Course Syllabus
Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations
Spring 2025
Dr. Elizabeth Searing

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Course Information
Title: Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations
Number: PA 6374.0W1.25S (26265)
Term: Spring 2025
Meetings: Asynchronous online instruction

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Professor Contact Information
Office Location: GR 3.818
Email Address: Elizabeth.Searing@utdallas.edu
In-Office Hours: In person: Monday & Wednesday 5:30-6:30p
                            Online or in person: By appointment

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Course Modality and Expectations

Instructional Mode	The course will be taught using asynchronous online learning.
Course Platform	This course will be delivered using three mechanisms: 1. Extensive resources posted on eLearning (including assignments, captioned lecture videos, and other required learning materials); 2. Zoom for weekly Student Hours. 3. Microsoft Teams or Zoom for meetings between the student team, Professor, and community organization.
Asynchronous Learning Guidelines	Asynchronous access does not mean that you can complete the course and course requirements at your own pace or discretion. Asynchronous access means flexibility is given to you completing the course at a distance. Success in this course will rely heavily on your ability to keep track of your own time. The learning modules (topics) are each one week long, and there will be an assignment due every week by midnight on Monday. This schedule will remain consistent across modules. Further details are in the grading and assignment section below.

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

There are no formal course pre-requisites or co-requisites.

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Course Description

This course integrates academic and practical perspectives on financial resources, planning, reporting, and financial decision-making in nonprofit organizations. These topics and concepts are essential for organizational survival and success. This course provides students with instruction on skills and conceptual information and provides them with opportunities to apply those abilities to practice through both hypothetical and actual cases.

In this course, students will:

- Apply financial planning, decision-making, and working capital techniques to nonprofit organizations;
- Understand the theoretical rationales and practical considerations involved in developing and utilizing particular sources of income and in selecting appropriate combinations or portfolios;
- Create and analyze financial reports in accordance with accepted standards;
- Produce professional quality materials, including commentaries, reports, and presentations;
- Demonstrate sufficient mastery of course material so that nonprofit organizations can effectively advance their particular missions, sustain the infrastructure of their organizations, remain financially healthy, and manage risk and change.

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Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Objective #1: Students will acquire and develop research and writing skills related to the knowledge of leadership within public and nonprofit organizations.

- Objective #2: Students will orally communicate the complex issues associated with nonprofit organizations concepts through interpretation and analysis.

Class Materials and Technology

Class Materials

The Instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct.](#)

Required Textbooks and Materials

- Bowman, Woods. (2011.) *Finance Fundamentals for Nonprofits, with Website: Building Capacity and Sustainability*. Wiley: Hoboken. ISBN 978-1118004517

- Coe, Charles K. (2011.) *Nonprofit Financial Management: A Practical Guide*. Wiley: Hoboken. ISBN 978-1118011324

- Additional readings for each new topic will "unlock" every week, and they will remain available for the rest of the semester.

- Each student will have access to GuideStar Premium through the semester. You will need to register with GuideStar with your UTD e-mail address, but the service is free for our academic use.

Textbooks and some other bookstore materials can be ordered online or purchased at the [UT Dallas Bookstore](#).

Suggested Course Materials (not required)

Peri Pakroo. *Starting and Building a Nonprofit*, 10th ed., Berkeley, CA: NOLO, 2024, ISBN 978-1413331516. Since this is only recommended (though strongly so for those with no nonprofit experience) and will not be used in class, feel free to use whichever edition you want. The most recent will have the most up-to-date information.

Selected Journals of Interest (not required)

• *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (the journal of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA))

• *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*

• *Nonprofit Quarterly* (industry journal and daily newswire)

• *Voluntas* (the journal of the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR))

• *Stanford Social Innovation Review*

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Technical Requirements

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the Getting Started with eLearning webpage.

Course Access and Navigation

This course can be accessed using your UT Dallas NetID account on the eLearning website.

Please see the course access and navigation section of the Getting Started with eLearning webpage for more information.

To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the Student eLearning Tutorials webpage.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The eLearning Support Center includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

Communication

This course utilizes online tools for interaction and communication. Some external communication tools such as regular email and a web conferencing tool may also be used during the semester. For more details, please visit the Student eLearning Tutorials webpage for video demonstrations on eLearning tools.

Student emails will be answered within 3 working days under normal circumstances.

Distance Learning Student Resources

Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, The Office of Student AccessAbility, and many others. Please see the eLearning Current Students webpage for more information.

Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online eLearning Help Desk. The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

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Class Participation

Regular class participation is expected. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class, including both engaging in group or other activities that solicit your feedback. Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

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Class Recordings

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

The instructor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law.

