

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

**PPDE 646: Grant Writing Practicum
Fall 2015**

Time/Day: weekly online discussions from Monday, August 24th – Friday, December 4th and four all-day, in-person classes on the Saturdays of August 29th, September 26th, October 10th, and November 21st at the locations indicated below.

Locations:

- Saturday, August 29th: 9am-4pm, location TBD
- Saturday, September 26th: 10am-4pm, location TBD
- Saturday, October 10th: 10am-3pm, location TBD
- Saturday, November 21st: 10am-3pm, location 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 requires 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. College-level command of written English conventions is expected.

Please also note that 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 two or three 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 Monday, October 5th: 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 October 30th and December 4th (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 October 30th, 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 Tuesday, November 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, December 4th. 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

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Funder Research Memo	30	30%
Final Grant Proposal	50	50%
Weekly Online Written Assignments	20	20%

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 11:59 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, August 24th

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, August 29th

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, September 5th

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

Saturday, September 12th

Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Writing Needs Statements
Activities: online video lecture and discussion questions
Reading: links provided by instructor via Blackboard
Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, September 19th

Time: 1 hour
Format: online
Topic: Collecting Research for Needs Statements (continued)
Activities: online written assignment
Reading: TBA, links provided by instructor via Blackboard
Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, September 26th

Time: 10 am – 4 pm (with a one-hour lunch break at noon)
Format: in-person class
Topic: Funding Landscape, 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.
2. Lynn, Elizabeth and Wisely, Susan. (2006) "Four Traditions of Philanthropy." *The Civically Engaged Reader*, ed. Davis, A and Lynn, E, Great Books Foundation.

Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, October 3rd

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 Monday, October 5th by 11:59 pm PST****

Saturday, October 10th

Time: 10 am – 4 pm (with a one-hour lunch break at noon)

Format: in-person class

Topic: Writing Objectives, Program Descriptions, and Outcomes; Framing Data

Activities: Writing Clinics, last meetings with organizations

Reading: Writing examples (links provided by instructor via Blackboard)

Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, October 17th

Time: 1 hour

Format: online

Topic: Sustainability Questions

Activities: online written assignment

Reading: links provided by instructor via Blackboard

Assignment Due: participation

Saturday, October 24th

Time: 1 hour

Format: online

Topic: Editing Your Own Work

Activities: online written assignment

Reading:

1. Cook, Claire K., (1985). *Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing*. Modern Language Association of America. Chapter 1.
2. Proscio, Tony K., (2005). *When Words Fail: How the Public Interest Becomes Neither Public Nor Interesting*. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

Assignment Due: participation

****Proposal due on Friday, October 30 by 11:59 pm PST****

Saturday, October 31st

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

Saturday, November 7th

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, November 14th

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:

1. Wells, Michael. "Using the Budget to Tell Your Story." (July 21, 2004) CharityChannel.com.
2. Horizontal Budgeting, Excel template, via Blackboard link
3. Gregory, Ann and Howard, Don. (Fall 2009) "The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. SSIRReview.org.

Assignment Due: participation

****Students will receive proposal comments by Tuesday, November 17th, 5 pm PST and may choose to submit optional re-writes by Friday, December 4th by 11:59 pm PST****

Saturday, November 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, December 4th by 11:59 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.usc.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:

<http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html>.

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.