Price School of Policy, Planning, and Development  
University of Southern California  

PPDE 646: Grant Writing Practicum  
Spring 2015

**Time/Day:** weekly online discussions from Monday, January 12th – Friday, April 24th and four all-day, in-person classes on the Saturdays of January 17th, January 31st, February 28th, and March 28th at the locations indicated below.

**Locations:**
- Saturday, January 17th: TBD
- Saturday, January 31st: TBD
- Saturday, February 28th: TBD
- Saturday, March 28th: TBD

**Instructor:** Kimberly Tso  
**Office Hours:** By appointment only. Please request by email.  
**Contact info:** tsok@usc.edu

**Course Description**  
The purpose of this course is to teach students how to write strong grant proposals for nonprofit organizations to private foundations (not governments). High-quality grant writing includes well-researched prospects, practical programs with clear and measurable benefits to the community, well-articulated statements of need, and jargon-free writing. During the course, students will learn specific skills to strengthen these core elements of a written proposal, and then they will practice applying those skills to an organization arranged by the instructor. By the end of the class, students will write an analysis of prospective funding opportunities, one proposal, and a letter of inquiry.

Students should note that this class is a writing class; therefore, online and in-class exercises will include weekly writing activities and critique, and college-level command of written English conventions is expected.

Please also note that due to required changes in the format of all University intensive courses, this intensive is structured as four in-person classes supplemented by weekly online writing assignments based on brief video lectures or readings. Use of Blackboard is required.

**Learning Objectives**  
The overall objective of this course is to learn how to construct a high-quality grant proposal for a nonprofit organization to a private foundation. Many of the skills are applicable to government grants, but government grants will not be covered in the course.
Students will learn to:

- Assess organizations for their strengths and needs;
- Identify measurable program outcomes that can be used to as goals and evaluation measures for the grant;
- Research potential funding opportunities;
- Analyze and prioritize grant opportunities for highest compatibility and likelihood of success;
- Understand other aspects of successful grant writing such as researching funders, writing letters of intent, working successfully within the philanthropic culture, and how to communicate with funders; and,
- Improve the quality and clarity of their writing in ways that will help provide critical funds for their efforts.

**Prerequisites:** none  
**Co-requisite/Concurrent Enrollment:** none  
**Recommended Preparation:** none

**Course Notes:**
This two-credit intensive course will meet weekly through Blackboard and in-person four times during the semester. All course materials will be provided through Blackboard.

**Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required**
Students must be able to access Blackboard on a weekly basis.

**Required Readings and Supplementary Materials:**
All required reading or video links will be posted on Blackboard. No purchase of books is necessary.

**Description and Assessment of Assignments**
Thanks to a collaboration with USC Joint Educational Project’s service learning program, students will be introduced to three to four organizations that will serve as live case studies. Students will use these organizations as the basis for class discussion, and they will develop their proposal and other assignments based on one of these organizations. In exchange for their time and effort, the organizations will receive copies of the Funding Research memos, the final draft of the Grant Proposal, and Letters of Inquiry for their own use.

Throughout the course, students will be expected to participate in written assignments, both on Blackboard and in class. Only two of these assignments are assessed for grades, and they are described below. Scoring rubrics for grades will be provided to students at
the beginning of the class. Weekly written assignments completed on Blackboard will be graded for participation.

Funder Research Memo, due February 13th: For this assignment, students will write a three- to five-page memo to the instructor that describes the search for a funder for the selected organization. The memo should be written as a first-person, reflective narrative of the student’s thinking process as he/she researched funders and attempted to determine their theory of change and the organization’s “fit” with the theory of change. Students may draw on written materials from foundation search engines, general internet searches, the foundation’s website, conversations with colleagues regarding past experiences with the funder, and personal experiences and observations.

The memo should begin with a description of how the student began to search for potential funders. The main body should include a summary of at least three potential “good fit” funders, followed by the student’s rationale for how the organization can fit within the funder’s theory of change. By the end of the memo, the student should sum up how his/her ideas evolved during the process of research and reflection. Students will be rewarded for the quality of research, exploration, and thinking processes. In other words, the goal is not only to find potential funders for the organization, but also to report on the process of researching the funder and analyzing the prospects for a match.

Final Grant Proposal, due March 27th and April 24th (second date is optional): Students are required to submit an electronic copy of the grant proposal to the instructor and according to all of the instructions. The grant proposal will be assessed according the criteria laid out in the assignment instructions.

Throughout the course, students will be writing sections of the proposal, compiling these sections into a full proposal, and revising their final proposal. Opportunities to write drafts and receive feedback will be incorporated into the class frequently. On March 27th, students are to turn in their proposal for the professor to review and grade. Students will receive their proposal with comments and their preliminary grade by April 17th. If the student is satisfied with the grade received, the instructor will submit that grade as final. If the student is not satisfied with the grade received, he/she may revise the paper and resubmit by Friday, April 24th. The instructor will re-grade the proposal as if receiving it for the first time; this grade will be final.

