<h1 style="text-align:center">Nonprofits - A Communicator's Perspective – Spring 2026
PUR 4243
1 credit
Tuesdays 11:45 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.</h1>

Instructor: Bridgette Blair is located in Brooklyn, N.Y., and will teach remotely.

Office hours: By appointment.

Contact information: bridgette.blair@ufl.edu, or 540-550-3582 (mobile). Please allow at least 24 hours for a response during the week and 48 hours on weekends and holidays.

Course Prerequisites: None.

Course Description: Nonprofit communicators don't work in a vacuum. They work with grassroots organizers, campaign directors, researchers, lawyers, government relations directors and many others throughout the organization. For nonprofit communicators to be successful, they must understand the work of their colleagues, and their colleagues must understand what communicators do. In this course, we'll explore:

- What a nonprofit is.
- Why people go into nonprofit work.
- What public interest communications is.
- **How a nonprofit operates from the perspective of the organization's communicators**, delving into the roles and responsibilities of key players in the organization and how communicators work with them to effect positive social change.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain what a nonprofit organization is, how it operates and how it differs from foundations and government agencies.
2. Explain the roles and responsibilities of key players in a nonprofit organization.
3. Define public interest communications and how public interest communicators work with key players in a nonprofit to achieve the organization's goals.
4. Create a new nonprofit, crafting mission and vision statements, and outline a communications plan to achieve the organization's goals.

College of Journalism and Communications objectives
The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Tips for success
To be successful in this course, you just need an open mind and a desire to learn, question and explore. You'll do well as long as you come to class, keep up with the assignments and ask questions when you have them.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Textbook: None. Reading assignments will be provided via Canvas.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course.

Minimum Technology Requirements:
The University of Florida expects students entering an online program to acquire computer hardware and software appropriate to their degree program. Most computers are capable of meeting the following general requirements. A student's computer configuration should include:

- Webcam
- Microphone
- Broadband connection to the internet and related equipment (cable/DSL modem)
- Microsoft Office Suite installed (provided by the university)
- Adobe flash (for viewing video content)
- Adobe PDF

Minimum Technical Skills: To complete your tasks in this course, you will need a basic understanding of operating a computer and using word processing software.

Course Technology:

You will need reliable Internet access and a reliable computer with Microsoft Word (or other word processing software that can generate a .doc or .docx file), Adobe flash (for viewing video content) and Adobe PDF reader.

Materials/Supply Fees: There is no supply fee for this course.

Zoom: Zoom is an easy-to-use video conferencing service available to all UF students, faculty, and staff that allows for meetings of up to 100 participants.

You can find resources and help using Zoom here.

MUTUAL PLEDGE

As your instructor, I pledge to open a window for you into the world of nonprofits. In turn, I ask that you do the work necessary to help me guide you. That means keeping up with assignments, being prepared for class, participating in class discussions and putting time and thought into your work.

About classroom discussions
Please engage in class discussions with care, respect and empathy for others, recognizing that people come from an array of backgrounds and have different perspectives. My aim is for students from all backgrounds to find this course valuable and to view others' ideas as a resource and benefit. I aim to present materials that are respectful of ethnicity, race, culture, gender, sexuality, disability, age and socioeconomic status. However, I recognize the materials may have limitations and encourage suggestions for additional materials that offer different perspectives. Please let me know if you have any ideas as to how to make the course more effective for you and/or other students. If something was said in class (by anyone) that makes you uncomfortable, please talk to me about it. (Anonymous feedback is an option as well). If any class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

COURSE POLICIES

Deadlines
Communications work is deadline oriented, so it's important to meet assignment deadlines. If you do miss a deadline and submit your assignment late, I'll still assess it, but I will reduce the total number of points you can receive. The number of possible points will drop over three days to 0. I will make exceptions for students with documented medical emergencies (e.g. a doctor's note) or other genuine, documented emergencies. **Please notify me as soon as possible** if you have an emergency that will prevent you from completing an assignment. This policy doesn't pertain to the final project; if it is submitted after the due date and time, it will get a 0.