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Assignments & Academic Calendar

	All assignments due online by Mondays at midnight (in bold)	
Week (Tues – Mon)	*Module Topics*	*Readings for the Week (Non-textbook readings will be available on eLearning)*
Week 1 Jan 21 – **Jan 27**	Introduction to the Course and Financial Management	Coe Chapter 1 Zimmerman and Beall. 2014. *The Sustainability Mindset: Using the Matrix Map to Make Strategic Decisions.* Chapter 2. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Young, Dennis. 2017. *Financing Nonprofits and Other Social Enterprises: A Benefits Approach.* Chapter 4. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Week 2 Jan 28 – **Feb 3**	Accounting Basics	Coe Chapter 2 Selections on eLearning
Week 3 Feb 4 – **Feb 10**	Donations & Philanthropy	Bekkers, R., & Wiepking, P. 2011. "A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy: Eight Mechanisms That Drive Charitable Giving." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 40*(5), 924-973. Havens, J. J., O'Herlihy, M. A., & Schervish, P. G. 2006. "Charitable giving: How much, by whom, to what, and how." *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook,* Chapter 2. pp. 542-567. New Haven, CT: Yale UP. Young, Dennis. 2017. *Financing Nonprofits and Other Social Enterprises: A Benefits Approach.* Chapter 6. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Week 4 Feb 11 – **Feb 17**	Earned Revenues & Social Enterprise	Bowman Chapter 5 Dees, J. G. 1998. "Enterprising nonprofits." *Harvard Business Review, 76*, 54-69.

		Young, Dennis. 2017. *Financing Nonprofits and Other Social Enterprises: A Benefits Approach*. Chapter 5. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Week 5 *Feb 18 – Feb 24*	Government Funds & Contracting	Coe Chapter 9 Malatesta, D., & Smith, C. R. 2014. "Lessons from resource dependence theory for contemporary public and nonprofit management." *Public Administration Review, 74*(1), 14-25. Young, Dennis. 2017. *Financing Nonprofits and Other Social Enterprises: A Benefits Approach*. Chapter 7. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Week 6 *Feb 25 – Mar 3*	Revenue Portfolio Management	Bowman Chapter 10 Dropkin, M., Halpin, J., and La Touche, B. 2007. *The Budget-Building Book for Nonprofits: A Step-by-Step Guide for Managers and Boards, 2nd Edition.* Chapters 5 and 15A. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Week 7 *Mar 4 – Mar 10*	Managing Risk & Internal Controls	*Coe Chapters 3, 13, and 14* Dropkin, M., Halpin, J., and La Touche, B. 2007. *The Budget-Building Book for Nonprofits: A Step-by-Step Guide for Managers and Boards, 2nd Edition.* Chapter 19. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Week 8 *Mar 11 – Mar 17*	Asset & Cash Flow Management	Bowman Chapter 3 Coe Chapter 7 & 11 Bowman, W., Calabrese, T., and Searing, E. 2018. "Asset Composition." *Handbook of Research in Nonprofit Economics and Management, Second Edition*, Chapter 5. pp. 97-117. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. Selections from Dropkin and Hayden. 2001. *The Cash Flow Management Book for Nonprofits: A Step-by-Step Guide for Managers and Boards.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mar 18 - Mar 24	SPRING BREAK!	
Week 9 *Mar 25 - Mar 31*	Cost Management	Coe Chapter 8 Dropkin, M., Halpin, J., and La Touche, B. 2007. *The Budget-Building Book for Nonprofits: A Step-by-Step Guide for Managers and Boards, 2nd Edition.* Chapters 15B and 16. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Lecy, Jesse D., and Searing, Elizabeth A.M. 2015. "Anatomy of the Nonprofit Starvation Cycle: An Analysis of Falling Overhead Ratios in the Nonprofit Sector." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. doi: 10.1177/0899764014527175. Zimmerman, Steve, and Beall, Jeanne. 2014. *The Sustainability Mindset: Using the Matrix Map to Make Strategic Decisions.* Chapter 6. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Week 10 Apr *1 – Apr 7*	Budgeting	Coe Chapter 6 Dropkin, M., Halpin, J., and La Touche, B. 2007. *The Budget-Building Book for Nonprofits: A Step-by-Step Guide for Managers and Boards, 2nd Edition.* Chapters 2, 4, 7, 8, and 13. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Week 11 *Apr 8 – Apr 14*	Financial Statements & the Form 990	Bowman Chapters 2 and 4 Selections from financial statements and Form 990s on eLearning
Week 12 *Apr 15 – Apr 21*	Financial Ratio Analysis	Chabotar, K.J. 1989. "Financial ratio analysis comes to nonprofits." *The Journal of Higher Education*, *60*(2), pp.188-208. Coe Chapter 5 Searing, E. 2018. "The Recovery of Financially Distressed Nonprofits." *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 28*(3), 313-328.

