

# NONPROFITS AT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

## SOCI 4399

### MAY TERM 2014

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**Professor:**

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Hyer Hall 306A  
Office hours: By Appointment

**Class Meeting:**

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Location TBD

**Course Description**

*Sociology at Work in the Community* explores the nonprofit sector's role in addressing myriad social problems. The course will explore those problems unique to Dallas County and its urban environment. Specifically students will examine issues such as poverty, domestic violence, healthcare, and our aging population. Class time will be divided thusly: Traditional lectures on campus where students are introduced to concepts relating to the social issue being explored and the specific ways in which the nonprofit sector is working to mitigate the problems, and; Fieldtrips to local nonprofit agencies to tour facilities and meet with administrators, volunteers, and clients who are working to address the social problems discussed in class.

**Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will comprehend the role the nonprofit sector plays in assessing and addressing social problems. Students will also be equipped with general knowledge of nonprofit administrative issues and the dynamics of the third sector.

**Course-Specific Learning Outcomes:**

- Analyze and critically evaluate the roots of social problems in communities.
- Recognize the unique role and attributes of the American nonprofit sector in addressing social problems.
- Understand the various social issues present in the Dallas community.
- Understand the challenges facing modern nonprofit managers in addressing social problems.

**Required Text**

Linda A. Mooney, David Knox, and Caroline Schacht. 2012. *Understanding Social Problems, Eighth Edition*. ISBN 978-1111834487

Dan Pallotta. 2012. *Charity Case: How the Nonprofit Community Can Stand Up for Itself and Really Change the World*. ISBN: 978-1-118-11752-1

**Requirements & Grading**

Exam	20%
Analytic Reflection Papers	40%
Social Problem Presentation	20%
Class Attendance & Participation	20%

Students are expected to attend class and to arrive punctually and prepared to contribute to discussions. Active class participation is mandatory. Note that the quality, tone, and timeliness of class comments are more important than their frequency and length. If you know in advance you will not be able to attend class, please alert the professor via email.

Students are responsible for ALL material presented in class. There will be material presented in the classroom that cannot be found in the textbook or course readings. It is your responsibility to get notes from students after an absence. The professor will not provide class notes to students.

**Agency Visits**

In order to fully explore the role of nonprofits in addressing social problems, we will visit off-campus nonprofit agencies nearly every class meeting. Students are responsible for arranging transportation for field trips. Punctuality and decorum are expected during agency visits.

**SYLLABUS: CLASS AGENDAS & READINGS**

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\*\*All agency visits are tentative.

May 15      Defining Social Problems  
                  Dallas's Nonprofit Landscape  
                  Mooney Part 1  
                  Royce Hanson. 2003. *Civic Culture and Urban Change: Governing Dallas*.  
                  Chapter 12: How Dallas "Solves" Problems, pp. 323-355.

*Suggested Reflection Questions: Discuss the theoretical approaches to identifying social problems. Why/how is the nonprofit sector positioned to address social problems? What do you perceive to be the biggest social problems facing our community? What challenges does Dallas face in mitigating social problems?*

May 16      Exploring the Potential of the Local Nonprofit Sector  
                  Agency Visit: The Center for Nonprofit Management  
                  Pallotta Chapter 1

*Suggested Reflection Questions: Discuss the interpretive perspectives on social problems; consider conflicts in these perspectives. Explore the function of CNM in Dallas. How does Dallas differ from other communities in the way they address social problems?*

May 19      Urban Poverty & Hunger  
                  Agency Visit: The Stewpot (and/or Vogel Alcove)  
                  Mooney Chapter 6

*Suggested Reflection Questions (Human Diversity Discussion Requirement): What are the leading causes of urban poverty and hunger? How are Dallas nonprofits addressing these root causes?*

May 20 Homelessness  
Agency Visit: Central Dallas Ministries/City Walk at Akard  
Pallotta Chapter 2

*Suggested Reflection Questions: What surprised you most about Dallas's homeless population? Link homeless to other social issues addressed in this course.*

## **ANALYTIC REFLECTION PAPER DRAFT DUE**

May 21 Aging Population  
Agency Visit: C.C. Young Senior Care  
Mooney Chapter 12  
Pallotta Chapter 3

## **EXAM**

*Suggested Reflection Questions: Discuss the specific challenges facing the senior services sector. Describe Dallas's aging population and discuss its impact on the community.*

May 22 Domestic Violence  
Agency Visit: The Family Place  
Mooney Chapter 5  
Pallotta Chapter 4

*Suggested Reflection Questions (Human Diversity Discussion Requirement): Discuss the value of competition between nonprofits. Explore the problem of domestic violence and propose ways to address its root causes. Examine the roles of race and gender.*

May 23 Child Advocacy  
Agency Visit: Dallas Children's Advocacy Center  
Pallotta Chapter 5

*Suggested Reflection Questions: Discuss the benefits of the advocacy center model. Explore the impact that crimes against children can have on a community.*

May 27 At-Risk Youth & Educational Intervention  
Agency Visit: The Salesmanship Club  
Mooney Chapter 8  
Pallotta Chapter 6

*Suggested Reflection Questions (Human Diversity Discussion Requirement): Discuss The Salesmanship Club's model and impact on the community. How do at-risk youth present an issue for society at large? What role do nonprofit schools and education nonprofits play in mitigating social problems?*

May 28      Health Services & Support  
Agency Visit: Ronald McDonald House (and/or The Resource Center)  
Mooney Chapter 2  
Pallota Chapter 7

*Suggested Reflection Questions: Discuss the social problems associated with healthcare and policy. Examine the nonprofit sector's place in mitigating these social problems. Assess the impact of the agency visited.*

May 29      Unemployment & Job Training  
Agency Visit: Urban League of Greater Dallas  
Mooney Chapters 7 & 9

*Suggested Reflection Questions: Discuss your reactions to the Pallota text. Explore the Urban League's unique way of addressing social problems. Discuss the root causes of unemployment; specifically examine how Dallas's economy may contribute to these social issues.*

May 30      The Impact of the Nonprofit Sector  
Trends and Challenges of Meeting Community Needs

## **ANALYTIC REFLECTION PAPER PORTFOLIO DUE**

### **COURSE COMPONENTS**

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#### **Social Problems Presentation**

Beginning on Day Two, students will be responsible for finding one (1) academic article relating to the day's social problem to read and then present to the class. Students are responsible for both summarizing their chosen article and relating it to the day's topic. Article Presentations should be 7-10 minutes long.

#### **Analytic Reflection Papers**

Reflection papers provide students the opportunity to synthesize the information presented during lectures, presentations, guest speakers, agency visits, and in the course readings. Students will complete a reflection paper for each day of the course. This is not a journaling assignment. Students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the subjects presented while considering how the nonprofit sector is working to assess and address the relevant social issue. Each paper should be 500-1000 words. Mandatory paper drafts will be collected once during the term.

#### **Exam**

Students will be tested on their knowledge of the history, theories, and complexities of social problems, especially as they are being mitigated by nonprofit organizations. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions. The exam will take place in class on Day 5.