

PPD 478: Social Innovation

Spring 2025

Mondays/Wednesdays, 12:00-13:50

Location: RGL 209

Professor Elizabeth Graddy

graddy@usc.edu

RGL 212

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course presents an overview of social innovation and how it can be used to address complex social problems and promote social change. We will examine social innovation strategies and processes within government and the nonprofit and business sectors of society. Careful attention is given to public-private collaboration, social entrepreneurship, and new financial models for addressing public problems. Case studies and guest speakers examine examples of social innovation across organizational forms and policy areas.

Learning Objectives

This course aims for students to:

1. Understand social innovation and its theoretical foundations
2. Improve their critical thinking and presentation skills
3. Design a social innovation process to address a social problem

Required Readings

Textbook: Keohane, Georgia Levenson. (2013). *Social Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century: Innovation across the nonprofit, private, and public sectors*. McGraw Hill Professional; available in the student store and online.

Cases: You will need to purchase several cases that will be discussed in class. You can do so directly from the linked citation in the syllabus.

Articles: Additional required readings are denoted by citation on the weekly schedule and are available through the USC Libraries System or online.

Assignments

There will be 5 sets of assignments in the course.

1. *Class Participation* (10% final grade). Student engagement and participation are essential components of class meetings. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the session readings and lectures with thoughtful commentary and questions. It is also expected that discussions will be respectful of all participants and their diverse

views. Grades will reflect the *quality* of student participation in class discussion, and attentive engagement during peer presentations and guest speakers.

To encourage engagement and discourse, cell phones cannot be accessed during class time. Laptops may only be used for note taking.

2. *Social Innovation Memo* (15% of final grade). Students will individually identify a **real** social innovation and write a memo analyzing it. The memo must identify the social problem and its stakeholders, discuss the policy context, identify the innovative process or product, discuss the status of scale and diffusion, and put forth an assessment of its effectiveness. Assignment details are provided in Brightspace.
3. *Team Case Leadership* (10% of final grade). Cases will provide a forum for us to apply the concepts we are learning in a specific context. There will be **eight** structured case discussion sessions during the semester. These cases are *substantial*, and we will devote considerable time to using them to apply and build on what we are learning.

Student teams will structure and lead these discussions, posing questions to the class and encouraging class engagement. Each team will need to plan exercises and develop discussion questions to achieve the learning objectives. Assigned students will have the **entire session** to engage the class in an exploration of the case. Grades will be determined by the effectiveness of the case discussion and your individual contribution to its success, based on instructor and peer evaluations.

All other members of the class will carefully **read the case in advance** and come prepared to engage with the team. Their contributions to the exercises and discussion will be reflected in their class participation grades.

4. *Group Project* (45% of final grade). The class will be divided into small groups. Each group will identify a social problem amenable to social innovation and recommend a social innovation solution. The project has several components including a proposal, written outline, and group presentation.

The project must include:

- a. A description and evidence of the social problem that is being addressed and previous attempts at solutions
- b. The recommended social innovation process and how it will be engaged
- c. A set of metrics and criteria for evaluation
- d. A funding plan
- e. Rationale for why a social innovation process is preferred to a more traditional process of social change

Approximate Timeline:

Week 3 -- Groups will be formed

Week 5 – Group project proposal, work plan & class presentation (7% of final grade)

Week 9 – Annotated bibliography due to the instructor (3% of final grade)

Week 12 – Written Outline Due (10% of course grade)

Week 14 & 15 – Final Presentations and slide deck (25% of final grade)

Details for preparing the Group Project are provided on Brightspace.

Final Presentation grades will be based on my assessment of the slide deck, peer assessments from group members about your individual contributions to the project, and class feedback on the value and feasibility of your proposed process. Grades may not be the same for all group members.

5. *Comprehensive Final Exam* (20% of final grade).

