for responding to them.

Due Dates: Students must select from Options A-D below. Presentations will take place on the last day of class – June 11, 2009. Papers are due on June 15, 2009 and can be emailed to the instructor.

Assignment Options:

Students must choose from one of the following options to complete this assignment:

Option A: Organizational Assessment (Individual or Group Project)

Requirements: Each student or group of three students will select a nonprofit organization with which to conduct an organizational capacity assessment. An assessment tool from the Marguerite Casey Foundation (available on Blackboard) will be used by students to help the organization assess its capacity in various areas such as board development and program evaluation. The idea is not for the group of students to evaluate the nonprofit as an outside group, but to use the assessment tool to help the nonprofit answer key questions about its capacity to achieve its mission. Detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard.

Option B: Organizational Development Project (Individual or Group Project)

Requirements: Students will work with a nonprofit organization that wants help in addressing one or more capacity areas described in the Marguerite Casey Foundation organizational assessment tool. Unlike Option A, which focuses on assessing and understanding, this option involves helping the organization develop ideas, strategies and tactics about one or more key performance areas. Examples include:

- SWOT analysis
- A resource development and marketing plan
- A capital campaign plan
- A board recruitment, development and retention plan (including job descriptions and other important documents)

For students that do not have an existing nonprofit organization with which to work, there are two options to pursue Option B.:

1) Conduct an analysis of strategies for ensuring financial sustainability of subsidized, nonprofit child care centers in North Carolina. This is connected to and supportive of the instructor’s pro bono work with Self-Help Credit Union and its nonprofit lending program.
2) Conduct an analysis of strategies for ensuring financial sustainability of micro enterprise programs in Haiti. This is connected to and supportive of the instructor’s pro bono work with Village of Vision for Haiti Foundation.

Proper credit will be given to student contributions on these projects and pursuing either option confers no special consideration by the instructor in assigning a grade. It is meant to give students a practical application while performing a public service.

The final product will consist of the completed written work to be turned in to the nonprofit organization and a supplementary paper to be turned in to the instructor that discusses the leadership roles and skills within the organization that are needed to accomplish the development effort. It is essential that information and recommendations given to the nonprofit be substantiated with nonprofit literature (see Blackboard for helpful sources).

Option C: Literature Review – Organizational Best Practices (Individual Project)

Requirements: Students choosing this option will conduct an in depth literature review related to one or more capacity areas described in the Marguerite Casey Foundation organizational assessment tool and apply (theoretically, not in actual practice) what they learned from the review and from the course to a nonprofit organization of their choosing and what they see as the leadership roles and skills within the organization that are needed to adopt the recognized best practice(s).

Option D: Nonprofit Startup (Group Project)

Requirements: Students with an existing interest in launching a nonprofit corporation can exercise this option to accomplish several important tasks required in starting a nonprofit:

- Creation of mission and vision statements, core values and beliefs and case statement
- Filing Articles of Incorporation with a state corporation commission
- Creation of organizational bylaws
- Board composition
- IRS Form 1023
- Nonprofit business plan outline

The most important part of this assignment is the business plan outline. Generally speaking, the instructor actively discourages the formation of new nonprofit corporations for a variety of reasons. Without a solid idea of how a new nonprofit would be funded and financed, it shouldn’t be formed. The final product will consist of the documents listed above and a brief, 1-2 page supplementary paper that discusses the leadership roles and skills within the organization that are needed for a successful launch. The instructor will entertain alternative ideas to this option, including proposed mergers between existing nonprofits.
LEADERSHIP ANALYSIS (EXTRA CREDIT - OPTIONAL)

Objective: To apply and adapt leadership knowledge and skills discussed in the course to one’s own identified leadership style and to align this analysis to a specific nonprofit organization.

Due Date: June 15, 2009

Requirements: This assignment is option for students who wish to have an opportunity to earn a grade of an H for the course. It is intended to be a reflection paper wherein students apply what they have learned in class (knowledge, skills, leadership self-awareness) to a plan or vision for how they might offer leadership in an organization or community. The final paper should be 6 to 10 double spaced pages and should incorporate scholarly sources. It will be comprised of three sections:

1. Personal Leadership Style: What do you judge to be your areas of strength and weakness regarding leadership competencies and characteristics discussed in the course? What do you want to improve or strengthen? How would you characterize your own leadership style?

2. Synthesis: Based on what you have learned in this course as comprising the skills needed to lead a nonprofit organization by effectively responding to the various challenges they face, what skills/challenges do you feel you are best able to apply/confront in nonprofit work? Based on this assessment, what role within an organization do you feel is ideal? (e.g. Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Program Director, Client Services Director, Director of Development, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, etc. – Note: You will not lose points for not selecting ED!)

3. Alignment: Based on your personal leadership style and the skills/challenges you feel you are best able to apply/confront, describe the type of nonprofit organization (size, mission, scope, location, life stage, target population, etc.) with which you feel you are optimally aligned. You can name and describe a specific organization or just describe the characteristics of an unspecified one (though this should bear resemblance to real world organizations!). To fulfill this part of the assignment, you must consult with one individual to give you feedback to help you identify this alignment. This can be a former supervisor, colleague, peer, faculty member (not the instructor), or other person (excluding family members). You must explain why you sought this individual’s counsel by describing the perspective you feel that they offer that helps you assess your strengths, weaknesses and alignment. The following reading is highly recommended to complete this section on alignment:

GRADING SYSTEM:
All grades are based on the following scale:
94 and above       H
80-93             P
70-79             L
69 and below       F

While it is possible to earn as much as 95 points (grade of H) without completing the optional Leadership Analysis assignment, chances of earning an H are considerably greater if a student completes this optional assignment. This is an intentional form of contract grading.