If submission of your assignment is delayed because of technical issues with Canvas, please report the problem immediately, receive a ticket number from the UF Computing Help Desk and email it to me immediately. The ticket will document the time and date of your issue.

For technical issues related to Canvas, contact the UF Help Desk at http://helpdesk.ufl.edu or (352) 392-HELP (4357).

Format for writing assignments
Please use Associated Press (AP) style for all writing assignments. If you don't have the AP Stylebook, you can subscribe to it online here or you can purchase a hard copy.

Attribution in writing assignments
You likely have heard about careers being derailed because someone copied material from a book, article or other source and represented it as their own (aka plagiarism). It's a serious offense, both in school and the professional world. That's why, in every assignment for this course, you must clearly attribute the source of your information, including information obtained from organizations' web sites or internal documents. **Do not copy anything word for word, regardless of the source, without putting quotes around it and crediting the source. Doing so constitutes plagiarism, which will result in a 0 on the assignment and could lead to disciplinary action.**

Artificial intelligence (AI)
In this course, you may be asked to use generative AI for some assignments. Increasingly, AI is used in the profession, so familiarity with generative AI tools is important. However, do not let

your creative thinking and editing skills lapse! When AI is allowed or encouraged in assignments, you will need to document how AI was used. This could include providing your original prompts, showing the editing that you did to the created content, or using appropriate citation of information obtained via generative AI.

Using AI when not explicitly allowed is considered a violation of the honor code, as you are presenting content as your own that was not fully created by you.

Various AI detection tools are available (built within Canvas and externally such as ZeroGPT), and many AI platforms follow very formulaic response patterns. If I am concerned that your work is not your own, I will try to verify the originality of your work. If unable to do so, I may ask you to resubmit the assignment detailing how you arrived at your submission.

Course technology
You will need reliable Internet access and a reliable computer with Microsoft Word (or other word processing software that can generate a .doc or .docx file), Adobe flash (for viewing video content) and Adobe PDF reader.

Class attendance
Attendance is important, as class participation is a key part of your learning and will factor into your grade. To get the most out of the class, you must be present and participate in discussions and class activities. Being present doesn't simply mean you're in the room; it also means you're attentive and not texting, checking email, doing other work or using social media during class. Excessive absences will harm your grade.

In the professional world, people who are running late or are going to be absent notify their employer and/or colleagues. It's a good habit to get into, so please notify me and your teammates (if you are working in a team) if you are going to be late or absent. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to make up lost work, get notes from another student or otherwise ensure that you have caught up on what you missed.

I recognize that things come up and you may have to miss a class during the semester. For that reason, at the end of the semester, I will drop each student's lowest participation grade.

Class professionalism … did you know?
Did you know that multitasking during class hinders your ability to absorb information and virtually ensures that you will miss a critical point being made by another student or the instructor? For that reason, please do not text, check email or social media unrelated to the class, browse unrelated websites or do other work during class. Also, please keep your camera on, so that you can engage fully in the class discussions.

Please be on time to class. Being late means missing updates and announcements, as well as the introduction to the material we are covering, which is key to putting it in context. (See note above about class attendance.)

Class-related notifications

Please log in to Canvas daily to check for class-related announcements. You may set up alerts to forward messages directly to your UF email address. To learn how to manage announcements, read this. To adjust your notification settings in Canvas, follow these guidelines.

Grading

Participating in class will be key to your learning and will be part of your grade. Likewise, the written analyses that you conduct outside of class will be critical because you will be applying concepts covered in class and in the reading assignments.

Here's how the grading will be weighted:

➢ Class participation (includes discussions, activities and in-class writing assignments): 33%

➢ Writing assignments (done outside of class): 33%

➢ Final project: 34%

For more information, please see the university's policy on grades and grading.

Students with special needs

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Academic honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Read the Honor Code here. You are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask me.

In every assignment for this course, you must clearly attribute the source of your information, including information obtained from organizations' web sites or internal documents. You must not copy anything word for word, regardless of the source, without putting quotes around it and crediting the source. Doing so constitutes plagiarism, which will result in a 0 on the assignment and could lead to disciplinary action.

Plagiarism

The Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code states that "A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.

Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.

Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.

Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author."

Course evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.

Recording of class

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student

within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule may change as the semester advances to reflect the progress and needs of the class.

Week 1 (Jan. 13) – Welcome – and Why Nonprofits?
Welcome to Nonprofits-A Communicator's Perspective! We will meet each other and go over what you'll learn in the course, as well as discuss why you're interested in nonprofit work.

Week 2 (Jan. 20) – Overview of the Nonprofit Landscape
We will provide an overview of what a nonprofit organization is and the variety of causes and sizes of nonprofits. We will examine a typical nonprofit organizational chart, discuss the responsibilities of key staff, and explore the relationships and reporting lines between departments and individuals.

We will define public interest communications and the vital strategic function it serves within a nonprofit.

Week 3 (Jan. 27) – Nonprofit Building Blocks: Mission, Vision, Theory of Change
We will look at the importance of having a consistent mission, vision and theory of change. Having a consistent message for an organization keeps everyone on the same page. Nonprofit communicators are key to ensuring that these building blocks are concise and clear.

The instructor also will describe the final project, discuss how to produce a final project outline and organize students into small teams for creating the final project.

Week 4 (Feb. 3) – Nonprofit SWOTs
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT): Every organization has them, and every organization should do its own SWOT Analysis. In class, we will discuss what a SWOT analysis is, and we'll do one together.

Week 5 (Feb. 10) – The Nonprofit Communications Department
We will examine the roles and responsibilities of nonprofit communicators and will talk with a nonprofit communicator. What are the top lessons they've learned about effectively engaging groups or individuals and driving them to take action that achieves their nonprofit

organization's goals? What do they love most about their work, and what are their biggest challenges? Given the rapidly evolving tools and practices of communicators, what changes do they foresee for the future?

Week 6 (Feb. 17) – The Founder/Executive Director
Nonprofit communicators work closely with a nonprofit founder/executive director on organization's core messaging and delivery of the messages. How do communicators work with them to best deliver the organization's message?

Week 7 (Feb. 24) -- The Subject-Matter Experts
Nonprofit communicators work with the organizational subject experts – including researchers, grassroots organizers or lawyers – to understand the issues and deliver the messages that need to get out to the public. How do communicators explain what the organization is doing in a way that is clear, accurate and authentic?

Week 8 (March 3) – The Volunteers
Many nonprofits involve volunteers at various levels. Volunteers can help to deliver an organization's services such as cleaning up parks or tutoring students, but volunteers can also run an organization on its board or as a director. We will examine the motivations behind volunteering at nonprofits and how communicators interact with volunteers.

Week 9 (March 10) – The Fundraisers
We will explore the functions of development staff and how they interact closely with communicators to tell the story of the organization and the impact of its work. We will consider:

1. What strategies are most effective for building and maintaining relationships with donors, especially for first-time or small nonprofits?
2. How do fundraisers determine the fundraising methods (e.g., events, grants, online campaigns) that are the best fit for a nonprofit organization?
3. What role does storytelling play in fundraising efforts? How do nonprofits create compelling narratives to inspire donors?

March 17 – Spring Break – No Class

Week 10 (March 24) – SWOT Analysis and Final Project Outline
We will revisit the final project assignment and how to create a project outline. We will examine some examples of past outlines and presentations to illustrate the quality of work teams need to achieve. We will also review group SWOT analyses.

Week 11 (March 31) – **In-Class Presentation Preparation**
Groups will work on their Final Projects in breakout rooms. Instructor will be available to answer any questions or provide help as needed.

Week 12 (April 7) – PUR4243 Panel Discussion
Now that you all have founded your own nonprofits (for your projects), we will have a panel discussion during class, to talk about what your key takeaways have been for the semester. Students will create the topic (or topics), become the panel, and facilitate the discussion.

Week 13 (April 14) – **Group Presentations**
Groups present their nonprofit plans.

Week 14 (April 21) – Group Presentations
Groups present their nonprofit plans.

READING MATERIALS

Reading and other course materials will be provided in Canvas.

ADDITIONAL UF RESOURCES

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall*,* 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.