

DRAFT!
Syllabus Subject to Revision

**Philanthropy, Nonprofits and the
Politics of American Education**

GOV 94LF

Fall 2019
Tuesdays, 3-5pm in CGIS K450

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Course Website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/60275>

In recent years, foundations like the Gates Foundation and wealthy individuals like Mark Zuckerberg have become heavily involved in funding K-12 education, giving large sums of money to urban school districts, charter schools, Teach For America and other education entities. This philanthropy has been controversial, leading to accusations that some non-profits are mere agents of philanthropists' ideological education agendas. At the same time, foundations have been accused unduly influencing politics and policy. The Gates Foundation, for example, has been criticized for funding the development of the Common Core State Standards. Regardless of how one feels about these activities, they are not new, as foundations and the non-profits they fund have long been involved in education efforts. Nevertheless, as epitomized by foundations like Gates and Walton, they have become much more muscular, goal-oriented, and focused on education reform in recent decades.

This course will examine the role played by foundations and non-profits in education policy and politics, with a focus on the current period of education reform. We will first examine what foundations do and what normative considerations they raise. Then, with this conceptual and ethical toolbox at our disposal, we will explore the various ways in which scholars have identified foundation and non-profit influence in education, whether through the creation of new institutional forms like Charter Management Organizations, the creation of new constituencies, influence on the executive, efforts to counter teachers' unions, actions to set the policy agenda, etc. Throughout, we will use political science concepts and theories to make sense of these developments. This course will provide a strong grounding in the modern education reform movement, the nature of philanthropic behavior, and seminal American politics theories and concepts.

As part of this course, you will write an original research paper that speaks to how foundations and non-profits have influenced education. You are welcome to focus on a particular donor, non-profit or education phenomenon, and using literature from the course as well as outside literature, you will derive hypotheses, collect data, and present findings.

The overarching objectives of this course are threefold:

- 1) Students will be able to describe foundation and non-profit influence on the trajectory of education policy and politics in the United States.
- 2) Students will be able to apply political science concepts to foundation and non-profit behavior and evaluate the normative and political implications of foundation giving.
- 3) Students will be able to find and analyze publicly available data to compose an original research paper.

Who should take this course?

This course is appropriate for student interested in philanthropy, non-profits, education, wealth inequality, or interest groups and American politics. It will touch on some seminal works in political science and will provide students a foundation in an emerging political science literature on non-profits and philanthropy.

Requirements:

Class attendance and participation (including online posts)	30%
Research paper	70%
Research Question Paper (5%)	
Hypothesis Generation Paper (15%)	
Prospectus (15%)	
Presentation of Preliminary Findings (5%)	
Final Paper (30%)	

Class Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend all sessions and participate in all class discussions and activities. Students should plan to arrive on time and be prepared to discuss the readings. **Laptops and cell phones are permitted, but only to reference the readings, not for note-taking; there should be no typing happening. If they are distracting, I will ban them.**

Meetings: I will meet with each student individually at least once over the semester. We will meet after you hand in your research question paper. This will be a chance for me to get to know you and for us to develop your ideas for your paper. I may ask to meet with you again, and, of course, you are welcome (and encouraged!) to set up any additional meetings with me. You should schedule these and any other appointments via <https://calendly.com/leslie-finger/office-hours>. If those hours do not work for you, we can schedule another time. Just send me an email if that's the case.

Online Reading Responses: In preparation for Week 2, you must post a short reaction to the readings on the Canvas site by midnight the night before class to prepare for discussion each week. Your post should be 1-2 paragraphs and should raise one or two questions or critiques with explicit reference to the readings assigned for that week's class. Other students in the course can see your postings. You can respond to each other. While these need not make a formal argument, they should have a coherent point that is grounded in the readings. They should not simply be about your personal

experience or about current events, although you can tie anecdotal ideas in with a discussion about the readings. I will use your questions and critiques from the online forum in class discussion. After the first week, there are eleven class meetings with assigned readings (no need to do this on the last week when there will be presentations). You may miss three out of eleven online postings without penalty, but you are encouraged to post something every week in order to collect and synthesize your thoughts before class.

