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Marquette University
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THE POLITICS OF NGOS

What are nongovernmental organizations and what is their place in politics and policy? On the one hand, NGOs can advocate politically on behalf of poor and otherwise marginalized communities. And on the other hand, NGOs can provide important community services in areas where government programs are absent. Recent global transformations over the last twenty years have deepened each of these roles, as international NGOs and domestic grassroots groups have taken on new responsibilities once thought of as the domain of government. *What is the relationship between international and domestic nongovernmental organizations? What is the relationship between their roles as civic advocates and service providers? How has the expanded authority of nongovernmental organizations affected democracy and citizen well-being? What kinds of groups in society are more likely to organize, and what kinds of groups get left out?* Drawing on literature from Political Science, Sociology, and Anthropology, this course will develop a transnational understanding of the world of NGOs.

This course will also focus on developing students' writing and research skills. After four weeks of exploring the scholarly literature, students will select for comparative analysis two nongovernmental organizations, two NGO projects, or two countries. Students will be responsible for turning in memos and annotated readings, and then draft sections of the paper on an assigned schedule so that they can get feedback from me about how to structure and organize an original research paper. Student participation in this course will culminate in an 18-25 page research paper addressing one particular dimension of the politics of NGOs. An expected outcome of this course, then, is that students will know how to conduct original research and to write an analytic paper for a social-science audience. This course is thus intended as a building block for students on their way to taking upper-division classes in the social sciences.

Course Objectives

Throughout the course of the semester, you should:

1. become familiar with the core debates about NGOs, how they connect to your cases, and how they connect to social-science theories;
2. develop the analytic tools to be able to design and conduct your own social-science research project; and
3. improve your writing ability.

Class Meetings

Students must be fully prepared *at all times* to discuss the readings and concepts from that day's material, and that of previous classes. Because this class is a small seminar, I will not be lecturing to you. Instead, our classes will revolve around active group discussion of the reading materials. This means that every class period will require you to spend some non-reading time preparing for class. **Create a habit of setting aside non-reading time to prepare your ideas.**

Student Assessment

Your final grade for the course will be composed as follows:

15%	Class engagement
15%	Assignment 1
20%	Assignment 2
n/a	Assignment 3 (grade penalty on Assignment 4 if not adequate quality or not submitted on time)
20%	Assignment 4
n/a	Assignment 5 (grade penalty on Assignment 6 if not adequate quality or not submitted on time)
30%	Assignment 6

See the Assignment Schedule document for details.

Grading

The class is not curved; you will be evaluated on your own merits rather than on how you compare to your peers. Written assignments will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Mechanics: Overall quality of writing
- Structure of your argument
- Evidence: factual accuracy and appropriate use of course materials
- Argument: Conceptual clarity and analytical rigor

Grading Standards	
A	Exceptional work. Demonstrates superb understanding of the course material <i>and</i> outstanding critical thinking and analytic rigor. Goes beyond simply answering the prompt to craft a creative and insightful analysis. Communicates information in a clear, concise, and mechanically correct manner. <i>An A grade will only be given if work is exceptional.</i>
B	Good work. Demonstrates a strong grasp of course material and good analytic rigor, but with some errors (e.g. faulty assumptions in logic or some incorrect descriptions of an author’s argument). May have some problems with structure or mechanics but overall easy to understand the main gist. Solid work, but not the most original or insightful analysis.
C	Mediocre work. Applies some course material and themes, but demonstrates considerable misunderstanding of material. Difficult to discern the student’s argument and the logic supporting this argument. A number of serious problems with structure and mechanics.
D	Poor work. May attempt to apply some course materials and themes, but demonstrates very serious errors or misunderstanding of course material. The student doesn’t appear to have any argument, and the assignment lacks structure entirely and has extensive problems with mechanics. Shows little effort.
F	Very poor work. Assignment is unrelated to course material and fails to address the prompt and guidelines. Reflects a lack of effort.

Course Policies

- **Attendance:**
 - Attendance: Attending class is mandatory. Should you have to miss a class, it is your responsibility to learn about any assignments, discussion, etc. from other students in the course. I will not send you summaries of lectures or classes, so please do not request them.
 - Note: Attending class is not the same as participating in class. Active engagement with the material we are covering in this class is critical to your success, and to your class participation grade. I expect you to ask questions in class and make informed contributions to discussion.
- **Respect:**
 - Respect for others: This course provides a forum for lively debate about competing visions of politics and society. Throughout the semester, we will be addressing some issues on which people may have strong and diverse opinions. Please respect one another by giving thoughtful consideration to the comments made by your peers, even if you disagree, and by addressing your comments at the *ideas* presented, not the person presenting them.

