



MDA 300X – FALL 2020 DORNSIFE TOOLKIT

“DOING GOOD: HOW TO START AND RUN A SUCCESSFUL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION”

Instructor: Kambiz “Kamy” Akhavan

Office: SOS B15

Office Hours: Fridays 9am – 10am

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Course Description

This course will lead students through the complex process of setting up a nonprofit for long-term success. We will learn about the pros and cons of various nonprofit structures, how to create legally required bylaws, dealing with the IRS and state regulatory agencies, hiring, building your board, marketing, partnerships, measuring impact, and of course fundraising - from events to grants to program-based revenue. The course will be highly interactive (debates, storytelling, discussion), practical, and even fun. It will also feature prominent nonprofit leaders as guests.

Instructor Bio

Kambiz "Kamy" Akhavan serves as Executive Director of the USC Center for the Political Future whose mission is to inspire and train future generations of civic leaders in practical politics and civil discourse. Prior to that role, Kamy was CEO of ProCon.org, the nation's leading source of nonpartisan research on controversial topics.

Kamy has decades of experience in creating and delivering educational content on important issues to more than 300 million people, including students at more than 12,000 schools in all 50 states and 100 countries. He has been published and interviewed in textbooks, magazines, television, radio, newspapers, and websites including Reuters, Associated Press, Fox News, ABC, Washington Post, NPR, CNN, and CBS.

Kamy is an accomplished veteran in management, leadership, research, politics, marketing,

media affairs, web development, SEO, and startups. He is a professional speaker on bridging divides, unconscious bias, civic engagement, current events, and how to depolarize workplaces, communities, and the nation.

He serves on multiple nonprofit boards, including The Psychology of Technology Institute, Mikva Challenge, National Conversation Project, and Critica Science. He is involved in businesses with double bottom lines - do well and do good – including Common Ally, Gell.com, and several startups. He is a mentor in UCLA’s Alumni Mentor program.

Kamy was born in Iran, grew up in southern Louisiana, and has lived in California for over 25 years. He holds a BA and MA in History from UCLA.

Learning Objectives

This course meets the following learning objectives for the Department of Political Science:

- The development of critical thinking and a refined set of skills in analytical thinking, problem-solving, and persuasiveness
- Competence and knowledge to speak about social issues in small groups and in larger venues
- Familiarity with advocacy work including organizing, fundraising, marketing, and impact measurement

Description and Assessment of Assignments

To receive credit (CR) for the Credit/No Credit undergraduate course, students must earn the equivalent of a C- (70%) or higher.

Grading Policy

- 30% participation (being present, engaging with fellow students, interacting with instructor and guests, completing readings, completing assignments, etc.)
- 10% one pager
- 10% elevator pitch
- 10% fundraising strategy
- 10% grant proposal
- 10% 10-20 slide pitch deck
- 20% final paper – final polished version of the NGO elements

Communication Policy

Office hours are Fridays from 9:00am – 10:00am or by appointment. Emailed questions or concerns will normally receive a response within 48 hours.

Topics and Assignments

Lesson One: WHY YOU SHOULD START A NONPROFIT (August 19)

Before Class:

No pre-class assignment

Overview:

The class begins with a discussion of the social and economic benefits of the nonprofit industry in general. The status of charity in America, the range of programs within the nonprofit sector, and the challenges facing the industry will be discussed. In class, students will write no more than one page about why they are considering starting a nonprofit organization. The explanation should identify one or more nonprofit organizations, leaders, or programs they admire and why. It can also focus on a problem that is underserved and how their ideal nonprofit organization would address that problem. Students should be prepared to share their stories with the class in 2 minutes or fewer.

Guest Lecturer: Deb Richard, former LPGA golfer, nonprofit executive coach, and author of “Trust: Understanding My Why”

Lesson Two: WHY YOU SHOULD NOT START A NONPROFIT (August 26)

Before Class:

The students will read:

“Alternatives to Starting a Charitable Nonprofit” by Joanne Fritz

<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/alternatives-to-starting-nonprofit-2502285>

“The Benefits and Disadvantages of Forming a Nonprofit Company” by Heather Huston

<https://www.bizfilings.com/toolkit/research-topics/incorporating-your-business/the-benefits-of-forming-a-nonprofit-company>

“What Are the Advantages/Disadvantages of Becoming a Nonprofit Organization?” by Grantspace

<https://grantspace.org/resources/knowledge-base/pros-and-cons/>

“Don’t Do It: Don’t Start a Nonprofit” by Dahna Goldstein

<https://blog.boardsource.org/blog/dont-start-a-nonprofit>

And students will watch:

“The Case for Letting Business Solve Social Problems” by Michael Porter (VIDEO)
https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_porter_the_case_for_letting_business_solve_social_problems

“Why We Shouldn’t Trust Markets to Our Civic Life” by Michael Sandel (VIDEO)
https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_sandel_why_we_shouldn_t_trust_markets_with_our_civic_life

and prepare to debate both sides of the issue: is it better to start a nonprofit or a for-profit to achieve the social good you seek?