Research Paper: For the main project in this class, you will write an original 12-15 page research paper that reveals something new about how philanthropy or non-profits have influenced education. You can choose a single organization, philanthropist or foundation to focus on, or you can choose a phenomenon in education and look at how philanthropy and/or non-profits have shaped it.

Your paper should draw from literature from the course in addition to outside literature to develop hypotheses, which it will then test using data you collect. You can use whatever data will allow you to answer your research question. You can use foundation grant data, non-profit tax documents, foundation annual reports, interviews with relevant actors, newspapers, campaign finance information, secondary sources, or other appropriate data sources. This project will offer you a chance to produce original research, and reveal something new about philanthropy and non-profit influence in education. This project is worth 70% of your course grade, but will be broken up into several pieces. Note that all assignments should be uploaded as word documents and follow the assignment instructions posted online.

Research Question Paper: On Friday, September 27 by 5pm you will upload a 2-page paper describing your topic and research question., why it is important, and how it speaks to the broader question of philanthropy or non-profit influence on education. I will provide comments and you will be required to meet with me to discuss the topic and your plans for the paper.

Hypothesis Generation Paper: You will upload a 3-5 page hypothesis generation paper by Friday, October 25 at 5pm. In this paper you will develop 2-3 distinct possible answers to your research question using literature from the syllabus and outside the course. I will read it and give you comments.

Prospectus: You will hand in a 6-8 page prospectus by Wednesday, November 13 at 5pm. This paper will build off your previous assignments and add a methods section. I will read it and give you comments, and then we will meet during the next two weeks.

Presentation of Preliminary Findings: The final class session on December 3 and during an extra “conference” session on December 5, you will present your preliminary findings to the class. Two days prior to class (by the night of December 1 or December 3, depending on when you are slated to present), you will provide a handout with the key points you will present, and you will be expected to look at everybody’s handout before class on Tuesday and again before the session on Thursday. During the presentation, your peers will have the opportunity to offer comments and suggestions (as will I), which you may choose to incorporate into your final draft. **Note that the Thursday, December 5 meeting will be from 10 to 12pm in room TBD and breakfast will be provided.**

Final Draft: The final draft will be due on Saturday, December 14 by 5pm.

Late Assignments: All assignments are expected to be handed in on time. Late assignments will be docked a third of a letter grade for every day it is late. Exceptions may be made, however, in the case of a medical or family emergency, although a note from a doctor or resident dean will be required.

Collaboration Policy: The exchange of ideas is essential to strong academic work. For assignments in this course, feel free to discuss with your classmates your ideas. For your research papers, you may find it useful to share sources or discuss your thinking, particularly if you are working on a similar topic. You may even read each other's drafts and provide feedback. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit to me is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own thinking and approach to the topic. You must be sure to cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that you draw on.

Books for purchase (available on Amazon or elsewhere online):

Dale Russakoff. 2015. *The Prize: Who's in Charge of America's Schools?* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

All other readings are available on the course website or at the listed URL.

Readings and Class Meetings:

NOTE: I recommend that you do the readings in the order they appear in the syllabus

Tuesday, September 3: Introduction

Week 1, Tuesday, September 10: Concepts and Early Education Giving

What is philanthropy and what purposes does it serve? How has the law changed over time?

- Andrew Carnegie. 1889. "The Gospel of Wealth." *North American Review* 147: 653-664.
<https://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/rbannis1/AIH19th/Carnegie.html>
- Oliver Zunz. 2012. *Philanthropy in America: A History*. Chapter 1 (pages 8-43)
- Peter Frumkin. 2002. "The Idea of a Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector." Reprinted in J. Steven Ott and Lisa A. Dicke, eds. 2012. *The Nature of the Non-Profit Sector*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Pages 17-30
- Dennis Young. 1998. "Government Failure Theory" and "Contract Failure Theory." Reprinted in J. Steven Ott and Lisa A. Dicke, eds. 2012. *The Nature of the Non-Profit Sector*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Pages 151-157
- Paul Arnsberger, Melissa Ludlum, Margaret Riley, and Mark Stanton. 2008. "A History of the Tax-Exempt Sector: An SOI Perspective." *Statistics of Income Bulletin*.
- **A small assignment for today:** Type "Foundation Directory Online" into HOLLIS. The top result should be listed as a "journal" called The Foundation Directory Online (although it's not a journal). Click the "View Online" link and then click the link next to "Full Text Available At." Once on Foundation Directory Online, click on "Search Grantmakers," and write the name of a foundation in the "Grantmaker Name." Click on the foundation and read through its profile. You will need to share which foundation you chose and what you found interesting about its profile.