- **Communication:**
 - Checking your email: I expect you to check your email regularly. I will typically send announcements to you via email. You are responsible for the material I send electronically, and you are responsible for ensuring that the email account listed on D2L is one you check regularly.
 - Sending email: I will dedicate some (necessarily limited) amount of time to answering emails from students, in the order that I receive them. Whether it takes me a day or three weeks to respond to your email depends upon the volume of email I receive. Before sending me an email, consider whether coming to see me during office hours may be a more efficient option.
 - Office hours: Please come visit! I welcome and encourage you to use my office hours to discuss the lectures, readings, and any other concerns or thoughts you might be having. (Keep in mind that there is generally a positive correlation between showing up for office hours and grades.)

- **Laptops and other electronic devices:**
 - Laptops may only be used by those with special learning needs that have consulted with me in advance. If you need advice on how to take notes effectively using paper and pen, you can come to office hours and I can suggest note-taking strategies.
 - Cell phones should be silenced without vibration during class.
 - If the phone becomes distracting I will ask you to turn it off.
 - If you have a special need to keep your cell phone on, such as to monitor a sick child, see me *before* class and I will make a special accommodation.

- **Students with learning differences:** If you anticipate needing any type of an academic accommodation in this course please (1) discuss this with me as soon as possible AND (2) consult the office of disability services to register your academic needs <http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services/>. In order for you to receive any type of academic accommodation, I will need to receive, from the Disability Services Center during the first few weeks of the semester, formal notification of the academic accommodation to which your disability entitles you.

- **Losing points for submitting assignments late:** You will lose one third of a letter grade (e.g. your grade will fall from A- to B+) for each day an assignment is late. Late penalty waivers will be granted only if you present me with written documentation of the legitimate circumstances that prevented you from completing the assignment on time *within one week of the assignment's due date*.

- **Grade appeals:** If you want to appeal an assigned grade, you must submit to me a typed, one-page statement explaining why the grade should be changed. Note that doing so gives me license to adjust the questioned grade either upward or downward. At the same time, I am more than happy to discuss your papers and exams during office hours with the goal of helping you to improve your performance the next time.

- **Under no circumstances will extra credit be offered.**

- **Academic dishonesty:**

You, as a Marquette student, have taken the Honor Pledge. This pledge states:

I recognize the importance of personal integrity in all aspects of life and work.

I commit myself to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, by which I earn the respect of others.

I support the development of good character, and commit myself to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity as an important aspect of personal integrity.

My commitment obliges me to conduct myself according to the Marquette University Honor Code.

- University policy and unfortunate experiences compel the following statement of principle: Students who engage in plagiarism or cheating as defined by official university policy will automatically be referred to the Marquette University Honor Council. See <http://www.marquette.edu/provost/integrity-index.php>. **No exceptions.**
- Additional note on plagiarism: in all of your writing, you must identify the nature and extent of your intellectual indebtedness to the authors whose work you have read, or to anyone else from whom you have gotten ideas (including classmates). Failure to acknowledge and properly attribute your reliance on someone else's ideas, thoughts, words, research, theories, evidence, findings, or argument is PLAGIARISM. Failing to provide page numbers for quotations or paraphrasing in a paper, or paraphrasing or summarizing the work of others without acknowledging the source in the text of your paper IS PLAGIARISM. **Plagiarism is wrong, unethical and dishonest.**

Readings

One book is required for this course, and we will read it starting in Week 1.

- Schuller, Mark. 2012. *Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs*. New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press.

Most required readings are articles.

- These articles are listed on the syllabus and available either through a direct online search or through the library's website.
- *It is your job to find, download, and print these articles.*

A few readings are posted on the **course web site** (See <http://d2l.marquette.edu>).

- Readings posted on the course web site are followed by "D2L" in the list of required readings below.

Course Schedule

PART I: WHO DOES WHAT AND WHY

Week 1

January 13, 15

January 13: Course Introduction – Perspectives on NGOs and advocacy

- No assigned reading

January 15: Introduction to Service Organizations

- Edwards, Paul. “How to Read a Book.” (ON D2L)
- Schuller, Mark. 2012. *Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ. Introduction, Chapter 1

Week 2

January 20, 22

January 20: **NO CLASS. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY.**

January 22: Community Participation

- Green, Amelia Hoover. “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps.” (ON D2L)
- Schuller, Mark. 2012. *Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ. Chapter 2,

Week 3:

January 27, 29

January 27: The battle for funding

- Schuller, Mark. 2012. *Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ. Chapter 4

January 29: NGOs in Haiti wrap-up

- No assigned reading

Week 4

February 3, 5

February 3: Research day. **Meet at library.** Bring your computers!

