

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
Example Course Syllabus
ARTL-537-02 Boards and Volunteers in the Arts

This class is designed to give in-depth exploration of the various non-profit board and volunteer models. We will evaluate board roles and responsibilities and discuss the dynamics of board-staff relations. We will also explore the role of volunteers in the non-profit organization and the management challenges that are unique to this resource base. Class sessions will be discussion oriented and interactive. Students should be prepared, well-versed in the readings, and expected to participate fully in each class.

Textbooks:

Governance as Leadership, Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards by Richard Chait, William Ryan, Barbara Taylor; (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; ISBN: 0-471-68420-1)

The New Breed-Second Edition, Understanding & Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer by Jonathan McKee, Thomas W. McKee; (Group Publishing, Inc.; ISBN: 978-0764486197)

The Art of Governance, Boards in the Performing Arts by Nancy Roche, Jaan Whitehead; (Theatre Communications Group; ISBN: 1-55936-259-6)

Leading Roles, 50 Questions Every Arts Board Should Ask by Michael M. Kaiser; (University Press of New England; ISBN: 978-1-58465-906-8)

Other Resources:

Blue Avocado – A free monthly newsletter (email & Facebook) that has many governance and board news features designed to be read in less than ten minutes. Visit www.blueavocado.org to subscribe and/or visit their Facebook page.

Energizeinc.com – An online resource for volunteer management featuring a resource library and bookstore. www.energizeinc.com

Evaluation & Grading Criteria:

Reflection	5%
Lessons in Leadership	10%
Nonprofit Board Observation	35%
Group Presentation	30%
Class attendance, preparation & participation	20%

Class Sessions

January 8, 2013

Assigned Reading

Governance as Leadership: Chapters 1-2

The New Breed: Chapter 9

Art of Governance: xv-xviii (middle of the page) and pgs. 149-161

January 15, 2013

Reflection Assignment Due

Assigned Reading

Governance as Leadership: Chapter 3

The New Breed: Chapter 1 & Sample Board Code of Conduct, pg. 159

Art of Governance: pgs 67-84

Leading Roles: Introduction, pgs. 15-18, pgs. 94-98 and 113-119

January 22, 2013

Assigned Reading

Governance as Leadership: Chapter 4

Art of Governance: pgs. 163-178

Leading Roles: pgs. 18-43, 88-93, and 99-101

January 29, 2013

Assigned Reading

Governance as Leadership: Chapter 5

The New Breed: Chapter 2-4

Leading Roles: pgs. 8-14

February 5, 2013

Lessons in Leadership Paper Due

Assigned Reading:

Governance as Leadership: Chapter 6

The New Breed: Chapter 5

Art of Governance: pgs. 129-148

February 12, 2013

Assigned Reading:

Governance as Leadership: Chapter 7

The New Breed: Chapter 6

Art of Governance: pgs. 53-65 and pgs. 214-226

Leading Roles: pgs. 44-62

February 19, 2013-NO CLASS

February 23, 2013 (Saturday, 9am to noon)

Assigned Reading:

Governance as Leadership: Chapter 8

The New Breed: Chapter 7-8

Art of Governance: pgs. 269-291

Leading Roles: pgs. 83-87, 102-204 and 108-112

February 26, 2013-NO CLASS

March 5, 2013

Nonprofit Board Observation Paper Due

Assigned Reading

Art of Governance: pgs. 101-126

Leading Roles: pgs. 1-7 and Epilogue, pgs. 127-130

March 12, 2013

Group Presentations in Class

Assignments

Reflection – Due January 15, 2013:

Using the assigned readings, online resources, nonprofit research, academic literature and possibly your own experience with boards of directors, write a three page essay (complete with cited sources) that effectively communicates your position on the effectiveness of non-profit boards. Specifically write this with a point-of-view, and as if it will be published for the non-profit arts sector at large.

Questions you should contemplate and address in your essay:

- What do we mean by board effectiveness?
- Is this an age-old problem, an emerging problem, or a prevalent problem?
- What is your suggested framework for addressing the issue?
- What areas are most significantly at risk if a board is ineffective?
- Who is responsible for the effectiveness of the board?
- What impact does board effectiveness have on accomplishing the mission?

Your paper should be double-spaced, three pages (not counting footnotes), and will be turned in electronically. Make sure to properly cite all sources.

Lessons in Leadership – Due February 5, 2013:

The details of this assignment will be distributed in class.

Nonprofit Board Observation-Due March 5, 2013:

This assignment has four components and all four need to be completed in order to receive a passing grade for the assignment.

1. Attend a nonprofit board meeting or board committee meeting. What was the agenda/purpose of the meeting? Was it clear what the board roles and responsibilities were? Which dynamics were in play, what communication styles were used? Were there any roles and dynamics not in play?
2. Interview the chair or leadership of the board or committee. What does that person consider their most important role and responsibility? Is there an evaluation process on each? Are there financial expectations and how are those set and communicated?
3. Interview the CEO or ED or other key staff member of the organization. What does this person consider to be the most important roles and responsibilities of their board? How does the board evaluate its success, both collectively and as individuals? What is the current state of board/staff relations?
4. Using the course readings, case studies and class discussions, synthesize what the work of a nonprofit board should be, and indicate the key governance concepts and approaches needed for maximum effectiveness.

Your written report should address all four components in a single narrative. Write as if you were hired as a consultant to provide an analysis and recommendations to the organization. The length should be long enough to address all of the four components, but short enough to retain interest and to be easily consumable as a consultant's report.

Even if the organization is the poster child of board effectiveness, recommend improvements, areas for further engagement, or areas that are missing and could be explored. All information in your paper will remain confidential. You may choose to provide a copy of your analysis to the individual that is your main contact at the organization. That decision will remain yours.

Group Presentation:

We will discuss this in class. Basically the class will be divided into groups and you will be asked to design and present a training session intended for delivery to nonprofit board members. Each group will have a different topic. You will also be asked to design an evaluation form and implement that evaluation as part of the assignment

Your grade on this assignment will be on the following criteria:

- Quality of content
- Effective use of current research and trend literature in designing the lesson
- Quality of handout materials
- Ability to stay on topic and appropriateness of lesson to that topic
- Usefulness of the lesson to a wide array of nonprofit boards
- Ability to stay within the assigned time period
- Evaluation tool and peer group evaluation results

Attendance and Grading Rubric

Attendance of classes during the quarter is mandatory. Students who miss more than two classes during the quarter can expected to have their grade lowered as much as one grade point (letter grade). Arriving late to class two or more times is considered equivalent to one absence.

The grading rubric for this class will be distributed at the first class.