

NGOs in INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Spring 2006)
UAP 5364, Blacksburg and Northern Virginia via VTEL

Class

Day and Time: Wednesdays, 7:00 – 9:45 pm
Alexandria Architecture Center, VTEL room
Blacksburg location TBD

Professor

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Office Hours

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Web Access to Course Materials: www.learn.vt.edu

Web Assistance: e-mail 4help@vt.edu or call (540) 231-HELP, M-F from 8-5

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the theory and cases of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in international institution and community-building. The course will evaluate the impact of NGOs in institution-building, their role in local and international responses to conflicts, NGO management processes including accountability, responsibility and learning, NGO - government - donor relationships with special attention to their interactions with actors such as local communities, government agencies, international donors and multilateral institutions. The course will examine tensions and collaboration between NGOs and other community-building actors, with a critical look at issues of capacity building, performance, and accountability in various policy domains.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Having completed the requirements for this course, students will be able to:

- a) Describe and distinguish between the diverse roles and typologies of NGOs in international institution-building.
- b) Analyze the complex relationships of NGOs with other major actors including local communities, public agencies, international organizations, and other NGOs.
- c) Examine challenges of capacity building and accountability among NGOs.
- d) Critically examine the strengths, weaknesses, and performance of NGOs in various policy domains.
- e) Explore the effects of globalizing processes on the emergence and roles of NGOs.

CLASS ORGANIZATION

Course is offered via VTEL from Northern Virginia and Blacksburg campuses. Instructor teaches primarily from the Alexandria Architecture Center on Prince Street. Three times during the semester, instructor travels to Blacksburg campus to teach. Dates for Blacksburg trips are announced in advance.

During the semester, students fulfill responsibilities outlined below.

Field trips to NGOs in the Washington DC and Roanoke areas are scheduled at the end of the semester. Field trips are designed to offer students opportunities to 1. receive presentations of NGO structure, functions, modes of operation, project design, funding, operations and management from NGO management staff and project directors 2. observe an NGO work environment, 3. interact with NGO staff. Field trip structure will be discussed in advance with students.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Class Participation (30% of grade): Each week, students are required to read the assigned material and engage in class discussion.
 - a. For each class, students make short, verbal presentations of the required reading material and identify issues of particular interest to be discussed further. Assignments of weekly presentations are decided during the first week of class.
2. Article/book review (30% of grade): Students select either a book from the required readings or a set of articles required for a particular class and prepare an article/book review (10-15 pages). Students can do their book/article review on the reading material they present in class (see article 1 a. above). The review should reflect the following:
 - a. Topic of book/article; main argument; where argument fits in the overall literature on the subject;
 - b. Organization of material and sources: How is the material organized? Is the material easy to follow? Does the evidence support the main argument? Are the sources reliable? Are they biased (i.e. reflecting only one side of the argument)?
 - c. Methodology (how the author achieved his/her stated goals): Did the author present historical, statistical, anecdotal evidence to support his/her argument? Was the evidence sufficient? Was the evidence presented in a sequential and logical manner?
 - d. Personal critical evaluation: Has the author achieved his/her goal? Is the material a contribution to the field? What areas were insufficiently (or inconclusively) treated? What could the author have done to improve the piece under review?
3. Grant Proposal (40% of grade): Select a political, social or environmental issue of personal interest. Research past (5 years) and current projects undertaken by NGOs in the field. Identify an aspect of the selected issue that has been unsuccessfully (insufficiently, not at all) addressed and write a grant proposal for a project that would (partially) solve

the problem. Present grant proposal to the class, receive feedback from students and instructor, adjust proposal as needed, submit to instructor one week after presentation (15-20 pages).

- a. On the course Blackboard site, in External Links, several web addresses are posted to assist students in identifying 1. the structure of a grant proposal, 2. samples of grant proposals; 3. philosophy and tips.
- b. For students who have difficulties writing, it is strongly recommended that they visit the Writing Center on the main campus (340 Shanks Hall, telephone: 231-5436, Web site: www.english.vt.edu/writing/center.htm) to get editorial and stylistic help.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. The required readings for the course are listed in the Course Schedule.
2. Books: The required books have been ordered at the Virginia Tech bookstore, Blacksburg campus and at the Falls Church campus, Northern Virginia. Amazon.com is another source for purchasing the books.
3. Required articles are posted on the website of the course.

PARTICIPATION POLICY AND HONOR CODE

The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning values the role of participation and active engagement by students in the learning process. Regular attendance, full class participation and fulfillment of students' requirements are considered prerequisites for learning and integral part of the student evaluation process.

All students are expected to abide by the Virginia Tech Honor Code. Check the current university catalogue for a complete explanation of the honor code. Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on assignments, plagiarism, and falsification are all violations of the honor code.

Additionally, students are strongly encouraged to behave courteously towards one another, with respect for cultural, educational, religious and any other differences that may lead to contentious arguments. Each student should feel free to express oneself in the class. If the opposite is the case, please contact the instructor immediately.

