# MDA 300X – SPRING 2023
# DORNSIFE TOOLKIT

## <mark>"DOING GOOD: HOW TO START AND RUN A SUCCESSFUL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION"</mark>

**Instructor:** Kambiz "Kamy" Akhavan
**Class:** Wednesdays 10:00am – 11:50am (Waite Phillips Hall – WPH 107)
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 9am – 10am (SOS B15) or by appointment; Zoom OK too
https://usc.zoom.us/j/5822757940
**Contact info:** kakhavan@usc.edu

## Course Description

This course will lead students through the 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 many 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, National Conversation Project, Critica, Team Awareness Combatting Overdose (TACO), and The Society Library. He is involved in businesses with double bottom lines - do well and do good – including Common Ally, Gell.com, PERKS, 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 large 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 and assignments, attending 1+ office hours)
- 10% one pager (1)
- 10% elevator pitch (2)
- 10% fundraising strategy plan (3)
- 10% grant proposal –OR- The Tipping Point self-analysis (4)
- 10% 10-20 slide pitch deck (5)
- 20% final paper – final polished versions of the five previously submitted assignments

If you miss a class then you can make up missing participation points by completing one of the optional readings and writing a paragraph about it OR attending an additional office hours.

## Communication Policy
Office hours are Tuesdays from 9:00am – 10:00am in SOS B15 or by appointment for in-person, phone, or Zoom. Emailed questions or concerns normally get a response within 48 hours.

# Topics and Assignments

## Lesson 1: WHY YOU SHOULD START A NONPROFIT (January 11)

Before Class:  No assignment before week one

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.

*Optional Reading: "Trust: Understanding My Why" by Deb Richard (book); "Start with Why" by Simon Sinek (book); "Why Simon Sinek Is Fundamentally Wrong" by Dominic Monkhouse (article); "The Nonprofit Sector in Brief" by Natl. Center for Charitable Statistics (article)*

## Lesson 2: WHY YOU SHOULD NOT START A NONPROFIT (January 18)

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.

# Lesson 3: MECHANICS OF A STARTUP (January 25)

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.

*Optional Reading: "Start a 501c3 Nonprofit That Doesn't Ruin Your Life" by Audrey Chisholm (book); "How to Start, Run, and Grow a Successful Nonprofit Organization" by Aaron Sanders (book); "How to Start a California Nonprofit" by California Association of Nonprofits (article)*

## Lesson 4: RESARCH – COMPETITION, PARTNERS, & MARKETS (February 1)

Before Class:
Students will create free online accounts at candid.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 read Chapter One of *Nonprofit Hero: Five Easy Steps to Successful Board Fundraising* by Valerie Jones. *Optional: Do 2 activities in Chapter One: giving dos and don'ts and personal mission statement.*

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.

## Lesson 5: BUILDING THE BOARD (February 8)

Before Class:
Students will also read Chapter Two of *Nonprofit Hero: Five Easy Steps to Successful Board Fundraising* by Valerie Jones.

Then students will download a copy of
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14_sDb8PAvvCkG_UINTNaR5ldZN53cTzwV0yJF8Pscl0/edit#gid=0 to use as their worksheet. Write down 12 board members (6 they personally know and 6 they WISH they could recruit) for their nonprofit. Mark all criteria appropriately (race, gender, political ideology, geography, age, etc.).

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?

## Lesson 6: STORYTELLING (February 15)

Before Class:
Read two articles about ethos, pathos, and logo
https://natureofwriting.com/courses/introduction-to-rhetoric/lessons/ethos-pathos-and-logos/

https://boords.com/ethos-pathos-logos

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; focus on one person or specific community). Logical/reason appeal (how you are making a measurable difference; stats on the problem). And higher authority appeal (who's on the team; testimonials; partners; awards; name drop here). 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.

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.

*Optional Reading: "Start Me Up: Tips, Tales, and Truths about Starting Up and Starting Over" by Jeannie Edmunds (book); "Storytelling: The Secret Sauce of Fundraising Success" by Lynn Malzone Ierardi (book)*

## Lesson 7: SPECIAL SESSION WITH GUEST TBD (February 22)

Before Class:
The students will visit https://www.16personalities.com/, take the personality quiz, and record their personality type – Analyst, Diplomat, Sentinel, Explorer – and which traits are most dominant – empathy (E), intuition (I), observation (O), judgment (J), etc. in your personality type. Read the part of chapter three "Do It Your Way" in *Nonprofit Hero* about your specific personality type (OK to ignore the others) and write a few sentences about how you think this Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test influences how you think about YOUR nonprofit.

## Lesson 8: MAKING THE PITCH FOR FUNDING (March 1)

Before Class:
Students will watch at least six videos from the 2020 Fast Pitch competitions (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNaK3IGQyZI) and work on making their own 2-3 minute verbal pitch for funding support for their nonprofit. Students will come to class prepared to discuss the pros and cons of the pitches they saw. Students will also come to class with a written draft of their pitch. OK to borrow language and structure from your one pager.