Week 2, Tuesday, September 17: Normative Considerations

Is philanthropic giving democratic? How is the tax exemption justified?

- Rob Reich. 2016. "On the Role of Foundations in Democracies." In Rob Reich, Chiara Cordelli, and Lucy Bernholz, eds. *Philanthropy in Democratic Societies: History, Institutions, Values*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pages 64-81
- Ryan Pevnick. 2013. "Democratizing the Nonprofit Sector." *The Journal of Political Philosophy*. 21(3): 260-282
- Emma Saunders-Hastings. 2018. "Plutocratic Philanthropy." *Journal of Politics*. 80(1): 149-161
- **A small assignment for today:** Go to <http://edfunders.org/our-community/members>, the member page for Grantmakers for Education. Click on one of the members with "Foundation" in their name. This will take you to their website. Look through the site and consider: What issues does the foundation focus on? When was the foundation founded and by whom? What information is available on the website? If you wanted to know more about how they spend their funds, what could you use on this website?

Week 3, Tuesday, September 24: Foundations as Non-Profit Patrons and the Case of TFA

To what extent do non-profits rely on patrons? Do wealthy patrons shape group mobilization and priorities?

- Jack L. Walker. 1983. "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America." *The American Political Science Review*. 77(2): 390-406
- Anthony J. Nownes and Grant Neeley. 1996. "Public Interest Group Entrepreneurship and Theories of Group Mobilization." *Political Research Quarterly*. 49(1): 119-146.
- Wendy Kopp. 2001. *One Day, All Children...* New York: PublicAffairs. Pages 13-23, 42-48, and 83-101.
- Steven M. Teles. 2016. "Foundations, Organizational Maintenance, and Partisan Asymmetry." *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 49(3): 455-460.
- **A small assignment for today:** Read either case study 4, 5, or 6 from the case studies at <https://www.edfunders.org/resources/effective-grantmaking-series - Case Studies>. To what extent does your case reflect the issues of organizational maintenance that came up in the readings? Be prepared to describe your case and observations in class.

Due Friday, September 27 at 5pm: Research Question Paper

[To be scheduled: One-on-one meetings with instructor during the weeks of Sept. 30 and Oct. 7 to discuss research projects.]

Week 4, Tuesday, October 1: Vested Interests and Institutional Stability

How and why do vested interests protect institutions? How have they done this in education and what has been done to counter their influence?

- Terry Moe. 2015. "Vested Interests and Political Institutions." *Political Science Quarterly*. 130: 277-318.
- Terry Moe. 2011. *Special Interest: Teachers Unions and America's Public Schools*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. Pages 275-303.
- Sarah Reckhow, Jeffrey R. Henig, Rebecca Jacobsen, and Jamie Alter Litt. 2016. "Outsiders with Deep Pockets: The Nationalization of Local School Board Elections." *Urban Affairs Review*. 53(5): 783-811.
- Dylan Matthews. June 27, 2018. "6 Excerpts that Explain the Supreme Court's Big Anti-Union Ruling." *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/2018/6/27/17509460/supreme-court-janus-afscme-public-sector-union-alito-kagan-dissent>
 - o Optional: read the longer version of this piece here: <https://www.vox.com/2018/6/14/17437832/janus-afscme-supreme-court-union-teacher-police-public-sector>
- Celine McNicholas and Zane Mokhiber. February 26, 2018. "Who's Behind the Janus Lawsuit?" *The American Prospect*. <http://prospect.org/article/whos-behind-janus-lawsuit>
- **A small assignment for today:** Again, go to HOLLIS and "Foundation Directory Online." Search for a foundation in the search field (it can be the same one as last time or not). Click on the foundation and then, once on the foundation's profile, click "Search Grants." Then click "List all grants." What do you notice about the grants listed? Feel free to subset the list or search for grants in a specific "field of interest" or with a specific keyword. If you wanted to write a paper on this foundation's giving, what could it focus on?

