

UEP Policy and Planning Competency Grid

**Course Name and Number: Nonprofits, States, and Markets
Sociology 184/UEP 273**

Instructor: Ostrander

Semester: Spring 2009

a) Knowledge Competencies	Specific sub-competencies or examples as developed in this course
1. History, structure, function of urban and metropolitan settlements	
2. Economic influences on policy and planning (e.g. 'market' and 'polis' relationships)	Moderate focus – Deals with influence of larger economic and state context on nonprofit activities, e.g. public policy, funding, and finance; changing availability of government grants and contracts; increased use of nonprofit fees in relation to market, foundation funding; and shifts in individual donor giving in light of changing economic and fiscal climate and resources.
3. Environmental, social and cultural influences on policy and planning	Moderate focus – Considers influence of social and cultural climate on nonprofit policy and activities, e.g. cultural and community values regarding the place of philanthropy and nonprofits in society, cross-cultural differences (including racial ethnic) in orientation to nonprofit activities and philanthropic giving.
4. Understanding different roles in policy and planning	Heavy emphasis- Contributions and importance of nonprofits in relation to public policy, advocacy, and democratic participation.
i) Levels of government	Moderate focus – Relationship of nonprofits to federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit-government collaboration, strengths and weaknesses of nonprofits in comparison to government.
ii) Governance structures	Moderate focus – Discussion of nonprofit governance structures, boards, staff, accountability to constituents, clients, funders, and to government as agent of “the public.”
iii) Citizens and residents	
iv) NGOs	The major focus of this course. Role of NGO's/nonprofits (primarily U.S. or U.S.-based) in society in relation to states and markets. Consideration of nonprofits as meeting social needs, advocating public policy, providing opportunities for civic engagement, strengthening democracy and civil society. Current challenges in regard to nonprofit capacity, funding, commercialization, governance and management, accountability and effectiveness.
5. History, theory and processes of policymaking	Minor focus – Some attention to historical origins of nonprofits in relation to state and markets.
6. History, theory and process of planning	
7. Implementation of policy and planning	Moderate focus – How the state makes use of nonprofits to implement public policy, implementation of new nonprofit policies in strategies in nonprofits for planning, capacity building, evaluation.

8. Evaluation of policy and planning	Moderate focus – Attention to evaluation of nonprofit effectiveness in relation to organizational mission and larger social and political goals.
9. Administrative and legal aspects of policy	.
10. Administrative and legal aspects of planning	Moderate focus – Some discussion of strategic planning in relation to nonprofit leadership, management (e.g. role of Executive Director), legal establishment of nonprofits, tax-exempt status, legal limits and possibilities of lobbying by nonprofits
11. Politics of policy and planning	

b) Skills Competencies	Specific sub-competencies or examples as developed in this course
1. Critical thinking	
i) Defining problem	Major focus – Course requires weekly 2 to 3 page comment papers that offer a critical reading and evaluation of claims about nonprofits in relation to how nonprofits actually operate and the effects they actually have according to systematic research. Beginnings of class discussions come from these papers. Half of course grade is based on 18-20 page final paper which is to focus on a clearly defined problem with an explicit stated research question, use evidence from peer reviewed academic and practitioner journals, formulate solid conclusions and argument, and layout implications for practice. Students may integrate organizational case study into this paper.
ii) Documenting the extent of a problem	Moderate focus – Readings document problems. Final paper includes documenting extent and significance of stated problem and context.
iii) Documenting the political and social context	Moderate focus – Same as above.
iv) Documenting the environmental and spatial context	
v) Identifying possible analysis strategies and their implications	Moderate focus – Readings typically offer multiple and sometimes competing analyses and implications.. Required final paper must seek literature that offers different ways of analyzing problem, and locates the paper's argument in current debates and competing evidence.
vi) Identifying criteria for proposing solutions	