TO SUMMARIZE, the course grade is based on the above requirements as follows:

Class Participation	10%
Social Innovation Memo	15%
Team Case Leadership	10%
Group Project	45%
Examination	20%

Attendance and Speaker Session Expectations

- Attendance is *required* for scheduled guest speakers, case discussions, and student presentation sessions. If you are unable to attend due to illness or religious observation, notify the instructor in advance and as early as possible.
- Be on time – punctuality is a sign of respect.
- Maintain a respectful demeanor throughout, giving polite attention to peers and to guest speakers.
- Read any required materials in advance and have a question prepared
- Engage the guest speaker in conversation – *they are here because of you*

Failure to meet these expectations will negatively impact your discussion grade.

Attendance is *not* required for other class sessions, but students are expected to attend regularly. Class discussions are an important component of the course and the opportunity

to participate cannot be made up if one is absent. The quality of your contributions to class discussions is the major determinant of your Class Participation grade.

Peer Assessments

Peer assessments will form an important component of one's grade in all group exercises. Students will assess the contributions of other members of their group, and all non-participating students will assess the contributions of each presenting group member. **You may not assign the same grade to two or more group members.** All peer assessments are due on the day of the presentation (email the instructor).

Detailed Course Schedule

The following schedule provides the topics, readings, and assignments for each class session. Readings are required unless otherwise noted. All required reading should be completed before class. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class and on Brightspace.

Part I: Social Problems, Innovation, and Social Change

Week 1

Monday, January 13

Course Overview & Class Introductions

- Readings: Syllabus
- Ask for volunteers for the Case 1 team

Wednesday, January 15

Introducing Innovation & Social Change

Readings:

- Pisano, G. P. (2015). You need an innovation strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 93(6), 44-54.
- Brest, P. (2010). The Power of Theories of Change. *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 8:2, 47-51.
- Brown, M. (2020). Unpacking the Theory of Change. *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 18, 44-50.
- Christensen, C., H. Baumann, R. Ruggles & EM Sadtler (2006). Disruptive innovation for social change. *Harvard Business Review* 84:12, 94-101.

Week 2

Monday, January 20 -- **NO CLASS** (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

Wednesday, January 22

Public Goods & Institutions

Readings:

- Ostrom, E. (2009). Beyond Markets and States: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems. Nobel Prize Lecture.
 - <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2009/ostrom/lecture/>
 - <https://www.nobelprize.org/uploads/2018/06/ostrom-lecture-slides.pdf>
- Agrawal, A., & Hockerts, K. (2013). Institutional theory as a framework for practitioners of social entrepreneurship. In T. Osburg & R. Schmidpeter (ed.), *Social Innovation* (pp. 119-129). Springer.

⇒ *Case Teams Formed*

Part 2: Social Innovation Theory & Process

Week 3

Monday, January 27

Conceptual Framing of Social Innovation

Readings:

- Keohane: Introduction & Chapter 1

- Phills, J. A., Deiglmeier, K., & Miller, D. T. (2008). Rediscovering Social Innovation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 6(4), 34-43.
- Pol, E., & Ville, S. (2009). Social Innovation: Buzz word or enduring term? *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 38(6), 878-885.
- Mulgan, G. (2006). The Process of Social Innovation. *Innovations*, 1(2), 145-162.

Wednesday, January 29

CASE 1 –Innovation Practices

Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Case HKS 2056: “Innovating by the Book: The Introduction of Innovation Teams in Memphis and New Orleans”

<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/innovating-by-the-book-the-introduction-of-innovation-teams-in-memphis-and-new-orleans/>

Learning Objectives:

Can an innovation model be used to solve seemingly intractable problems consistently, reliably and effectively? Students should consider the challenge of creating sustainable capacity for problem-centric innovation.

⇒ *Project Groups Formed*

Part 3: Forms and Sectors

Week 4

Monday, February 3

Social Entrepreneurship

Readings:

- Keohane: Chapter 2
- Martin, R. L., & Osberg, S. (2007). Social entrepreneurship: The case for definition. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 5(2), 28-39.
- Dacin, P. A., Dacin, M. T., & Matear, M. (2010). Social entrepreneurship: Why we don't need a new theory and how we move forward from here. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24(3), 37-57.
- Dees, J. G. (1998). Enterprising Nonprofits. *Harvard Business Review*, 76, 54-69.

