Course Syllabus

PMAP 9221 Doctoral Seminar in Nonprofit Research

Spring Semester 2017
Tuesdays 1:00-3:30pm
Langdale Hall, 707 (subject to change)

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Course Description

This course introduces early stage doctoral students in PMAP, Economics and other university doctoral programs to the research literature in nonprofit sector-related studies in order to assist them in framing research papers and doctoral dissertations in this field. The approach will be multidisciplinary – involving nonprofit research undertaken within various disciplinary frameworks including public policy, economics, political science, sociology, history, and management studies. Students will read and analyze selected review articles, formulate their own research projects, develop their own reviews of the literature, and prepare and present an original research paper intended for delivery at a scholarly conference.

Course Objectives

To expose doctoral level students to the extensive research literature on nonprofit organizations and related subjects such as social enterprise and civil society in a variety of academic disciplines and different national and international contexts.

To familiarize doctoral students with review articles that summarize knowledge on particular aspects of nonprofit research and identify state of the art research needs and opportunities.

To assist doctoral students in preparing original reviews of the literature on cutting edge research questions or issues relevant to the role, behavior, functioning and policy relevance of nonprofit organizations.

To assist doctoral students in framing new research projects to extend knowledge of a particular subject or answer new research questions related to nonprofit organizations and the nonprofit sector.
To guide students in the process of preparing scholarly papers for delivery at professional research conferences or for submission to scholarly journals.

**Course Requirements**

Students are required to attend classes regularly, and complete assigned readings prior to each class.

Students are required to make several presentations in class including reviews of assigned literature, original reviews of the literature, research project proposals, proposals for conference presentations, and, where feasible, preliminary findings of original research.

Students will be asked to discuss and critique each others’ work in class.

Students will submit several assignments in writing, including an original literature review, a research project proposal, a proposal for a conference presentation and a draft research paper.

**Grading**

Grades will be based 50% on class participation and 50% on the written research paper submitted by each student at the end of the semester.

**Required Texts:**


**Recommended Sources**


Key review articles as found in journals such as the *Journal of Economic Literature*, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *Voluntas*, *American Review of Public Administration*, *Journal of Social Enterprise*, *Nonprofit Policy Forum*, *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, *Social Enterprise Journal* and others.

Professional resources such as *ARNOVA Abstracts* and special research summary reports of organizations such as ARNOVA, ISTR , EMES European Research Network, The Aspen Institute, The Urban Institute and various nonprofit university academic centers.

Helpful websites include:  
www.urban.org  
www.arnova.org  
www.istr.org  
www.emes.net  
www.nationalcne.org  
www.naccouncil.org  (listing of individual academic centers)  
www.aspenstitute.org

We will also use the class’s Desire2Learn site to post articles of interest and to share drafts, presentations and works in progress.

**Course Policies and Procedures**

Students wishing to withdraw from the course must officially withdraw prior to the mid-point date of the semester as established by the University in order to avoid being given a grade of WF.
Students are reminded of the University Policy on Academic Honesty, found in section 409 of the *Faculty Handbook*: [http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/fhb.html]. **Use of uncited material copied directly from any source, including the Internet, will result in a significant grade reduction, including most likely a failing grade on the assignment.**

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought.

**Course Topics, Schedule and Assignments**

**January**

What are the various disciplines within which nonprofit research often occurs? What is “good” research?

10th: Introductory discussion of student research interests and review of course syllabus and objectives. Assign readings for next week based on Powell and Steinberg, and *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, Special Issue on Research Method Best Practices.

**Assignment:** Read and be prepared to discuss two chapters/articles chosen as a result of today’s discussion.

17th: Discussion on basic elements of good research. Student discussions of their two readings from the prior week that highlights ideas from articles on nonprofit research in different disciplines. Discussion on what is “good” research and strengths and limitations of different disciplinary approaches to nonprofit research.

**Assignment:** Find an article that does not reflect good nonprofit research and be prepared to discuss why.

24th: Discussion of student articles from previous week continued. Discussion of student’s articles that exhibit poor research.

**Assignment:** Conduct brief research around three research ideas you are interested in. Be prepared to discuss each in class including: What do we know? What don’t we know? What are the limitations of research to date? What new research would be productive to extend current knowledge?

31st: Discussion of student research ideas and how to identify potentially impactful research ideas. Discussion on writing a research question or problem statement.

**Assignment:** Write a problem statement/research statement for two of your three research ideas that shows the importance of your research ideas: What is the
research question? Why is this an interesting or compelling question? How does this question follow from existing research and current knowledge? Why is this project a logical next step in building knowledge? Also identify two journal articles in the subject area of each that exhibit good research in that sphere.

February

Organizing Your Research

7th: Discuss students’ written research questions and how they might be improved. Discuss students’ identified journal articles.
Assignment: Draft an outline of a literature review around your final chosen research idea including theory. Identify two seminal articles/chapters in your area and include in your literature review in detail.

14th: Discuss students’ literature review outlines and how they might be improved. Discuss various approaches to methodology that align with student research ideas.
Assignment: Draft a methodology section that outlines your approach to researching your chosen question: What will be the methodological/disciplinary approach to this research? What hypotheses will be tested? What data will be used? What will be the unit of analysis? What analytical techniques will be utilized?

21st: Discussion students’ methodology sections and how they might be improved. Discuss the writing of findings sections.
Assignment: Identify two articles in your research idea area that have good examples of findings sections. Be able to speak to why they are good examples.

28th: Discuss student articles on findings sections.
Assignment: Pull together the past weeks’ assignments regarding your research idea into a coherent proposal.

March

The Research Proposal and Conference Abstracts

7th: Student presentations of proposals in class. Discussion and feedback. Invited senior doctoral students and junior professors to present and attend as well.
Assignment: Work on developing abstracts for the ARNOVA conference.

14th: Spring Break; no class

21st: Continue student presentations in class.
Assignment: Continue working on abstracts for ARNOVA.

28th: Present ARNOVA abstracts in class.
Assignment: Begin work on writing the research paper.
April

Writing the Research Paper

4th: Students continue writing the research paper including theoretical foundations, disciplinary approach, sources of data and methods of analysis and receive feedback in class.

11th: Students continue writing the research paper and receive feedback in class.

18th: Last class: Students present their own draft papers and formally critique each others’ papers; each student is assigned as a formal discussant of another student’s paper. Review of semester learnings; discussion of process/strategy for completing final drafts and submitting papers for conference or journal consideration

25th: Final papers due by 11:59pm by email to jkerlin@gsu.edu