
Week 1 review · Mon Aug 24 & Wed Aug 26, 2026

What even *is* this?

SPEA-V221 Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector · Ji Ma · O'Neill School, Indiana University

Week 1 at a glance

Mon Aug 24 · How this course works

No reading, no content. The studio, the site, the nine graded items, the 3-3-3 rule, the AI policy, teams, and your questions.

Wed Aug 26 · Naming the sector

The name-storm, Frumkin's three features and four functions, why a democracy cares, and where the data lives.

- **Readings.** Frumkin, "The Idea of a Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector," ch. 1 of *On Being Nonprofit*, the whole chapter, 28 pp.; the payoff, the four functions, is on pp. 24–27. Plus Stanford PACS, Lindborg, "Investing in Civil Society," 2 pp.
- **Due.** Nothing graded this week. **A1 On-Ramp, 5 points, due Sun Sep 6:** a candidate Bloomington-area organization plus a backup, each with EIN and 990 link, and your first outreach email, actually sent.

PACS Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society · EIN Employer Identification Number

v221.jima.me/week/w01 · the A1 spec

Week 1, Session 1

How this course works

Ji Ma · O'Neill School, Indiana University

Monday, August 24, 2026

Who is in this room

Hands up: how long have you lived here, and where did you grow up?

lived in Bloomington more than a year	lived here a few months	arrived this month	grew up outside the US
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- **Fresh eyes have to ask.** You cannot coast on what you assume you already know about a place, which is exactly the posture fieldwork needs.
- **You each carry a second case.** Every framework we meet gets tested against how things work where you are from.

Today: no reading, no content, no quiz

Course tour and questions

- What this studio is, and why it is built around organizations you can walk into
- A live tour of the course site and of Canvas
- The nine graded items, and where the writing effort actually goes
- Attendance, late work, and AI, in plain terms
- How teams get assigned
- **Q&A, for as long as it takes**

First deadline: A1, 5 points, Sunday Sep 6.

SPEA-V221: Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector

Mon & Wed, 9:35–10:50 AM · WH 008 · 3 credits · no exams

Rail A 50 pts, individual
Visit one Bloomington non-profit, compare its 990 with another subsector's, and write a report.

Rail B 50 pts, teams of 5 max
Build a nonprofit-startup plan in six studios, pitch it, then submit the revised plan.

The 990 Lab the shared discipline
A3 compares two filings. B2 checks a frozen AI summary against a filing. Lab week: Week 8.

Your grade comes from work you make: 100 points, no exams.

The syllabus is the home page: v221.jima.me

The Bloomington Nonprofit Lab

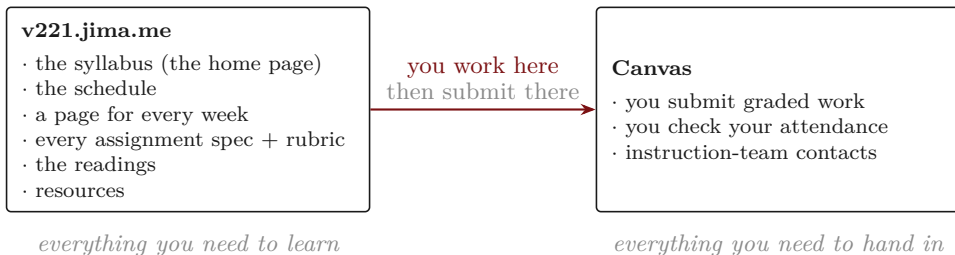
Local fieldwork; comparisons across countries

- **Visit locally.** Study a Bloomington-area nonprofit through its work and public records.
- **Use real comparables.** For the 990 assignments, choose organizations with an EIN and a usable filing.
- **Compare across countries.** Test each concept against Bloomington and a place you know: who counts as a charity, and what records are public?

*AI can help you draft. You must make the visit and **check the evidence.***

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Two places, two jobs



The site is public. A *TBD* marker means the session plan is provisional.

Live tour

Follow along on your phone or laptop if you have one

IN CLASS

1. v221.jima.me the home page *is* the syllabus.
2. v221.jima.me/schedule one row per week; click a topic to reach that week.
3. v221.jima.me/week/w01 the weekly skeleton: big question, readings, sessions, what is due.
4. v221.jima.me/assignments one page per graded component, each with its rubric.
5. v221.jima.me/resources where to find an organization, and where to look up its data. You are welcome to add your own sources.
6. **Canvas** the submission points and the attendance record.