OTHER POLICIES

- Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation because of a special need, circumstance, or disability (learning disability, attention deficit disorder, psychological, physical, etc.) please make an appointment to discuss the issue with the instructor.

- All written assignments must be submitted as called for by this syllabus. Late written assignments will not be accepted, without prior arrangement. If you need special accommodation, please discuss the details with the instructor in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, 1/18: The Rise of NGOs

Required Reading: Frederick A. Swarts, Taj I. Hamad, Anne R. Smart, Tajeldin I. Hamad (ed.), Anne Ranniste Smart (ed.), *Culture of Responsibility and the Role of NGOs*, Continuum International Publishing Group, September, 2003.

Week 2, 1/25: NGO Typologies and Key Concepts

Required Readings: Vakil, Anna C. 1997, "Confronting the Classification Problem: Toward a Taxonomy of NGOs," *World Development* 25 (12):2057-2070; Lewis, David. 2001. *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations*, Chapters 3 and 5.

Week 3, 2/1: NGO Management - How Do They Work?

Required Reading: Thomas Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization*, Simon & Schuster, Prentice Hall (1st.ed.) 1990 (a different edition is acceptable).

Week 4, 2/8: NGO Sustainability - How Do They Stay in Business?

Required Reading: David Hulme and Michael Edwards (eds.), *NGOs, States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort*, Palgrave Macmillan, February 15, 1997.

Week 5, 2/15: NGO Effectiveness I - Are They Influential?

Required Reading: Mari Fitzduff, *NGOs at the Table: Strategies for Influencing Policy in Areas of Conflict*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004.

Week 6, 2/22: NGO Effectiveness II – Do They Make a Difference?

Required Readings: Sarah E. Mendelson, John K. Glenn, *The Power and Limits of NGOs* Columbia University Press, 2002.

Week 7, 3/1: NGO – Change from Within and from Without

Required Reading: Ebrahim, Alnoor, *NGOs and Organizational Change: Discourse, Reporting and Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003; Chapters 1-4.

March 4 – 12: Spring break

Week 8, 3/15: Book Reviews due, no class.

Week 9, 3/22: NGOs and International Financial Institutions, The World Bank

Required Readings: World Bank website information (project cycle, profiles and dbases, measuring results, operations evaluations sections; projects 2004-05).

Week 10, 3/29: NGO Case Studies

Required Readings: Ebrahim, A. 2003 “Building Analytical and Adaptive Capacity: Lessons from Northern and Southern Nonprofits,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), Denver, Colorado, November 20-22, 2003.

Weeks 11 and 12, 4/5 and 4/12: Grant Proposal Presentations

Weeks 13 and 14, 4/19 and 4/26: Linking Theory with Practice
Field trips in Northern Virginia and/or Blacksburg/Roanoke areas.

RESOURCES

Some potentially useful resources for this course are listed below.

Journals

Many different kinds of journals carry articles related to NGOs and development. A few of these journals are listed below. You may also wish to check sector-specific journals (e.g., on health or housing) or country-specific journals.

Journals on Nonprofit and Nongovernmental Organizations

Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations.
Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly
Nonprofit Management and Leadership

Organizational Sociology and Management Journals

Academy of Management Journal
Academy of Management Review
American Sociological Review
Administrative Science Quarterly
American Journal of Sociology

Development Journals

World Development
Development and Change
Economic Development and Cultural Change
Journal of Development Studies
Journal of Peasant Studies
IDS Bulletin

Development in Practice
Third World Quarterly
Development Policy Review

Web Sites

World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) <http://www.civicus.org> (has descriptions of civil society in 40 countries)
Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex, United Kingdom — <http://www.ids.ac.uk>
Private Agencies Collaborating Together — <http://www.pactworld.org>
National Center for Charitable Statistics — <http://nccs.urban.org>
Guidestar — a database of over 800,000 U.S. nonprofits www.guidestar.org
Independent Sector — <http://www.IndependentSector.org>
Oneworld (human rights and sustainable development) — <http://www.oneworld.org>
Global Coalition for Africa — <http://www.gca-cma.org/emenu.htm>
The American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction) — <http://www.interaction.org/ia/>
Idealist — <http://www.idealists.org> (listings of organizations)
North-South Institute — <http://www.nsi-ins.ca>

International Organizations

World Bank (NGOs & Civil Society) — <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/forngos.htm>
U.N. Partners in Civil Society — http://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/cs.htm
Asian Development Bank — http://www.adb.org/Work/Social_Devt
InterAmerican Development Bank — <http://www.iadb.org>
Ford Foundation — <http://www.fordfound.org>
Kettering Foundation — <http://www.kettering.org>

Research Associations

International Society for Third Sector Research — <http://www.jhu.edu/~istr>
Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action — <http://www.arnova.org>
Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector Research Fund interactive research site — <http://www.NonprofitResearch.org>
Center for Strategic and International Studies www.csis.org
Latin American research — <http://www.rits.org.br>
Japan NPO Research Association — <http://www.osipp.osaka-u.ac.jp/janpora/e/>
Israeli NPOs — <http://www.givingwisely.org.il>