vii) Identifying criteria for selecting solutions	
viii) Evaluating the development and results of policies and plans	
2. Research skills	
i) Understanding research design	Moderate focus – Course readings are mostly based in empirical research. Students must therefore have or develop basic understanding of how to evaluate a research article, terms and methods used.
ii) Collecting relevant literature	Moderate focus - Final paper based on doing this successfully. Instructor provides guidelines for literature searches.
iii) Analyzing relevant literature	Moderate focus - Key to final paper.
iv) Identifying and assessing data sources and limitations	Minor focus – May be discussed in relation to research-based readings.
v) Developing data collection instruments and tools	Minor focus – Same as above.
3. Data Analysis skills	
i) Interpreting and synthesizing data	Course does not ask students to conduct original research or gather data. Course readings are mostly published books and articles based on research done by others. These provide good models for students doing their own original research.
ii) Drawing inferences from specific observations to make	
iii) More generalizable findings	
iv) Comparative analysis	Minor focus – Readings may use comparative analysis, so may be discussed in that context.
v) Longitudinal analysis	Same as above.
vi) Recognizing and accounting for limitations to findings	Same as above.
4. Qualitative Analysis skills	
i) Direct observation	Students may opt to do a case study of an organization for final paper based in part on observations during weekly service in that organization. The final paper must pose a problem related to what is going on in that organization and contextualize and analyze their observations in relation to relevant literature.

ii) Analysis of primary qualitative data	
iii) Analysis of secondary qualitative data	
5. Quantitative Analysis skills	
i) Descriptive statistics	
ii) Inferential statistics	
iii) Basic forecasting	
iv) Use of spreadsheets and statistical software	
6. Spatial Analysis skills	
i) Understand how to identify spatial problems and frame spatial questions for analysis and research	
ii) Use Geographic Information System for basic spatial analysis and mapping	
7. Communication skills	
i) Writing skills	Major focus - Students write weekly short comment papers addressing specific questions about reading, plus an extensive final paper discussed above.
ii) Speaking skills	Major focus - Classes are almost entirely devoted to students discussing ideas expressed in their comment papers aimed at ensuring they come to class prepared for discussion. Students make an oral presentation to the class based on draft final papers.
iii) Graphic presentation skills	Minor focus – Some students choose to use graphics in their presentations about their final papers.
iv) Presentation strategies and methods	Minor focus- Students have an opportunity to be creative in their presentations about their final papers.

c) Policy and Planning in Practice Competencies	Specific sub-competencies or examples as developed in this course
1. Collaboration skills i) Negotiation	
ii) Group project management	
iii) Group problem solving	Heavy emphasis - The second half of the each 150 minute seminar period is devoted to students working in small groups on structured problem-solving exercises aimed at applying the main ideas and concepts in the days reading that are discussed in the first half of each class meeting.
iv) Perspective-taking	Heavy emphasis- The structured exercises typically ask students to take different points of view on the issues of the day, e.g. in one role-playing exercise multiple community players offered different positions to inform the work of a local nonprofit on a major economic development project. Other exercises provided students with 4 main “models” or approaches for appealing to donors for support, and 4 main “frameworks” for executive leadership applied to real-world issues and problems in real nonprofits.
v) Adaptability, flexibility	
vi) Networking	
2. Organizational management skills i) Decision making	Heavy emphasis – Implications for practical decision making always part of class discussions. Structured exercises often ask students to act as Executive Director of a specific nonprofit and to make critical decisions regarding strategic direction, funding strategies, etc.
ii) Strategic problem solving and adapting to change	See above.
iii) Human resource development	
iv) Financial management and resource development	Heavy emphasis on nonprofit funding and resource development, strengths and weaknesses of various sources and strategies, changing resources climate and how to adapt.
3. Political and economic power mapping skills i) Understanding political and economic power structures and dynamics	
ii) Modes of influencing their use	

4. Ethical and professional behavior skills

i) Understanding and upholding the role of ethics and accountability in professional policy and planning processes, practices, and behavior

Moderate focus – Discussion of ethical practices and problems in nonprofits in relation to mission, funding, governance, accountability. Readings, discussion, and structured exercises throughout the course relate to issues of accountability to constituents, clients, donors, and government.