The session plans carry a (*TBD*) marker: plan is not final, NOT that the topic is unsettled.

What you are graded on

100 raw points, nine items, more than half of them credit / no-credit

Two rails, one hundred points

Each item is graded on its own 0–100% scale; points earned = value $\times$ percent



100 points total

Nine graded items spread the work across the term; 65 points are due before Thanksgiving.

The nine

Rail A (50, individual)

A1 On-Ramp	5
A2 Visit evidence	10
A3 990 comparison	15
A4 Final report	20

Rail B (50, team)

B1 Concept brief	5
B2 Funding lab	10
B3 Assembled draft	10
B4 Capstone Pitch	10
B5 Final plan + appendix	15

Everything you upload is due a **Sunday, 11:59 PM**; the live pitch in Week 16 is the one exception. Build steadily and you are well ahead before the endgame starts.

Every spec and rubric: v221.jima.me/assignments

Two marking modes, and the difference matters to you

Credit / no-credit 55 points

Scored only on whether the work is *genuinely there*. Not on polish, not on prose.

The six checkpoints:

A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3.

These exist so a problem surfaces in early October instead of mid-November.

Rubric-graded 45 points

Three substantial pieces, each with a published rubric on its rail page.

A4 the report (20),

B4 the pitch (10),

B5 the plan (15).

This is where your writing time should go.

Attendance, late work, AI

the parts people email me about

The 3-3-3 rule

3

absences, free

3

late submissions, free

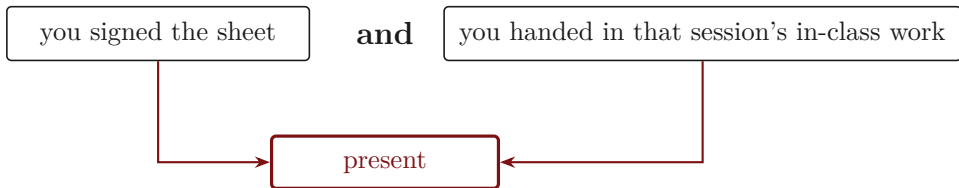
3

days each late pass covers

- Three of each, **no questions asked**. No email, no explanation, no doctor's note. Use them for illness, a job interview, a rough week, whatever comes up.
- After that the arithmetic takes over: **-1 point** per absence off the final grade, **0** for late work. Nine absences is an automatic F.
- The **-1** sits *outside* the 100 points, so it is a deduction, not a lost assignment.

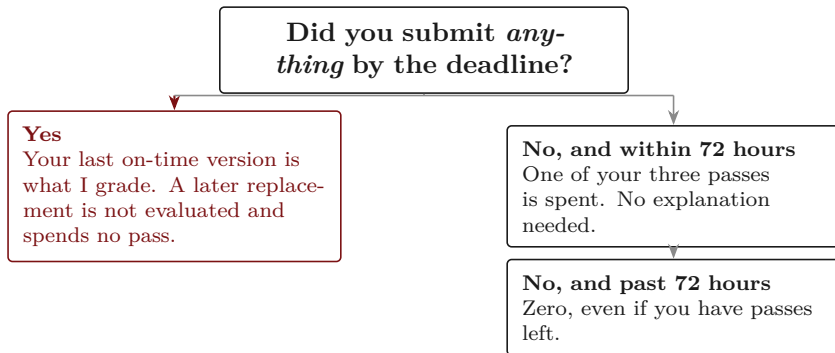
Canonical text: v221.jima.me, Policies

What “present” means here



- On a session with no in-class work, the signature alone does it. Today is one of those.
- **The sheet comes around once, at a moment I do not announce.** Sometimes early, sometimes in the last five minutes. There is no signing afterward, and signing for a friend puts you both into the academic-misconduct process.
- **In-class work is earned in the room.** If you are not there, that item scores 0 and there is **no make-up**. A free absence waives the attendance penalty; it never gives back an item's points.
- Attendance goes into Canvas after each session so you can check your own count. If something looks wrong, tell me **within a week** of that posting.

Late work, and the one trap in it



If you need a late pass, **do not submit a placeholder**. Your last on-time version is graded.

AI: allowed, expected, and graded

1. Disclose

which tools, and what for. Disclosure never lowers your grade; hiding it is the violation.

