Course Syllabus
Strategic Planning for Nonprofits
Fall 2024
Dr. Elizabeth Searing

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Course Information
Title: Strategic Planning for Nonprofits
Number: PA 6387-0W1
Term: Fall 2024
Meetings: Asynchronous online instruction

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Professor Contact Information
Office Location: GR 3.818
Email Address: Elizabeth.Searing@utdallas.edu
Online Office Hours: Synchronous online: Thursdays, 4p to 6p
                     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 two weeks long. However, there will be an assignment due every week by midnight on Sunday. This schedule will remain consistent across modules. Further details are in the grading and assignment section below.

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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 examines issues, strategies, and techniques related to strategic planning in nonprofit organizations. Upon completing this course, students will have better understanding of strategic planning, including:

• Knowing a workable overview of the strategic planning process

• Learning how to identify and engage with various stakeholders

• Learning how to write vision and mission statements

• Learning how to develop strategic analyses, such as SWOT, environmental analysis, and business plan development that supports a nonprofit mission

• Providing an actual community organization with a strategic plan through a service-learning project

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Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Objective #1: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the major issues in strategic planning for nonprofits.

- Objective #2: Students will acquire and develop research and writing skills related to strategic planning for nonprofits.

- Objective #3: Students will orally communicate the complex issues associated with strategic planning for nonprofits

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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

The required textbook is *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations, Third Edition + Website: A Practical Guide and Workbook* by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye (ISBN 978-1-118-76986-7). Please use the third edition – I will be assigning material from it that is not included in the other editions.

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

Any additional readings for each new topic will "unlock" every module, and they will remain available for the rest of the semester.

Suggested Course Materials (not required)

Peri Pakroo. *Starting and Building a Nonprofit*, 7th ed., Berkeley, CA: NOLO, 2017, ISBN 978-1413323573. Since this is only *recommended* (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))

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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 and discussion board messages 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 during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). 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

	Module Topics	*Assignments*	*Readings Due by IRR Date* *(Non-textbook readings will be available on eLearning)*
	— *All assignments due online by Sundays at midnight*		
Week 1 & 2 *Aug 19 - Sep 1*	Defining Strategic Planning	**Aug. 25: IRR 1 Due** Sep. 1: Group Activity 1 Due	Introduction (textbook) & Selected Readings Available on eLearning
Week 3 & 4 *Sep 2 - Sep 15*	Developing the Why and How of Planning	**Sep 8: IRR 2 Due** Sep. 15: Group Activity 2 Due	Chapter 1 (textbook) & Selected Readings Available on eLearning
Week 5 & 6 *Sep 16 – Sep 29*	Engaging Stakeholders and Mission	**Sep. 22: IRR 3 Due** Sep. 29: Group Activity 3 Due	Chapters 2 & 3 (textbook) & Selected Readings Available on eLearning
Week 7 & 8 *Sep 30 - Oct 13*	Positioning and Theory of Change	**Oct. 6: IRR 4 Due** Oct. 13: Group Activity 4 Due	Chapters 4 & 5 (textbook) & Selected Readings Available on eLearning
Week 9 & 10 *Oct 14 – Oct 27*	The Business Model	**Oct. 20: IRR 5 Due** Oct. 27: Group Activity 5 Due	Chapter 6 (textbook) & Selected Readings Available on eLearning
Week 11 & 12 *Oct 28 - Nov 10*	Relating the Business Model & Organizational Capacity	**Nov. 3: IRR 6 Due** Nov. 10: Group Activity 6 Due	Chapters 7 & 8 (textbook) & Selected Readings Available on eLearning
Week 13 *Nov 11 - Nov. 17*	Finishing the Plan: Writing, Using, and Updating	**Nov. 17: IRR 7 Due**	*Mandatory synchronous meeting with the professor*

Week 14 Nov. 18 - Nov. 24	Bringing the Strategic Plan (& the Course) Together	**Nov. 24: BONUS IRR Due** Nov. 24: Optional Draft Written Report Due	*Mandatory synchronous meeting with the professor*
Week 14 Nov 25 – Dec 1			*HAPPY THANKSGIVING!*
Reporting Week		*Dec. 4-7: **Group Presentation*** *Dec 8: **Final Written Report & Peer Evaluation***	

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Assignments & Grading Policy

Assignment Type Overview:

    A. Individual Performance
          Individual Reading Responses   30%
          Individual Participation   15%

    B.   Team Performance
          Team Weekly Activities   30%
          Final Presentation   5%
          Final Report   15%

    C. Team Peer Review   5%
          100%

Assignment Types Detail:

1. **Individual Reading Responses (30%).** 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 1-3 prompts, depending on the week. The responses will be due by midnight on Sunday of the first week of the module, submitted via eLearning.

2. **Individual Participation Points (15%).** Throughout the semester, there will be two simple tasks buried in the materials for each 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 class materials. They are due at the end of the module (which is also when the Group Activity is due), and they *CANNOT* be submitted late.

3. **Team Activities (30%):** Each module, there will be some kind of activity designed to apply the lessons learned in the readings and other materials to real-life scenarios. In this class, most of the team activities will apply the module's content to the community organization your team is working with. 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. The final version of whatever the module's activity is will be due by midnight on the Sunday of the second week in the module.

4. **Team Final Presentation (5%) and Report (15%).** This project will integrate and expand on the materials learned in class, resulting in a final product that will be delivered to a local nonprofit. The final strategic plan will be approximately 20 double-spaced pages, though this is subject to change based on the preferences of the nonprofit. 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 your group to assess and describe 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%

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.

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