



## SYLLABUS

**Global Civil Society**

**Instructor: Dyana Mason**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**UO Credits: 4**

**Contact Hours: 40**

**Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities: 60**

**Rosario, Argentina**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The guiding questions of this course are: What is the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs, the international term for nonprofit organizations) in helping to empower people and support advocacy around the world? What is the shape and scope of civil society organizations in South America compared to the United States and globally? How do these organizations emerge and evolve over time? What is the relationship between “western” funders, local activists and organizers and civil society NGOs active in different regions? The basic goal is to help students have a general understanding of the ongoing issues and challenges of these organizations working abroad.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**Instructional Goals.** The course will:

- \*Provide an historical overview and theories of NGOs and civil society.
- \*Conduct a comparative analysis of civil society active in Argentina and the rest of the world.
- \*Understand the relationship between “northern”/”western” organizations and the developing world.
- \*Provide an opportunity to study current political and social events with a view to social change, organization theories and the organizations engaged in the work.

**Student Outcomes.** Students who successfully complete this course will:

- \*Meet with current activists and leaders working for social and political change.
- \*Understand the role of social change and civil society organizations in Argentina and around the world.
- \*Critically analyze current events relating to social change movements and organizations.
- \*Closely analyze one organization currently involved in social change or the global civil society.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY**

This course is divided between classroom instruction (aprox. 2/3) and excursions or experiential learning (1/3). During class, regular lectures will be supplemented with small group discussion, videos, and guest speakers. At least half of each class period will consist of lectures covering core course material, though the structure will be informal enough to allow for group and class discussions at any point. The remaining in-class time will be divided between guided class discussions, small-group discussions, and videos. Excursions (e.g. to museums, NGOs) will provide an opportunity for students to begin understanding the practical application of theoretical and philosophical. Excursions will also provide students an opportunity to engage directly with local perspectives on the topics studied in class.

### **METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)**

The method of assessment should correctly correspond to the level of the course, as outlined above.

Grades for the course will be comprised of the following elements:

#### **Blog Posts (20%)**

Students will be required to write a blog post each week on Canvas or another shared online platform for the class (tbd). Blog posts should be comprised of approximately 500 words, and should explore and integrate the readings, lectures, discussions and any field trips we may have (both cultural and class related). Students should critically examine the materials and discussions and consider: What stood out for you this week? Why? How do the readings or field trips conform or conflict with your idea of the topic? What were your main takeaways? These will be due each Friday by 5pm, and you are required to respond to TWO classmates by Sunday evenings (midnight). 4% each post with 1% for responses. Any late posts or responses will be deducted at 5% per day.

#### **Midterm Exam (20%)**

Students will take a midterm exam covering some of the core theoretical constructs of civil society developed in the course.

#### **Case Study Research Paper (40%) – due two weeks after the end of the term, upload or email required.**

At the end of the term, students will write a 8-10 page research paper (for graduate students 10-12 pages) on an organization of interest to you. Using the theories we discuss in class, the paper should develop a case study of how the organization meets, or disagrees, with existing theories of nonprofits and civil society. You are welcome to explore an organization that we meet with during the course, another group in Argentina or elsewhere (including the United States or other countries). You may need to conduct interviews with the organization leaders, either in person, email (written responses are ok) or phone/skype.

#### **Participation (20%)**

This will cover attendance for the term (10%), as well as your participation in class discussions and field trips (10%).

#### **Textbook:**

- **Edwards, Michael (2014) “Civil Society”. Cambridge: Oxford University Press**

## COURSE OUTLINE

### **Week 1: Introduction (Case Study: The United States)**

This week students will begin to explore the definitions of nonprofit organizations, civil society and their various activities. We will also discuss what civil society means in the United States.

Day 1: Course Introduction and Overview, Nonprofits around the world

Day 2: What is “civil society” definitions and typologies

Day 3: Civil society and how it relates to civic engagement and public participation

Day 4: Civil Society in the United States

Readings: Edwards Chapter 1 “The Big Idea” (p 1-17)

### **Week 2: Theories of Civil Society (Case Study: Latin America)**

This week, we discuss leading theories of civil society, from Toqueville’s “associational life” to the way civil society bridges the public and private spheres.

Day 1: Civil society and associational life

Day 2: Civil society and the public sphere

Day 3-4: Civil Society in Latin America

Readings:

- Edwards Chapter “Civil Society and Associational Life” (pages 18-42) and Chapter 3: “Civil Society as the Good Society” (pages 45-62)
- Newton, Kenneth. "Trust, social capital, civil society, and democracy." *International Political Science Review* 22.2 (2001): 201-214.
- Dagnino, Elvina (2011) “Civil Society in Latin America” in *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, ed Michael Edwards. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, p.122-132.

### **Week 3: Civil Society in Comparative Perspective (Case Study, The Middle East and Africa)**

In week three, we continue to explore civil society theories. Based on theory are there similar patterns and differences around the world? Although we will be looking at the global civil society movement(s), we will focus primarily on examples from the Middle East and Africa.

Day 1: Civil Society and the Public Sphere

Day 2: The idea of “Uncivil Society”

Day 3-4: Global Civil Society

Readings:

- Edwards Chapter 4 “Civil Society as the Public Sphere” (pages 63-81)
- Alvarez, Sonia E. et al (2017). “Interrogating the Civil Society Agenda, Reassessing Uncivic Political Action”, in *Beyond Civil Society: Activism, Participation, and Protest in Latin America*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Jordan, Lisa. (2011) “Global Civil Society” in *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, ed Michael Edwards. Cambridge: Oxford University Press. P.93-108.

#### **Week 4: Civil Society, A Critical View (Case Study: Asia)**

In this final week we discuss the challenges and critiques of civil society, as it has often been defined by western scholars using civil society movements in Asia as a case study). In addition, we'll discuss the ways that some countries are trying to regulate civil society.

Day 1: Civil society and Democracy

Day 2: Civil Society and Diversity

Day 3: Civil society and international politics

Day 4: Civil society and “northern” funding

Readings:

- Hilde, Coffee and Catherine Bolzendhal (2011) “Civil Society and Diversity” in The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society, ed. Michael Edwards. Cambridge: Oxford University Press p. 245-256.
- Kasfir, Nelson. "The conventional notion of civil society: A critique." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 36.2 (1998): 1-20.