January 7, 2019

NGO Politics
POL S 586 A
Winter 2019

Instructor: Aseem Prakash (https://faculty.washington.edu/aseem/)
Class Time: Thursday, 1:30-4:20 p.m.
Class Location: Rait 109
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Objective
Non-governmental, non-profit organizations (NGNPOs) have emerged as important actors in local, national, and international politics. As units of collective action, they advocate policy positions and produce collective goods. They are often viewed as crucial building blocks for democracy and economic growth. NGNPOs compete and cooperate with governments and with firms. Importantly, they compete and cooperate with one another for membership, external funding, and media attention. Like firms and governments, NGNPOs suffer from principal-agent problems and develop, with varying levels of success, governance mechanisms to mitigate such problems. Although they are termed as ‘non-governmental’ organizations, many of them rely on governments for much of their funding. And, some NGNPOs have highly questionable and normatively inappropriate goals. In sum, there is a scholarly need to systematically examine NGNPOs as units of collective action, and answer key questions such as under what conditions they emerge, how they structure their organization, how they function, and how they influence public and corporate policy.

Several literatures study the advocacy and collective good provision functions of NGNPOs. These are:

- the NGO politics and civil society literatures in political science,
- the social movement literature in sociology, and
- the non-profit (NP) literature in public policy/administration/management.

This doctoral seminar will investigate key theoretical and empirical issues raised in these literatures pertaining to NGNPO goals, strategy, politics, and efficacy. We will focus on topics that are theoretically and empirically interesting, and have attracted scholarly attention. I hope this seminar will help you synthesize various NGNPO literatures and develop ideas for research papers, research grants, and/or your dissertation.
Readings
Book:
You can access the e-book via UW library system

Articles
All articles will be made available on Canvas

Course Expectations
This doctoral seminar requires active student participation. You are expected to energetically and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and to the collective learning processes.

For every session, students will present and critique the assigned articles. The discussant/presenter is expected to prepare a two-page (single-spaced) summary and critique of the article, and email it to the class by Thursday, 9:00 am.

How to structure your article memo? Assume a prominent journal has requested you to review the assigned article. Share your evaluation of the article with the class. The discussant-presenter should budget about 10-15 minutes for the in-class presentation. To minimize transaction costs, I will assign articles.

Class Participation
To have a meaningful discussion, please review all readings prior to the class. Those not assigned to present any reading should email a 2-3 discussion questions. This one page “Discussion Questions” memo should reach me by Thursday, 9:00 am. Please provide short discussion on how your questions relate to the theoretical or empirical issues raised in the assigned readings. I encourage you to relate these readings to articles/books you may have reviewed in other seminars. As scholars you must cumulate knowledge: drawing connections with readings in different seminars is therefore a valuable exercise.

Research Proposal
A five page (single-spaced) research proposal is due towards the end of the course. Treat this as a first cut for a grant proposal or your MA/PhD proposal. One page proposal outline is due February 21. The final proposal is due March 14. The research proposal could be structured as follows:
Research Puzzle: What is the central issue you want to study and why is it theoretically important? It might be helpful to identify your dependent variable(s), independent variable(s), and the logic connecting the two.

Research Context: How does your topic speak to the environmental governance literature? What are relevant concepts or models? What are the research contributions?

Research Design: What is the appropriate research strategy to examine your research puzzle? What are your hypotheses? Are they falsifiable? What are your data requirements? How would you analyze and interpret the data?

Contributions: What new theoretical insights your research is expected to provide? What are the implications for future research?

Evaluation
Article Memos: 30 points
Key Questions: 20 points
Term paper: 30 points
Class Participation: 20 points
Total: 100 points

Class Schedule
Session 1, January 10
The Civil Society Debate
Session 2, January 17

**NGOs and Nonprofits: An Overview**


Session 3, January 24

**Civic Action in World Politics**


Session 4, January 31

**Advocacy Strategies**

99-120.


Session 5, February 7
Advocacy Organizations and Collective Action
- Prakash and Gugerty, Editors. 2010. Advocacy Organizations and Collective Action. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Prakash & Gugerty), Chapters 2 (Bob), Chapter 3 (Gill and Pfaff), Chapter 6 (Barakaso), Chapter 7 (Pralle), and Chapter 8 (Ron and Cooley).

Session 6, February 14
Social Movements -1

Research Proposal Outline due
Session 7, February 21
Social Movements -2
- Koopmans and Olzak. 2004. Discursive opportunities and the evolution of right-wing


**Session 8, February 28**

**Non-Profits**


**Session 9, March 7**

**Social Capital and Volunteering**

Accountability