Weekly Class Assignments: During the weeks when there is no in-person class, students are expected to participate in short, weekly online assignments and view online lessons. These assignments are sections of the full grant proposal and are intended to help spread out the writing task over several weeks by doing them in discrete chunks. New online assignments will be posted on the Saturday of that week (unless otherwise indicated), and students have until Thursday of the following week to respond substantively for credit.
Grading Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funder Research Memo</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Grant Proposal</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Online Written Assignments</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = 93+ points
A- = 90-92 points
B+ = 88-89 points
B = 83-87 points
B- = 80-82 points
C+ = 78-79 points
C = 73-77 points
C- = 72 points or fewer

Assignment Submission Policy
All assignments are to be submitted electronically to the instructor by email by 5 pm PST on the dates noted or unless otherwise indicated. *Late assignments are docked one point for every quarter of an hour (fifteen minutes) they are late.* Weekly Online Written Assignment points earned through Blackboard participation (10 instances) may be earned *only during the week they are current* (responses must be posted by 11:59 pm the Thursday after the Saturday that they are made available).

Course Schedule: A Breakdown by Class
Each session will include exercises that will give students opportunities to learn and practice their skills and to ask questions as challenges arise. The emphasis of the course is on hands-on, real-time learning, and all activities will produce information that is necessary for subsequent assignments. *Weekly attendance and active participation is critical.* Readings and order of topics are subject to change.

**Monday, January 12th**
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Introduction to Class and Rules for Writing Critique
Activities: Online discussion and video lecture
Reading: Websites of participating client organizations (TBA, links provided by instructor via Blackboard) and other materials provided by client organizations
Assignment Due: participation

**Saturday, January 17th**
Time: 9 am – 4 pm (with a one-hour lunch break at noon)
Format: in-person class
Topic: The Funders’ Perspective, Meet the Organizations
Activities: presentations by nonprofit organizations, lecture, and in-class exercises
Reading: links provided by instructor via Blackboard
Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, January 24th
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: History, Mission, and Accomplishments sections
Activities: online written assignment and critique
Reading: none
Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, January 31st
Time: 10 am – 4 pm (with a one-hour lunch break at noon)
Format: in-person class
Topic: Researching Funders, Theory of Change, Program Planning with Grant Proposals
Activities: evaluate funding opportunities in class, meet with organizations
Reading: links provided by instructor via Blackboard
  1. Demystifying the 990. Online tutorial by the Foundation Center.
Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, February 7
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Questions and Answers on Researching Funders
Activities: online discussion question
Reading: none
Assignment Due: participation

**Funder research memo due on Friday, February 13th, 5 pm PST**

Saturday, February 14
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Collecting Research for Needs Statements
Activities: online video lecture and discussion questions
Reading: links provided by instructor via Blackboard
Assignment Due: participation

**Saturday, February 21st**
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Collecting Data for Needs Statement
Activities: online written assignment
Reading: TBA, links provided by instructor via Blackboard
Assignment Due: participation

**Saturday, February 28th**
Time: 10 am – 4 pm (with a one-hour lunch break at noon)
Format: in-person class
Topic: Writing Needs Statements, Framing Data
Activities: Writing Clinics, last meetings with organizations
Reading: Writing examples (links provided by instructor via Blackboard)
Assignment Due: participation

**Saturday, March 9th**
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Sustainability Questions
Activities: online written assignment
Reading: links provided by instructor via Blackboard
Assignment Due: participation

**Saturday, March 14th**
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Editing Your Own Work
Activities: online written assignment
Reading:
Assignment Due: participation

**Proposal due on Friday, March 27th, 5 pm PST**

**Saturday, March 28th**
Time: 10 am – 3 pm (with a one-hour lunch break at noon)
Format: in-person class
Topic: Funders’ Perspectives; Funder Relationships; Grant Writing as a Career; Budgets; Writing Letters of Intent
Activities: guest speakers and lecture
Reading:
2. Horizontal Budgeting, Excel template, via Blackboard link

Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, April 11th
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Online Applications, Writing Summaries, and Writing Short
Activities: Online lecture, writing assignment, and critique
Reading: none
Assignment Due: participation

**Students will receive proposal comments by Friday, April 17th, 5 pm PST and may choose to submit optional re-writes by Friday, April 24th, 5 pm PST**

Saturday, April 18th
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Letters of Intent
Activities: Online writing assignment and critique
Reading: TBA, links provided by instructor via Blackboard
Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, April 21st
Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Reflections on Lessons Learned
Activities: Online discussion
Reading: none
Assignment Due: participation

**Revised proposals due to instructor by email on Friday, April 24th, 5 pm PST (optional)**

Statement for Students with Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of
verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am-5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:
http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, (www.use.edu/scampus or http://scampus.usc.edu) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.
Information on intellectual property at USC is available at:

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis
In the case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Please activate your course in Blackboard with access to the course syllabus. Whether or not you use Blackboard regularly, these preparations will be crucial in an emergency. USC’s Blackboard learning management system and support information is available at blackboard.usc.edu.