February 5: **ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE IN CLASS**

Please submit your assignment to Dropbox **and** bring a printed copy to class. If you do not both submit the assignment to Dropbox and come to class **on time** to turn in the printed version of the assignment, it will be marked late. *This rule holds for all assignments.*

Week 5

February 10, 12

February 10: Donor-driven “needs”

- Morfit, Simon. 2011. ““AIDS is Money”: How Donor Preferences Reconfigure Local Realities. *World Development* Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 64–76

February 12: Mapping the Global Chain of NGO Funding

- Swidler, Ann and Susan Cotts Watkins. 2017. *A Fraught Embrace: The Romance and Reality of AIDS Altruism in Africa*: Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ. Chapter 3 (ON D2L)

PART II: POLITICS AND ADVOCACY

Week 6

February 17, 19

February 17: International Advocacy Organizations (Vanilla Victories?)

- Stroup, Sarah S. and Wendy Wong. 2017. *The Authority Trap: Strategic Choices of International NGOs*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY. Chapters 1-2 (ON D2L)

February 19: Grassroots Advocacy Organizations

- Incite! 2017. *The Revolution will not be Funded: Beyond the Nonprofit Industrial Complex*. Introduction (ON D2L)
- Incite! 2017. *The Revolution will not be Funded: Beyond the Nonprofit Industrial Complex*. Additional chapter to read (ON D2L)

Week 7

February 24, 26

February 24: Research day. **Meet at library**. Bring your computers!

February 26: **ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE IN CLASS**

Please submit your assignment to Dropbox **and** bring a printed copy to class. If you do not both submit the assignment to Dropbox and come to class **on time** to turn in the printed version of the assignment, it will be marked late. *This rule holds for all assignments.*

Week 8

March 2, 4

March 2: office hours (mandatory appointments)

- Missed appointment will result in one-point grade penalty

March 4: office hours (mandatory appointments)

- Missed appointment will result in one-point grade penalty

Week 9

March 9, 11

March 9: **NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK!**

March 11: **NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK!**

Week 10:

March 16, 18

March 16: In-class work day. Bring your computers!

March 18: **ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE IN CLASS**

Please submit your assignment to Dropbox **and** bring a printed copy to class. If you do not both submit the assignment to Dropbox and come to class **on time** to turn in the printed version of the assignment, it will be marked late. *This rule holds for all assignments.*

Week 11

March 23, 25

March 23: The Boomerang Effect

- Keck, Margaret E and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY. Chapter 1

March 25: **AT-HOME WRITING DAY** Take the 75 minutes of class time to work on revisions on your own. Take this opportunity to go to the location where you work best! If you work best alone, take this time to write alone. If you work best in a group, make a writing date with a friend or two from class.

Week 12

March 30, April 1

March 30: Transnational Advocacy Networks in the 21st Century

- Sikkink, Kathryn. 2018. "The Information Paradox: How Effective Issue Creation and Information Politics Can Lead to Perceptions of the Ineffectiveness of Transnational Advocacy." Chapter 1 in *Transnational Networks Advocacy: Twenty Years of Evolving Theory and Practice* (Peter Evans César and Rodríguez-Garavito, eds.). Colección Dejusticia.

April 1: **ASSIGNMENT 4 DUE IN CLASS**

Please submit your assignment to Dropbox **and** bring a printed copy to class. If you do not both submit the assignment to Dropbox and come to class **on time** to turn in the printed version of the assignment, it will be marked late. *This rule holds for all assignments.*

Week 13

April 6, 8

April 6: office hours (mandatory appointments)

- Missed appointment will result in one-point grade penalty

April 8: office hours (mandatory appointments)

- Missed appointment will result in one-point grade penalty

Week 14

April 13, 15

April 13: **NO CLASS. HAPPY EASTER.**

April 15: **ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE IN CLASS**

Please submit your assignment to Dropbox **and** bring a printed copy to class. If you do not both submit the assignment to Dropbox and come to class **on time** to turn in the printed version of the assignment, it will be marked late. *This rule holds for all assignments.*

Week 15

April 20, 22

April 20: peer feedback day

April 22: The World Bank and civil society

- No assigned reading

Week 16

April 27, 29

April 27: student presentations

April 29: student presentations

FINAL PAPER DUE ON MAY 4 AT 1PM.

(Please turn in an **electronic copy to the Dropbox folder on D2L** AND place a **hard copy in my department mailbox** at 468 Wehr Physics.)