Overview:

This class will discuss social benefit corporations (B corps), private philanthropy, government work, and the unique solitary role of inspirer/fundraiser/executor in nonprofit leadership. Students will debate the merits of starting a 501c3 nonprofit vs. a different type of nonprofit vs. starting a social benefit for-profit vs. making lots of money and donating it without starting any new organization.

Guest Lecturer: Loren Bendele, CEO, Gell.com; Founder, Savings.com
Aaron Lyles, Founder/CEO Common Ally

Lesson Three: MECHANICS OF A STARTUP (September 2)

Before Class:

Visit Charity Navigator and read the profiles of all the Top 10 Most Frequently Viewed Nonprofits <https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=topten.detail&listid=15>.

Read the Charity Navigator methodology

<https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=5593>

Overview:

Students will learn IRS requirements for forming a 501c3 nonprofit public charity. Students will learn how to search for available business names, URLs, and related organizations. Students will know the timelines, required forms (including bylaws, Form 990, audited financials), and initial investment needed to start a nonprofit, plus how to make and implement early staffing decisions.

Guest Lecturer: Marley Duchovney, Co-Founder Project Divided

Lesson Four: RESARCH – COMPETITION, PARTNERS, & MARKETS (September 9)

Before Class:

Students will create free online accounts at guidestar.org and download the latest 990 form for the University of Southern California and two nonprofits related to one they would like to start.

Students will also start reading *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell (301 pages) at their own pace over the next four weeks so they will be done and complete the related assignment on September 30.

Overview:

This class will examine the 990 forms required of all nonprofits to understand financial health, reporting regimens, and how to identify revenue sources. This class also examines how partnerships work among nonprofit organizations.

Guest Lecture: Tony Pennay, Chief Learning Officer, Ronald Reagan Library and Museum
Leslie Graves, Publisher, Ballotpedia

Lesson Five: BUILDING THE BOARD (September 16)

Before class:

The students will read http://facilitationprocess.com/documents/10_Step_Board_checklist.pdf, and, using page 7 as their worksheet, write down 12 board members (6 they personally know and 6 they WISH they could recruit) for their nonprofit. In addition to the criteria on the checklist, they should consider race, ethnicity, gender, political ideology, geography, age, career background, and fame.

Continue reading *The Tipping Point*.

Overview:

What makes a great board? How do you solicit them? How do they get oriented? How much do they work with you vs. for you? How to establish term limits and replacement procedures? What if a board member is terrible? Do you really need a board? What about an advisory board?

Guest Lecture: Negin Singh, Executive Director at Santa Monica Pier Corporation
Pete Petersen, Dean at Pepperdine University School of Public Policy

Lesson Six: STORYTELLING (September 23)

Before class:

The students will write a one-pager describing their organization with a heavy focus on the obstacle their organization removes (the villain) from the needed solution (their nonprofit's programs). Use storytelling tactics. Emotional appeal (the problem, the need). Logical/reason appeal (how you are making a measurable difference). And higher authority appeal (who's on the team; who thinks you're great). The one-pager will be re-written numerous times throughout the class so make sure your concepts and placeholders are included even if your language or support needs refining.

Continue reading *The Tipping Point*.

Overview:

The class will review how to attract support for their cause through storytelling and marketing. The class will learn storytelling techniques from nonprofit websites and videos.

Guest Lecturer:

Jeanne Ringe, Former CNN reporter, Producer of Face the Nation, and start up funding guru
Mark Anthony Thomas, President at Pittsburgh Regional Alliance

Lesson Seven: SOCIAL & ONLINE MARKETING (September 30)

Before class:

Students will have read *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell. They will write a one-page summary of *The Tipping Point* and indicate what type of leader they are (of the four types) and why.

Overview:

Students will learn about marketing via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and potentially other channels for their specific nonprofits. Students will also learn about website marketing – tips for construction, coding, design, interactivity, etc. that are geared to elicit top search engine rankings. Students will also learn about online advertising.