In-class Research Objective: Identify the parts of a literature review and what it aims to do.

Week 5, Tuesday, October 8: Foundations and Institutional Change, Part I: Visitors from the Boston Foundation

How do actors try to change institutions? How have foundations created and changed institutions in education?

- James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen. 2010. "A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change." In James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, eds. *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jay Greene. 2005 "Buckets into the Sea: Why Philanthropy Isn't Changing Schools, and How it Could." In Frederick M. Hess, ed. *With the Best of Intentions: How Philanthropy is Reshaping K-12 Education*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press. Pages 49-78
- Bryan C. Hassel and Amy Way. "Choosing to Fund School Choice." In Frederick M. Hess, ed. *With the Best of Intentions: How Philanthropy is Reshaping K-12 Education*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press. Pages 177-198
- Read for Boston Foundation visit: Lynn Jenkins. 2017. "Don't Just Give. Solve: The Boston Foundation Embraces Innovation and Constant Learning in Pursuit of Educational Equity." *Grantmakers for Education*. Case Study No. 17.
https://www.edfunders.org/sites/default/files/Case_Boston_Foundation_2017_0.pdf

Week 6, Tuesday, October 15: Foundations and Institutional Change, Part II: Venture Philanthropy

What is venture philanthropy? How have foundations used it to create and change institutions in education?

- Christine W. Letts, William Ryan and Allen Grossman. 1997. "Virtuous Capital: What Foundations Can Learn from Venture Capitalists." *Harvard Business Review* (March-April): 36-44.
- Sarah Reckhow and Jeffrey W. Snyder. 2014. "The Expanding Role of Philanthropy in Education Politics." *Educational Researcher* 43(4): 186-195.
- Rand Quinn, Megan Tompkins-Stange and Debra Meyerson. "Beyond Grantmaking: Philanthropic Foundations as Agents of Change and Institutional Entrepreneurs." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. 43(6): 950-968.

Week 7, Tuesday, October 22: Policy Feedback and the Creation of Constituencies

How has philanthropic tax policy generated policy feedback? How have foundations generated policy feedback among charter schools?

- Paul Pierson. 1993. "When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change." *World Politics*. 45(4): 595–628.
- Kelly L. Russell. 2018. "The Politics of Hidden Policy: Feedback Effects and the Charitable Contributions Deduction." *Politics & Society*. 46(1): 53-80
- Jack Buckley and Mark Schneider. 2009. "Building Social Capital in the Nation's Capital: Can School Choice Build a Foundation for Cooperative Behavior?" In *Charter Schools: Hope or Hype?* Princeton: Princeton University Press
- "Donor Intent and Government Action: The Patrick F. Taylor Foundation and TOPS," pages 1-6.

Due Friday, October 25 at 5pm: Hypothesis Generation Paper

Week 8, Tuesday, October 29: Policy Entrepreneurship in Education: Grassroots or Astroturf?

What are policy entrepreneurs? Who are education policy entrepreneurs and what are their agendas? Are they reflective of populations on the ground or the desires of donors? How have they impacted policy?

- Adam D. Sheingate. 2003. "Political Entrepreneurship, Institutional Change, and American Political Development." *Studies in American Political Development*. 17. **Read only 185 to 191. The rest is optional.**
- Jesse Hessler Rhodes. 2011. "Progressive Policy Making in a Conservative Age? Civil Rights and the Politics of Federal Education Standards, Testing, and Accountability." *Perspectives on Politics*. 9(3): 519-544
- Paul Manna and Susan Moffit. 2014 "New Education Advocacy Organizations in the United States." *The Wallace Foundation*. **(The section on Advance Illinois is optional)**
- Daniel Katz. September 5, 2014 "How to Spot a Fake Grassroots Education Reform Group." <https://danielskatz.net/2014/09/05/how-to-spot-a-fake-grassroots-education-reform-group/>
- **A small assignment for today:** Read case study 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, or 13 of the case studies at <https://www.edfunders.org/resources/effective-grantmaking-series - Case Studies>. Consider whether the foundation(s) or their sponsored organizations acted like policy entrepreneurs. Be prepared to describe your case and observations in class.