Politics of NGOS Research Paper Assignment

Introduction

The course has a structured format for research and writing. After four weeks of intensive exploration, you will select for comparative analysis:

- Two international non-governmental organizations (NGOs); **or**
- Two domestic NGOs; **or**
- Two international humanitarian campaigns or projects; **or**
- Two domestic humanitarian campaigns (in the country of your choice); **or**
- Two countries that are the targets of a single humanitarian campaign; **or**
- Two countries that are the targets of a single international NGO; **or**
- Two foundations

The core idea of the research and the paper is the comparison between two cases that are similar in some important way and different in others. We will talk more about this in class.

Structure of Assignments

There are six assignments, due in class on the 4th, 7th, 10th, 12th, 14th, and final-exam weeks of the course (see syllabus). The assignments culminate in an 18-25 page paper (Assignment 6).

You must hand in all the assignments on time, since they are meant to pace your work in the class. This will allow you to explore, to make discoveries, to think, and then to go back and find out more. The **process** is important, not just the product.

The Assignments

Assignment 1: Choosing Cases to Compare

The first assignment involves choosing 2-3 sets of two cases that you might want to compare and defining your basic research question. (Before the next assignment, you will choose one of these case comparisons for your research project.) This assignment is the most important, because you are choosing your topic. In class I will suggest various ways to “discover” a topic *but the important thing is not to wait*. **You should start working on this assignment by the second week of the course, because finding sources, reading, and writing will take a while.**

What to turn in:

You should submit *at least 6 pages of material total*. For each case comparison, you should turn in the following:

1 page about the comparison, answering the following questions:

- What question or questions will this comparison allow you to answer?
- Why is this comparison interesting? (Tell us what are the basic similarities and differences are between your cases and why they are interesting vis-à-vis your research question.)
- What kind of data would you need to answer your question?

An additional 1-2 pages about the cases that are a part of the comparison, which contain:

- Some resources about your cases (such as a web page list or the beginnings of a bibliography)
- A basic description of each of the organizations or campaigns you want to compare

What to compare:

You can explore any cases that stimulate your imagination. You might compare two international NGOs that have different approaches to the same theme (e.g. World Vision and Save the Children, both of which work with children); two domestic NGOs with different approaches to the same theme (e.g. Growing Power and Greening Milwaukee, two Milwaukee nonprofits working on environmental issues); or two international campaigns (e.g. the campaign to end hunger and the campaign to combat HIV/AIDS); or you might compare how a single NGO operates in two countries (e.g. how Save the Children operates in Mozambique versus in South Africa).

Whatever case you select will inevitably lead to information and questions about other dimensions of the case. For example, you may find yourself asking, what international organizations and NGOs have which kinds of programs and projects in which countries; or for those of you focusing on two NGOs, why Médecins Sans Frontières vs. the Clinton Foundation have chosen the projects and interventions they have, and why they work in the countries where they do. How do these organizations decide to fund campaigns or engage in certain activities on the ground? Why do they work in some countries and not others? Who funds particular projects; what is the evidence of for the effectiveness of different projects; what is the political coalition behind particular campaigns?

Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography and Lessons Learned

By now you will have selected one of the case comparisons from the last assignment for your research project. This assignment involves reading the *secondary* (academic) literature related to your topic and developing your research question.

What to turn in:

Create an annotated bibliography of 8 to 10 books or articles that relate to your topic, with a summary paragraph about each item.

- For each annotation, you should summarize the argument of each article or book and *also* make a statement about how it relates to your cases or your potential research question.

Draw a map or diagram of where your articles and books stand in relation to each other and to your research.

- This map can be organized and drawn any way you like, depending on how you view the relationship among your articles/books, and on where you see your research fitting into this existing literature. Do they cluster into different historical time periods? Do they focus on different questions? Do they come from different academic disciplines? Do they contain different assumptions about human or organizational behavior?
- You may draw the map using pen/pencil and paper, or on a computer, or using a combination of technologies.

Develop 2-3 hypotheses about your cases based on the literature you read for their annotated bibliographies.

How to prepare this assignment:

The purpose of this assignment is to develop hypotheses based on academic theories about your topic, not your cases. So while you can continue to learn about your cases and use some of the readings you select to learn about your cases, this assignment is an opportunity to step back from the specific cases you chose, learn about your broad topic, and develop some expectations about how your cases should work if existing theories are correct.

