

AMGT 606

Governance & Leadership

Spring 2107

Instructor: Eileen Kennedy

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Mondays 7:20 – 10:00pm

Founders Hall Room 481

Office Hours: By appointment only

COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This course will provide you with a theoretical and practical grounding in the ethical, fiduciary, and legal functions of the Boards of Directors for nonprofit organizations, with particular attention to those in the field of arts and culture.

Through weekly readings, numerous case studies, and real-life observations, you will examine the operational characteristics of this group of volunteers and citizen leaders. You will explore both the nuanced and the explicit distinctions between theory and actual practice in Board governance, and will learn strategies that you can apply as a Board member or as a staff member to encourage partnership, collaboration, and organizational success.

Course assignments and activities are designed to promote discussion, and to stimulate critical thinking and writing skills. You will be required to interview organizational leaders and attend a Board meeting and/or Committee meetings.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Board members.
- Recognize and analyze governance and leadership issues that arise for organizations and their Boards at different stages of development.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the staff role in working with Board and fostering Board activities that best serve organizational mission and the community.
- Identify and describe three governing styles and their application.
- Use governance terminology.

READINGS

The following are required texts:

- Lakey, Berit, *Board Fundamentals: Understanding Roles in Nonprofit Governance, Second Edition* (BoardSource, 2010)
- Chait, Richard P., et al. *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards*. (Wiley and Sons, 2005)
- Connolly, Paul, *Navigating the Organizational Lifecycle: A Capacity-building Guide for Nonprofit Leaders* (BoardSource, 2006) (Available on BlackBoard)

- *Robert's Rules of Order*: <http://www.rulesonline.com/rror--00.htm>

In addition, you will be expected to read the following on a weekly basis. We will begin each class with a discussion of current, relevant events drawn from these publications; students should be prepared to summarize a story of particular interest to them, and foster conversation with fellow students.

- *Chronicle of Philanthropy*: <http://philanthropy.com/section/Home/172>. Please set up a free account and sign up to receive the ***Philanthropy Today*** newsletter.
- *BoardSource SmartBriefs*:
https://www.smartbrief.com/signupSystem/subscribe.action?pageSequence=1&briefName=board&campaign=in_brief_signup_link&utm_source=brief. Likewise, register for this free newsletter.
- *The New York Times*, Arts section and *Business* sections, looking for Board of Directors articles.
- *ArtsJournal*: <http://www.artsjournal.com/>. Subscribe to the free **daily** newsletter.

You may also find the following sites useful for background and research: <http://foundationcenter.org/>, www.giarts.org, <http://www.boardsource.org/>, www.createquity.com

Other readings will be assigned as the course progresses, so that theoretical topics covered in class can be compared to practical, real world examples.

WEEKLY CLASS TOPICS

(please note that these are subject to modification)

Reading assignments are listed in the weeks they will be discussed. Please read **in advance** of class. Current event and other applicable readings will be added as the semester progresses.

1. January 23rd: Introduction to course

We will spend most of the class getting to know each other, reviewing the syllabus, and policies. I do ask that everyone bring a current article to class relating to nonprofit boards and be prepared to present to the class.

2. January 30th: History and Legal Structure of Non-profits and the Duties of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience.

- a) Assignment of Case Studies and Case Study Groups.
- b) **READ**: *A History of Nonprofit Boards in the United States*, Peter Dobkin Hall (Available on Blackboard), Lakey, Introduction--Chapter 2, and Chapter 6, *Governance as Leadership* Chapters 1 and 2.