Guest Lecturer:

Natalie Samarjian, Executive Director, CORO Southern California
Tom Hall, ghost Twitter writer for major corporate executives

Lesson Eight: MAKING THE PITCH FOR FUNDING (October 7)

Before Class:

Students will watch at least six videos from the 2019 Fast Pitch competitions (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXtnJmKnGMVoiM75PVWjSGtZm3as-1hv0>) and work on making their own 3 minute (or less) verbal pitch for funding support for their nonprofit. Students will come to class with an outline of their presentation. OK to borrow language and structure from your one pager.

Overview:

The class will learn about first impressions, pitching, reading the audience, follow ups, and pre-pitch research.

Guest Lecturer: Elliott Schwarz, Fast Pitch Board Member, Business Consultant
Jenny Krusoe, Founding Executive Director, AltaSea at Port of Los Angeles

Lesson Nine: FUNDRAISING STRATEGY (October 14)

Before Class:

Students will read four articles:

“Ten Nonprofit Funding Models” by Foster, Kim, and Christiansen
https://ssir.org/articles/entry/ten_nonprofit_funding_models

“Top Nine Nonprofit Funding Sources for Any Organization” by GoFundMe
<https://charity.gofundme.com/c/blog/nonprofit-funding-sources>

“How Nonprofits Generate Revenue Streams” by Joanne Fritz
<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/where-do-nonprofits-get-their-revenue-2502011>

“Is Diversification of Revenue Good for Nonprofit Financial Health?”
<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/is-diversification-of-revenue-good-for-nonprofit-financial-health/>

Students will use what they learn as the basis for creating their own 1-2 page document on how they plan to raise money for their own nonprofit. Identify each type of revenue source you learn about and explain why and how you plan to pursue it or why you won’t pursue it.

Overview:

Students will learn about program revenue, foundation support, crowd sourcing, high net worth donors, online donations, sponsorships, and other forms of making money for their nonprofits.

Guest Lecturer: Julie Lacouture, Nonprofit Fundraising Consultant
Taylor McPartland, CEO of ScaleLA, Chairman of ScaleLA Foundation

Lesson Ten: MEASURING IMPACT (October 21)

Before Class:

Students will examine the websites of five nonprofits related to the one they wish to create and share in one page which metrics those organizations use to brag about their impact.

Using those examples, students will create 10-20 simple slides showing their organization's mission, origin story, profile of you, board members, fundraising strategy, and more. Students should use storytelling techniques... and be brief!

Overview:

Students will learn about how to measure the efficacy of their programs using social media metrics, online traffic, survey data, third party assessments, testimonials, and other methods.

Guest Lecturer: Kristin Hansen, Founder, Civic Health Project, Stanford Business School Professor

Lesson Eleven: WRITING A GRANT (October 28)

Before Class:

Students will create a free account at Foundation Center and use it to identify five foundations to whom they would like to submit an application for funding. Students will then read the latest 990 form and website for each of those foundations.

Students will also read:

"Top 5 Tips for Successful Grant Proposals" by Herbert and Neubauer

<https://grantspace.org/resources/blog/top-5-tips-for-successful-grant-proposals/>

"Writing a Successful Grant Proposal" by Davis

<https://mcf.org/sites/default/files/files/pages/writingagrantproposal.pdf>

Overview:

Students will learn about foundation research – which ones to solicit? How much to ask? LOIs vs. grant requests vs. no solicitation. Students will learn about grant writing techniques.

Guest Lecturer: John Kobara (COO) & Antonia Hernandez (CEO) California Community Foundation

Shawn Escoffery, Executive Director, Roy & Patricia Disney Family Foundation

No class on Nov. 4. Office hours still available on Friday and by appointment.

Lesson Twelve: TYING IT ALL TOGETHER (Nov. 11)

Before Class:

Students will update their elevator pitches with pointers accumulated to date.

Students will watch:

“Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are” by Amy Cuddy

https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are?language=en

Overview:

Students will present their elevator pitches in class to a panel of judges, including their fellow students. 3 minutes max. per presentation. 5 minutes max. for constructive feedback.

Guest Lecturer: Laura Lauder, Founder, Jewish Teen Funders Network; philanthropist
Elmer Roldan, Executive Director, Communities in Schools Los Angeles (former LAUSD Civic Engagement executive)

FINAL (due by November 18 at midnight)

Students will present their final versions of the one pager (PDF format; 1 page), elevator pitch (recorded video; 3 minutes max), grant proposal (PDF; 5-15 pages), fundraising strategy (PDF; 1-2 pages), and pitch deck (Google Slides; 10-20 slides)