Assignment 3: Evidence (Case Studies)

What to turn in:

- A thesis paragraph, containing the argument you intend to make as it relates to your cases.
 - This paragraph will probably explain how your two cases are similar or different and why.
 - This paragraph should also include a statement about why your explanation is interesting or different from what existing scholarship already says about your topic.
- *Write a minimum of ten pages* describing your cases. At this point, you should focus these summaries on highlighting how they support your broader argument about the politics of NGOs. In other words, the primary purpose of your case studies is to provide evidence in support of the argument you make in the thesis paragraph. Think about what information you need to provide to convince the reader that your argument is correct. This should help guide your research and writing.

How to prepare this assignment:

Continue to learn about your cases, but now look for research studies published in journals or books or reports and research studies available on the web. If you are reading an organization's web site, remember to look for how the organization is presenting itself to donors and to the public. Look at what kinds of funding the organization is receiving, where it works or has projects, what other organizations it "partners" with.

Begin to analyze your cases. If you have chosen campaigns or projects, are they funded by different groups with different interests? If you have chosen NGOs, what activities do they specialize in? Did they exist before they started working in their current area of emphasis? How have their activities changed over time? If you have chosen two campaigns or projects, what is the evidence about their effectiveness? What are the possibilities and barriers to their success, either technical (e.g., scientific difficulties), social and cultural, or political? How are they funded? Think like a detective. Have you noticed anything that has sparked your curiosity?

If relevant, look for *primary* sources of information. For example, is there someone you can interview for information about your case? If you chose a Wisconsin based NGO, such as Growing Power, or one sponsored by a local organization, you may be able to find people who know a lot about it. If you are comparing projects in a particular country, perhaps you can meet a graduate student from that country, or a Peace Corps volunteer who worked there. If you chose two foundations to compare, you can look up their annual reports.

Now start to think about how you might organize your case studies. What types of information about your cases you need to present in order to convince the reader your argument is correct?

Are the same types of information relevant for both of your cases, or are the pieces of information that are relevant to your argument different for each case. Based on your answers to these questions, think about whether it makes most sense to present your case studies separately or whether to combine them into a single “evidence” section organized around different parts of your argument.

After you write a rough draft of your evidence section, put it down for a day and then re-read it while asking yourself the following question: “Is it clear how this information I am providing about my case supports the broader theoretical argument I am trying to make?” If not, either cut the information or rewrite the information to clarify how it supports (or refutes) your argument.

Assignment 4: Evidence (Case Studies)

Using the feedback provided to you, revise your evidence section to reflect the lessons you learned about editing first drafts, and to reflect the specific suggestions you received from your peers.

Assignment 5: Literature Review and Evidence

What to turn in:

- General thesis paragraph, literature review, and evidence sections (*minimum of 15 pages*)
- *Write a minimum of five pages* explaining your argument and showing how it contributes to existing scholarship. (This counts as part of your fifteen pages.)
- Reorganize and revise your case studies so that they reflect the order in which you present your argument and the wording you use to explain your argument.

How to prepare this assignment:

Keep doing research to answer specific, focused questions. Start thinking about how you want your paper to be organized and how you plan to guide readers through the paper; i.e. how you will transition from one section to another, and how your arguments fit together. You will want your arguments to be solid and research completed by this stage of the paper.

This assignment will be will not be graded, but *the quality and completeness of the work will be taken into account in my grading of Assignment 6.*

Assignment 6:

What to turn in:

- Your polished final paper.
- The finished paper should be 18-25 pages not including the bibliography.
- Font should be Times New Roman 12pt, double-spaced, with 1” margins all around.
- Do not forget to use page numbers!

How to prepare this assignment:

Now is the time to add an introduction and a conclusion to your paper. Look at one or two your favorite research articles as models to guide you. You might want to diagram them to better understand how the authors organized their introductions. How do they introduce their topics? At what point do they present their research questions? Where do you summarize their thesis? What other paragraphs did they include in the introduction?

You will also want to add transition paragraphs. Does your theory section flow logically into your evidence section? Is there already a place in your paper where you explain the logic you used to select your cases? Where do the authors of your guideline articles discuss case selection? What kind of transition do they use between their theory section and their evidence section?

With a paper this long, you may also want to include a roadmap paragraph. Do you see a roadmap paragraph in the published articles you are using as models? If so, where in the paper do place it? Would it make sense for you to include a roadmap in the same location? In a different location?

Finally, polishing your draft may mean rethinking or reorganizing your paper to make your argument more effective, or adding additional research to clarify a question or idea.

Don't forget citations for all facts and ideas; cite and quote material from other texts. Include your full bibliography, just as you see in published articles. This version of the paper should also be thoroughly edited and proofread.