Week 9, Tuesday, November 5: Philanthropy, Non-Profits and Executive Power

Has the expansion of federal power in education been a story of unilateral presidential power, interest group influence, or something else?

- Terry M. Moe and William G. Howell. 1999. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. 29(4): **read pages 850-856 and 858-865 only.** **The rest is optional.**
- Patrick McGuinn. 2016. "From No Child Left Behind to the Every Student Succeeds Act: Federalism and the Education Legacy of the Obama Administration." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*. 46(3): 392-415.
- Jal Mehta and Steven Teles. 2011. "Jurisdictional Politics: A New Federal Role in Education." In Frederick M. Hess and Andrew P. Kelly, eds. *Carrots, Sticks, and the Bully Pulpit: Lessons from a Half-Century of Federal Efforts to Improve America's Schools*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press. Pages 197-215.
- Lorraine M. McDonnell and M. Stephen Weatherford. 2013. "Organized Interests and the Common Core." *Educational Researcher*. 42(9): 488-497.

Week 10, Tuesday, November 12: Liberal and Conservative Strategies of Philanthropic Influence
How have liberal and conservative wealthy donors sought to achieve power over policy? Which of the "two faces of power" have these donors demonstrated?

- Watch: UNICEF. "Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wy7qpJeoZec>. **Note: None of the readings this week use RCTs. However, we will use this information in class.**
- Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "The Two Faces of Power." *The American Political Science Review*. 56(4): 947-952.
- Alice O'Connor. 1996. "Community Action, Urban Reform, and the Fight Against Poverty." *Journal of Urban History*. 22(5): 586-625.
- Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Theda Skocpol, and Jason Sclar. 2017. "When Political Mega-Donors Join Forces: How the Koch Network and the Democracy Alliance Influence Organized Politics on the U.S. Right and Left." Working Paper.
- **Optional:** Olivier Zunz. 2012. *Philanthropy in America*. Princeton University Press. Pgs 201-231

Due Wednesday, November 13 at 5pm: Prospectus

Week 11, Tuesday, November 19: Foundations and Ideas

Does research inform policy debate in education policymaking? Where does this research come from and to what extent is it politicized? Do the two faces of power apply?

- Sarah Reckhow, Sarah Galey, and Megan Tompkins-Stange. 2018. “Did Research Inform the National Policy Debate on Teacher Evaluation?” Paper Presented at the Association for Education Finance and Policy, March 15-17, 2018.
- Andrew Rich. 2005. “War of Ideas: Why Mainstream and Liberal Foundations and the Think Tanks They Support are Losing in the War of Ideas in American Politics.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. 2(4): 18-25.
- Kathleen Demarrais. 2006. “‘The Haves and the Have Mores’: Fueling a Conservative Ideological War on Public Education (or Tracking the Money).” *Educational Studies*. 39(3): 201-240.
- Read “The Walton Family Foundation and the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA): The Politics and Policymaking of the Charter School Movement” and grade it using the final paper rubric.

Week 12, Tuesday, November 26: The Challenge of District Governance: The Case of Newark

To what extent can wealthy donors change a school district?

- Dale Russakoff. 2015. *The Prize: Who’s in Charge of America’s Schools?* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Whole Book.

Week 13, Tuesday, Dec. 3: Conclusion and Presentations of Preliminary Findings

- **Upload handout with main points for presentation by Sunday, December 2. Read all uploaded handouts prior to class and come with questions or suggestions.**

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***NOTE: We will have a “conference” the morning of Thursday, December 5, to finish presentations from 10 to 12 in room K450. Breakfast will be provided. Attendance is mandatory.

Due Saturday, December 14 by 5pm: Final paper