The class will learn about first impressions, pitching, reading the audience, follow ups, and pre-pitch research. Students will read or make their pitch to the class.

## Lesson 9: FUNDRAISING STRATEGY (March 5)

Before Class:
Students will read two 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

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 which strategies you plan to use and how much money you think each strategy will deliver over what period of time. Then compare those revenues against your expected expenses. Explain why you are pursuing those specific revenue sources, timelines, and amounts.

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.

*Optional reading: "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/*

## SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS MARCH 15

## Lesson 10: MEASURING IMPACT (March 22)

Before Class:
Students will examine the websites of five nonprofits related to the one they wish to create and pay close attention to 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!

Need help with your pitch deck? You can use this website for a solid template https://www.basetemplates.com/blog/10-pitch-deck-slides-for-successful-fundraising-in-2022 And this website for a good and real example: https://latinocf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/LCF-Accelerator-Pitch-Deck.pdf

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.

# Lesson 11: SOCIAL & ONLINE MARKETING (March 29)

Before Class:
Students will read two short articles:
"13 Ways to Level Up Your Nonprofit's Social Media Engagement Tactics"
https://www.classy.org/blog/nonprofit-social-media-engagement-tactics/

"10 Website Design Best Practices for Nonprofits"
https://www.nptechforgood.com/101-best-practices/10-website-design-best-practices-for-nonprofits

Overview:
Students will learn how to focus websites and social media to attract their most desired audiences and compel them to take the most desired actions for their nonprofit. 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.

# Lesson 12: WRITING A GRANT (April 5)

Before Class:
Students will research three 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.

## Lesson 13: SPEED CONSULTING ON ONE PAGERS, REVENUE PLANS, and PITCH DECKS (April 12)

Before Class:
Students will continue to develop their one pagers, revenue plans, and pitch decks. They will come to class with a laptop or print outs to display these key documents. USC Advancement staff and former Doing Good students will be invited to give feedback, too.

Overview: Students will give each other feedback on the one pagers, revenue plans, and pitch decks. Be critical and constructive. The idea is to beat up these documents in a friendly setting so they are in great shape for far more skeptical audiences.

## Lesson 14: SPEED CONSULTING ON PITCHES (April 19)

Before Class:
Students will watch two videos to better understand the importance of fundraising and networking in nonprofit work.

"3 ways to be a more effective fundraiser"
https://www.ted.com/talks/kara_logan_berlin_3_ways_to_be_a_more_effective_fundraiser/transcript

"What it takes to be a great leader"
https://www.ted.com/talks/roselinde_torres_what_it_takes_to_be_a_great_leader/transcript

Overview:
Students will present their nonprofit business ideas in fast pitch breakout rooms with nonprofit professionals, including some recent USC graduates. Make your pitch and solicit advice on any element of your business that are struggling with. The idea is that you'll gain perspectives and information to help improve your written documents for the final AND make some meaningful connections with people who can help your nonprofit grow. USC Advancement staff and former Doing Good students will be invited to give feedback as well.

# Lesson Fifteen: TYING IT ALL TOGETHER – FINAL PITCHES (April 26)

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. No background visuals or pitch decks. You can use a prop or handout if desired.

**FINAL (due by Monday May 8 at NOON)**
Students will present their final versions of the:

- one pager (PDF format; 1 page)
- elevator pitch (recorded video; 3 minutes max; ONLY if pitch not already made on April 19),
- grant proposal (PDF; 5-15 pages) OR 1+ paragraph(s) on which *Tipping Point* type you are and why
- fundraising strategy (PDF; 1-2 pages), and
- pitch deck (Google Slides; 10-20 slides)

*PAST GUEST LECTURERS AND JUDGES HAVE INCLUDED:*
*EV Boyle, VP Fast Pitch Board, Business Consultant, Annenberg Professor*
*Howard Brodwin, Founder/Managing Director, Common Ally*
*Dallas Dishman, President of the David Geffen Foundation*
*David Eisner, President and CEO, Convergence Center for Policy Resolution*
*Shawn Escoffery, Executive Director, Roy & Patricia Disney Family Foundation*
*Ashley Fumiko Dominguez, Head of Federal Relations at UCLA*
*Jenni Hargrove, "Nonprofit Jenni," Host of the Nonprofit Jenni podcast*
*Mir Harris, Director of Partnerships at Kamp Grizzly, ED at The Anderson .Paak Foundation*
*Jamie Joyce, Founder of The Society Library; Co-Founder, LeafLets Kits*
*John Kobara, former COO of the California Community Foundation*
*Aaron Lyles, Founder/CEO, Common Ally*
*Kevin Parikh, Founder/CEO, Avasant Foundation*
*Deb Richard, LPGA golfer and executive coach*