3. February 6th: Roles and Responsibilities: Setting Mission and Direction

- a) **READ**: Lakey, Chapter 3, *Governance* Chapters 3-4

4. February 13th: Roles and Responsibilities: Resources and Oversight

- a) The organization for your final project must be selected for today. Please provide a one-page description of your organization, why you have chosen it, and what your approach to research will be. We will discuss selections in class.
 - b) **READ:** Lakey, Chapters 4-5
5. **February 20th: Turning Duties, Roles and Responsibilities into Effective Boards.**
 - a) **READ:** *Association of Fundraising Professionals – Building An Effective Board of Directors* (Available on Blackboard)
 6. **February 27th: Governance and Management: Chief Executive Roles and Responsibilities.**
 - a) **READ:** Lakey, Chapter 7
 7. **March 6th: Lifecycles of Nonprofit Organizations and Boards**
 - a) **READ:** Speakman Management Consulting – Nonprofit Organization Lifecycle Matrix (Available on Blackboard), and Connolly, Chapters 1-2.
 8. **March 13th: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**
 9. **March 20th: Infrastructure Choices: By-Laws, Committees, and Staffing Decisions.**
 - a) **READ:** Roberts Rules of Order and Lakey, Chapter 8.
 10. **March 27th: Group Case Study Presentations**
 - a) Case Study written assignment due today and presentations.
 11. **April 3rd: Governance as Leadership: Fiduciary, Strategic, and Generative Models. How different matters require different leadership. When to use what approach, and why?**
 - a) **READ:** *Governance* 5-8 and review of earlier chapters.
 12. **April 10th: Building the Right Board for your Community and your Organization: Recruiting, Orienting, and Motivating.**
 - a) **READ:** *Governance* Chapter 6—8 review and Ramirez, Joan, “If Your Board Looked Like Your Community”, James Irvine Foundation, 2016 (Available on Blackboard)
 13. **April 17th: Guest lecture and presentation: To Be Determined**
 14. **April 24th: Board/Governance Presentations And Papers Due**
 15. **May 1st : Remaining Board/Governance Presentations and Final Thoughts**
 16. **Wednesday May 10th: FINAL EXAM DUE TO ekenned9@gmu.edu**

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

In-class Discussion and Analysis: 30%

Students are expected to engage actively in class discussions, and to ask and answer questions. I expect prepared, thoughtful, and thorough answers backed by facts or examples from the readings or current events. Keep an open mind, be respectful of others' life and professional experiences and views, and be willing to change your own opinions.

Group Case Analysis and Presentation: 20% Due March 27th

Students will work in groups to analyze a short case study related to Boards and Leadership. Each group will produce a short paper, which everyone will read in advance, and then present their analysis and suggestions in a class presentation.

Board and Leadership Presentation and Paper: 30% Due November 28

Each student will select an arts organization to analyze from a Governance and Leadership perspective. (suggestions will be provided to you, or you may choose your own). You must interview the Executive Director and the Board Chair. Ideally, you will attend one Board meeting of a non-profit cultural organization, although a committee meeting would suffice if necessary (the idea is to examine theory and practice). Students will then submit a paper and provide a short presentation with an analysis. You should begin to look for an organization immediately.

Final Exam: 20%

There will be a take-home, open-book final exam comprised of essay questions.

CLASS POLICIES

Instructor's Expectations of Students:

1. Prompt attendance to every class is expected. Any student who is unable to attend class is expected to notify the instructor by email or phone prior to his or her absence. The university has adopted policy that explicitly permits instructors to use absence, tardiness, or early departure from class as a grading criterion.
2. Students are expected to read the assigned material prior to class and actively participate in class discussion. In addition to drawing on the required readings, students are encouraged to share their own experiences in the workplace related to the weekly topics. Students should ask questions, listen to others' perspectives, and respectfully share the floor with others. Class participation counts for 30% of the course grade. Participation will be graded on quality and quantity of student participation.
3. Due dates for written assignments are set and extensions will only be granted for the most serious extenuating circumstances. Written assignments are due at the beginning of class.
4. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification if any material covered in the readings or in class is not clear. Please do not hesitate to speak up in class or see the instructor privately if further explanation is needed.
5. **Cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class.** Please keep them stowed away and out of sight. **Laptops or tablets (e.g., iPads) may be permitted for the purpose**

of taking notes only. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g., gaming, email, chat, etc.) will result in a significant reduction in your participation grade.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

GMU is an **Honor Code** university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification. **The GMU Honor Code:** <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/index.htm#Anchor12>

Privacy: Federal law (a law known as FERPA) requires us to protect the privacy of student information. Faculty should not speak about a student's record with anyone other than the student. The record includes how a student is doing in a course, whether a student has attended class, information about performance or grades, whether a paper has been turned in, etc. This prohibition includes parents, siblings, spouses, anyone. According to the University catalog, all students and faculty are to use their **GMU.EDU** email address. Some commercial email addresses may be filtered out of the **GMU.EDU** system. No official information can be sent to students unless on the Mason email system.

Disability: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. The need for accommodations should be identified at the beginning of the semester and that the specific accommodation has to be arranged through the Office of Disability Resources. Faculty may not provide accommodations to students on their own (e.g. allowing a student extra time to complete an exam because the student reports having a disability).

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon **diversity and inclusion** throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.

Students **must use their MasonLive email account** to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

Please sign up for the Mason Alert System by visiting the website <https://alert.gmu.edu>. An emergency poster exists in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises and further information about emergency procedures exists on <http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert>.