⇒ *Group Meetings – Problem Definitions & Work Plans*

Wednesday, February 5

CASE 2– Social Entrepreneurship

Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Case 1803. “Upwardly Global: Building a Model for Assisting Immigrant Professionals”

<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/upwardly-global-building-a-model-for-assisting-immigrant-professionals/>

Learning Objectives:

The case is designed to be used to explore the "invention" phase of social entrepreneurship, allowing for discussion of the variety of organizational types and strategies that an entrepreneur might consider (e.g., advocacy versus service provision) and even such basic issues as how one can be certain that an idea is worth pursuing.

Week 5

Monday, February 10

Project Problem Definitions & Work plans DUE

- ⇒ Brief Classroom Presentations (project teams present their proposals to the class and receive feedback)

Wednesday, February 12

Collaboration, and Public-Private Partnerships

Readings:

- Kania, J. and Kramer, M. (2011) Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011.
- Crosby, BC, P.'t Hart & J. Torfing (2016). Public Value Creation through Collaborative Innovation. *Public Management Review* 19:5, 1-15.
- Davis, S. & Gibbons, E. (2017). A Portfolio Approach to Social Innovation Partnerships. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, September 13th
- Quelin, BV, I. Kivleniece & S. Lazzarini (2017). Public-Private Collaboration, Hybridity and Social Value: Towards New Theoretical Perspectives. *Journal of Management Studies*, 54:6.
- Williams, N. & J.M. Ferris (2019). Scaling Up: How Philanthropy Helped Unlock \$4.7 Billion to Tackle Homelessness in Los Angeles County. *USC Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy*. (case study) Available at cppp.usc.edu.

Week 6

Monday, February 17 – **NO CLASS** (President's Day)

Wednesday, February 19

CASE 3 – Cross-Sector Partnerships

Case Centre #W91C85. "Building and Scaling a Cross-Sector Partnership: Oxfam and Swiss Re Empower Farmers in Ethiopia"

<https://www.thecasecentre.org/products/view?id=143349>

Learning objectives:

Evaluate the challenges inherent in cross-sector partnerships: Identify the unique benefits and risks for each sector involved in a cross-sector partnership; Evaluate the challenges and opportunities associated with scaling a partnership's initial pilot.

Week 7

Monday, February 24

Hybrids and Social Enterprises

Readings:

- Keohane: Chapters 8 & 18
- Lawrence, J. (2009). Making the B List. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Summer.
- Battilana, J., Lee, M., Walker, J., & Dorsey, C. (2012). In Search of the Hybrid Ideal. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Summer.
- Smith, WK & ML Besharov (2019). Bowing Before Dual Gods: How Structured Flexibility Sustains Organizational Hybridity. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 64:1, 1-44.

Wednesday, February 26

CASE 4 – B Corp

Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Case 2156.0. “Danone North America: The World’s Largest B Corporation.”

<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/danone-north-america-the-worlds-largest-b-corporation/>

Learning Objectives:

To examine how the B Corp movement is expanding to large corporations, and perhaps creating a viable alternative form of capitalism. More generally, the case study also examines challenges inherent in large-scale institutional and social change efforts.

Week 8

Monday, March 3

Business Entrepreneurship for Social Innovation

Readings:

- Keohane: Section II Introduction & Chapter 13
- Friedman, M. (1970). The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits. *The New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970.
- Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2002). The competitive advantage of corporate philanthropy. *Harvard Business Review*, 80(12), 56-68.

Wednesday, March 5

CASE 5 – Corporate Philanthropy

Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Case 2156.0. “Google.org: For-profit Philanthropy.”

<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/google-org-for-profit-philanthropy/>

Learning Objectives:

This case provides an opportunity to explore the tensions between the for-profit and nonprofit entities that inevitably arise in such structures, as well as factors that contribute to these tensions and solutions that have been attempted to address them.

Week 9

Monday, March 10

Policy & Civic Entrepreneurship

Readings:

- Keohane: Section III Introduction, Chapters 14 & 21
- Capano, G & MT Galanti (2021). From policy entrepreneurs and policy entrepreneurship: actors and actions in public policy innovation. *Policy & Politics* 49:3, 321-342.
- Sarma, S. & SA Sunny (2017). Civic entrepreneurial ecosystems: smart city emergence in Kansas City. *Business Horizons* 60, 843-853.
- Polimedio, C & M. Ly (February 28, 2023). Building a Culture of Innovation in Government. *Partnership for Public Service*.