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS:
A paper is considered late if it is handed in any later than the start of class on the day it is due. The grade for late papers will be reduced 5% per day, including weekends. Similarly, a paper due at 6pm on Thursday handed in at 7pm will be considered 1 day late.

A grade of Incomplete is given only in exceptional and rare circumstances that warrant it, e.g. family crisis, serious illness. It is the student’s responsibility to request and explain the reasons for an Incomplete. The instructor has no responsibility to give an Incomplete without such a request.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:
It is the responsibility of every student to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing in actions involving the academic processes of this class. Students will properly attribute sources used in preparing written work and will sign a pledge on all graded coursework certifying that no unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of the work. All written assignments should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, “I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.” Credit will not be awarded for unpledged work.

Please refer to the APA Style Guide, The SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the University’s Disabilities Services (http://disabilityservices.unc.edu) and provide documentation of their disability. Disabilities Services will notify the instructor that the student has a documented disability and may require accommodations. Students should discuss the specific accommodations they require (e.g. changes in instructional format, examination format) directly with the instructor.
USE OF LAPTOPS OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES:
Use of electronic devices for non-class related activities (e.g. checking email, surfing, IMing, blogging, playing games) is prohibited. Use of laptops is permitted as a tool for small group activities and in-class assignments or as an approved accommodation for students with disabilities (see above).

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS/APA Formatting:
Students are expected to use good academic English; grades will be lowered for poor grammar, syntax, or spelling. Those who have difficulty writing are STRONGLY encouraged to use online resources of the campus Writing Center (http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/) and/or seek assistance from Diane Wyant or Susan White in the School of Social Work.

The School of Social Work faculty has adopted APA style as the preferred format for papers and publications. **All written assignments for this course should be submitted in APA format.** A summary was distributed at orientation for MSW students and can be shared with non-MSW students as requested. The web sites listed below provide additional information, though students are strongly encouraged to purchase the following text:


- [http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html](http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html) (APA Style for material in electronic formats)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html) (general information about documentation using APA style)
- [http://www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/) (electronic version of Strunk's *The Elements of Style* which was originally published in 1918)
- [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html) (The Writing Center, links to on-line reference material and many other useful sites for authors)
# READINGS AND COURSE OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>May 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong>&lt;br&gt; Governance &amp; Management of Nonprofit Organizations (AM)&lt;br&gt; Board Recruitment, Development &amp; Performance (PM)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Objectives

### Morning Session:
- Understand expectations for and about the course
- Identify key characteristics and dynamics of the nonprofit sector
- Describe the role of the board of directors and board-staff relationships
- Distinguish between governance and management functions

### Multimedia
- DO Podcast #1 (BB - .mp3 format)

### Readings:
- **TEXT:**
  - Chapter 2: Mission, Vision & Values (pp. 7-10)
  - Chapter 6: Governance (pp. 43-56)

### Objectives

### Afternoon Session:
- Discuss the benefits and challenges of recruiting and retaining a diverse and well-qualified board of directors
- Explain key areas of board performance and how to promote it

### Readings:
Organizational Growth & Innovation: Pursuing the Mission (AM)
Nonprofit Business Models: Sustaining the Mission (PM)

Objectives

Morning Session:
- Articulate key principles of strategic planning and management
- Apply organizational life cycle perspectives to understand challenges confronting nonprofit organizations
- Critically examine assumptions about organizational performance and impact

Readings:

TEXT: Chapter 5: Strategic Planning & Thinking (pp. 35-42)
Chapter 13: Managing Change (pp. 125-132)


Objectives

Afternoon Session:
- Describe the essential characteristics of the nonprofit model and how it poses unique challenges for nonprofits to sustain their missions
- Articulate essential fundraising principles and strategies for nonprofits
- Examine earned income strategies for nonprofits and social business concepts

Multimedia

DO Podcast #3 (BB - .mp3 format)

Readings:

TEXT: Chapter 7: Fund Development (pp. 57-72)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3 May 28</th>
<th>Leadership Styles (AM) Communication &amp; Conflict Management (PM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Objectives** | Morning Session:  
|               | • Analyze differences between leadership and management  
|               | • Identify and describe leadership types, characteristics and competencies and relate them to nonprofit organizations |
| **Multimedia** | DO Podcast #2 (BB - .mp3 format) |
| **Readings:** | TEXT: Chapter 1: Leadership (pp. 1-6) |
| **Objectives** | Afternoon Session  
|               | • Articulate effective communication strategies  
|               | • Analyze different conflict management strategies  
<p>|               | • Demonstrate ability to have difficult conversations |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 4</th>
<th>Human Resource Strategies: Recruitment, Hiring, Diversity &amp; Retention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 4</td>
<td>Morning Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify major components of nonprofit human resource systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain how to recruit a well qualified and diverse staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate effective candidate interviewing techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia</td>
<td>DO Podcast #4 (BB - .mp3 format)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings:</td>
<td>TEXT: Chapter 10: Human Resources (pp. 97-104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digh, P. (2001). Getting people in the pool: Diversity recruitment that works. ASAE &amp; The Center for Association Leadership. (BB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Afternoon Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Describe various strategies for supporting and retaining employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>Course Review: Nonprofit Careers Outlook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objectives**
- Review and summarize progress in achieving course learning objectives
- Develop expectations concerning a career in nonprofit leadership

**Multimedia**
DO Podcast #5 (BB -.mp3 format)

**Readings:**