		Tuckman, H. P., & Chang, C. F. 1991. "A methodology for measuring the financial vulnerability of charitable nonprofit organizations." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 20*(4), 445-460.
Week 13 *Apr 22 – Apr 28*	Strategic Financial Planning	Bowman Chapter 6 + one of Chapters 7, 8, or 9 La Piana, D., Gowdy, H., Olmstead-Rose, L., and Copen, B. 2012. *The Nonprofit Business Plan: A Leader's Guide to Creating a Successful Business Model.* Chapter 3. St. Paul, MN: Fieldstone Alliance. Zimmerman, Steve, and Beall, Jeanne. 2014. *The Sustainability Mindset: Using the Matrix Map to Make Strategic Decisions.* Chapter 9. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Week 14 *Apr 29 – May 5*	Bringing It All Together	April 29 ***Optional Draft Report Due***
Week 15 *May 6 – May 12*		Between May 7 - 9 ***Final Presentation of Group Project Due*** May 12 ***Final Written Group Report and Peer Evaluations Due***

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Assignments & Grading Policy

Assignment Type Overview:

- A. Individual Performance
  - Individual Assignments   45%
  - Participation Points   15%

- B. Team Performance
  - Team Activities   15%

Final Presentation	5%
Final Report	15%
C. Peer Review	5%
	100%

Assignment Types Detail:

1. **Individual Assignments (45%).** These 3-4 page assignments are responses to prompts that allow you to show your mastery of the concepts from the readings assigned each module. Each prompt's response will be roughly one page, single spaced, reasonable font, and standard margins; there will be between 1-4 prompts, depending on the week. All assignments for a module are due by midnight on Monday, submitted via eLearning.

2. **Participation Points (15%).** Throughout the semester, there will be a simple task buried in the materials for each module. There will be one per weekly module. These will be found in the slides, videos, online readings, or other activities that are visible online. These are essentially attendance points designed to make sure you are reading/listening to/watching the materials for the class. They CANNOT be submitted late.

3. **Team Activities (15%):** In two modules, instead of an individual assignment, there will a more complex activity designed to apply the lessons learned in the readings and other materials to real-life scenarios. Most often, it will be a team activity involving the service-learning project or a case study. A discussion board specifically dedicated to your team will be available for you to carry out planning and discussions, and I will occasionally chime in on the conversation. All assignments for a module are due by midnight on Monday, submitted via eLearning.

4. **Team Final Presentation (5%) and Report (15%).** This report and presentation will integrate and expand on the materials learned in class, resulting a final product that will be delivered (and potentially presented) to a local nonprofit. The final report will be approximately 20 double-spaced pages, though this is subject to change based on the preferences of the nonprofit. The report's analyses or arguments should be supported with substantial secondary sources from the readings. Additional details will be released during the semester.

5. **Peer Evaluation (5%).** Each team member will evaluate the helpfulness of the other members of their team. You will have a set number of points to distribute amongst the rest of your group to assess their contributions, plus will have the opportunity to give written verbal feedback.

6. **Final Grade:** Final grades will be based on the point distribution described above. Final letter grades will be assigned as followed:

Grade	Total Percentage Achieved
A	93% or more
A-	90%-92%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
C	73%-76%
C-	70%-72%
F	Less than 70%

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Course & Instructor Policies

Late and Make-up Policy: With the exception of Participation Points (which cannot be submitted late), if an assignment is turned in within 24 hours of the due date and time, the assignment is eligible for 90% of the original point total. A written assignment submitted between 24-48 hours after it was due is eligible for 80% of the original point total. No written assignments will be accepted more than 48 hours after they are due except for a documented emergency situation. A documented emergency situation is hospitalization, the death of an immediate family member, or situations of similar magnitude. All emergencies must have documentation, and the treatment of each is totally within the professor's discretion.

If you know that you will have difficulty turning in an assignment at a certain time (travel, work obligations, etc.), you should plan ahead, coordinate with your team, and/or turn in assignments early.

Course Evaluations: Your assessment of this course is an important source of feedback for both me and the school. We will have course evaluations both mid-semester and at the conclusion. These are an important part of curriculum development, so please take the time to fill out the evaluations thoughtfully.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students.

Please go to [Academic Support Resources](#) webpage for these policies.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please review the catalog sections regarding the [credit/no credit](#) or [pass/fail](#) grading option and withdrawal from class.

Please go to [UT Dallas Syllabus Policies](#) webpage for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.