Wednesday, March 12

CASE 6 -- Civic Engagement

Harvard Kennedy School Case #0049TC & 0039EP. "Trust the People': Civic Engagement and Collaborative Imagination in Bologna, Italy."

<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/trust-the-people-civic-engagement-and-collaborative-imagination-in-bologna-italy/>

<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/trust-the-people-civic-engagement-and-collaborative-imagination-in-bologna-italy-epilogue/>

Learning Objectives:

Understand the democratic goals of civic engagement, including building relationships and advancing equity; ask and answer key design questions for planning engagement efforts; see the breadth of options for civic engagement and make strategic choices; assess and troubleshoot civic engagement efforts.

⇒ Annotated Bibliographies DUE

Spring Break March 16-23 – NO CLASS

Part 4: Financing Social Innovation

Week 10

Monday, March 24

Philanthropy & Government

Readings:

- Keohane: Chapters 3, 16, & 19

- Chertok, M. J. Hamaoui, & E. Jamison (2008). "The Funding Gap." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2008.
- Lindsay, Drew (2015). "Local Governments and Nonprofits Test Crowdfunding for Civic Projects." *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* (January 22, 2015).
- VanSlyke, DM & JK Newman (2006). "Venture Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship in Community Development." *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* 16:3.

Wednesday, March 26

GUEST SPEAKER

Kate Anderson. Director, Center for Strategic Partnerships, Los Angeles County

Week 11

Monday, March 31

Financial Innovations

Readings:

- Keohane: Section II (chs. 9-13) & ch. 17
- Olson, H., G. Painter, K. Albertson, C. Fox, & C. O'Leary (2024). "Are Social Impact Bonds an Innovation in Finance or Do They Help Finance Social Innovation?" *Journal of Social Policy*, 53:2, pp. 407-431.

⇒ SI CASES DUE

Wednesday, April 2

CASE 7 - Financing

Loutskina, Elena and Frank, Mary Margaret and Yemen, Gerry and Maiden, Stephen E, *Goldman Sachs Goes to Rikers Island*. Darden Case No. UVA-F-1807.

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3027024

Learning Objective:

Develop an awareness of the growing innovative financial structure that attracts private capital to finance governmental efforts to address social issues: SIBs; Financial and social returns, models of investing for social impact, measuring social impact, private-sector financial resources used for public benefit, and private debt vehicles.

Week 12

Monday, April 7

GUEST SPEAKER

Paula Daniels. <https://www.thethirtypercentproject.org/about>

⇒ WRITTEN OUTLINES DUE

Part 5: Evaluating Social Innovations

Wednesday, April 9

Evaluating Innovations

Readings:

- Keohane, chs., 4,15
- Ebrahim, A. & VK Rangan (2014). What Impact? A Framework for Measuring the Scale & Scope of Social Performance. *California Management Review* 56:3, 118-141.
- Howard-Grenville, J (2021). ESG Impact is hard to measure – But it's not impossible. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Smith, J. and S. Flanagan (2024). Viewpoint: Rethinking RCTs. *Stanford Social Innovation Review* Winter,63-64.

Week 13

Monday, April 14

CASE 8 - Evaluation

Harvard Kennedy School Case #2155.0. "Paying to Improve Girls Education: India's First Development Impact Bond." April 2, 2019.

<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/paying-to-improve-girls-education-indias-first-development-impact-bond/>

Learning Objective:

Examine how incentives and risks vary between the various parties of a Social Impact Bond; students explore the common tradeoff evaluators face between internal and external validity; and gain a deeper understanding of other evaluation design issues such as spillovers and selection bias.

Wednesday, April 16

GUEST SPEAKER or project preparation time

Presentations & Final Exam

Week 14

Monday, April 21 – Project Presentations

Wednesday, April 23 – Project Presentations

Week 15

Monday, April 28 -- Project Presentations

Wednesday, April 30 – Project Presentation & course wrap up

Final Exam: TBD

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

AI Generators. Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. **Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course**, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate-](#) and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

DRAFT