Education 377/GSB 346/Sociology 377

COMPARING INSTITUTIONAL FORMS: PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND NONPROFIT
4 Units

COURSE INFORMATION:

Class Meetings:

Wednesdays, 9:00 am to 11:50 am.
GSB South, Room 151

Instructor:

Walter W. Powell
CERAS 532
Phone: 725-7391
Email: woodyp@stanford.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:00 -12:00, and by appointment

Teaching Assistant:

Jeannette Colyvas

Goals of the Course:

The aim of the course is to offer an understanding of how private, public, and nonprofit organizations differ in terms of their missions and capabilities. We focus on a variety of sectors – health care, social services, culture, education, etc. – where there is substantial competition and overlap among organizations from different sectors. We will read both some of the key theoretical treatments regarding the choice of institutional form, as well as research on different fields. Students will learn through readings, class discussion, and development of a research proposal that addresses questions of institutional form and organizational performance.

Requirements:

1.) Active class participation (30%) Each week there will be a group of students responsible for generating discussion questions about the readings. These questions should be in the form of a one page list, distributed to the class on Tuesday before the Wednesday class. Please send the questions to my assistant, Barbara Beuche (Beuche@stanford.edu) by Tuesday noon. I will assign students for each week.

2.) Short discussion memos – by NOON each Tuesday, students will submit a one to two page memo to me (woodyp@stanford.edu) summarizing their reactions to the readings. Ideally the memo should have three components: a.) a wow statement about an idea that you appreciated; b.) a puzzle regarding an idea that
you did not fully understand; and c.) a critique of a particular argument that you did not find persuasive. (30%)

3.) A research proposal – a 12-15-page research paper outlining a topic that interests you which you will analyze from the point of view of institutional form. For example, what difference might it make if university distance education was organized as a for-profit activity or a nonprofit enterprise? Why does it matter if day care centers are public, private, or nonprofit? Can an environment for basic research be supported by for-profit firms? Why are capital markets so underdeveloped in the nonprofit sector? Is the idea of a socially responsible commercial enterprise an oxymoron? Final drafts of the papers are due by March 13th. (40%)

**Readings:**


Reading packet from Field Copy, fcp1@aol.com, (650) 323-3155.

**Schedule:**

**January 7th: Introduction and Assignments**

**January 14th: Theory About Institutional Form**


**January 21nd: Institutional Form, Organizational Performance, and the Public Good**

Peter Frumkin, *On Being Nonprofit*, Chapters 1 and 2.


**January 28th: Health Care**


**February 4th: Higher Education**


**February 11th: Social Services**

Peter Frumkin, On Being Nonprofit, Chapter 3.


D. Young, “Commercialism in Nonprofit Social Service Associations,” Ch. 10 in B. Weisbrod, To Profit or Not to Profi. In reading packet.

**February 18th: Cultural Organizations**


L. Cain and D. Meritt, “Zoos and Aquariums,” Ch. 11 in B. Weisbrod, To Profit or Not to Profit. In reading packet.

C. LeMay and B. Weisbrod, “The funding perils of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting,” Ch. 13 in B. Weisbrod, To Profit or Not to Profit. In reading packet.

**February 25th: Advocacy, Values, and Faith**

Peter Frumkin, On Being Nonprofit, Chapter 4.


March 4th: Managerial Behavior in the Public, Private and Nonprofit Sectors


March 10th: Measuring and Valuing Performance that is Hard to Measure

Peter Frumkin, On Being Nonprofit, Chapter 6.


Various handouts on capital markets in the nonprofit sector, and challenges of going after earned income.