2. Log

as you go: the prompts, what came back, and what you changed, rejected, or corrected.

3. Verify

every fact about a real organization against a primary source. Cannot verify it, cannot submit it.

4. Own it

“The AI said so” is not a defense for an error, a fabricated source, or a made-up statistic.

Your log must show which claims you checked, the sources, and any corrections.

Full how-to: v221.jima.me/assignments/ai-process-log

What that looks like on a real organization

Middle Way House, Bloomington · EIN 23-7300355

Weak, and earns nothing: *“I used ChatGPT to summarize the organization and it was all correct.”*

The AI claimed	Form 990, FY2023	What I did
“about \$4.2M in revenue”	total revenue \$1,996,558	false; corrected, Part VIII
“the year closed in the black”	expenses \$2,531,078 , \$535K above revenue	false; corrected, Part IX

Three ingredients in every strong entry: the **organization** named, the **AI claim** quoted, and the **primary source** cited precisely enough that I could check it in a minute.

EIN Employer Identification Number

Middle Way House Inc, EIN 23-7300355, FY2023 Form 990 via [ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer](#)

Teams

- **Teams of 5 max**, and they exist only for Rail B. Rail A stays individual all term, so your site visits are yours.
- **I assign teams randomly in Week 2.** You do not need to recruit teammates.
- **Individually accountable.** Each teammate presents the section they authored at the pitch, and a confidential peer evaluation runs at the end.
- **The plan grows one plank per module**, built in six studio sessions, and the three credit checkpoints bank what the studios built.

Studio work counts toward attendance. Photograph the collected sheets to use in your team plan.

Before Wednesday

- **Read two things**, both linked from **the Week 1 page**: Frumkin, “The Idea of a Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector” (the *whole* chapter, 28 pp.; the payoff is at the end), and the short Stanford PACS piece.
- **Bring a laptop** if you have one. Wednesday ends with a live data look-up.
- **Bring one organization from home.** Wherever you grew up: a charity, a temple or church, a village association, a sports club, a foundation. We start Wednesday with those, not with Bloomington.

IN CLASS

First graded item: A1 On-Ramp, 5 points, due Sun Sep 6. A candidate organization plus a backup, each with its EIN and a link to its Form 990 (a full 990 or a 990-EZ, not the 990-N), one sentence on subsector, and your first outreach email *actually sent*, pasted in with the date.

If nobody replies, that is expected and it is not your fault. Flag it at a progress check-in.

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Spec: v221.jima.me/assignments/site-visits · Scout at bloomingtonvolunteernetwork.org

Questions.

Anything: workload, deadlines, the visit requirement,
what happens if an organization never writes back.

Week 1, Session 2

Naming the sector, and where its data lives

Ji Ma · O'Neill School, Indiana University

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

This week's big question

What even *is* a nonprofit?

argue

sort real organizations, and watch the piles fail

name

three shared features, ten contested labels

frame

four jobs the sector does

check

where the data lives, and how to pull it

Use a source someone else can check for every claim about a real organization.

Frumkin, *On Being Nonprofit*, ch. 1 · v221.jima.me/week/w01

Name-storm

start where you actually know something

Name-storm

Start with organizations you remember from home.

IN CLASS

Sheet 1 of your handout. I collect it at the end.

1. **Three minutes, alone.** Top box: organizations from **wherever you grew up**. Include charities, religious groups, or clubs; add Bloomington examples. Aim for ten, with a city or country for each.
2. **Three minutes with the person beside you.** Read the lists out. Ask about the ones you do not recognize; that is the useful half.
3. **Two minutes.** Write each one into a column: **nonprofit, for-profit, government**.
4. **What you could not agree on goes in the bottom strip**, starred. Star it twice if the disagreement was about *whose country's rules you were using*.

One rule: you may not justify a placement with “it does good things.” When we come back together, I want the *bottom strip*, not the columns.

Where the disagreements land

Call out your starred cases first. Then compare them with mine.

nonprofit

a food bank

for-profit

a coffee shop

government

the city parks dept.

and these refuse to sort

the university?

the hospital?

*the chamber
of commerce?
an unbanked
village fund?*

the credit union?

a state-chartered NGO?

*Frumkin starts with **contested boundaries**: people disagree about which organizations belong.*

NGO nongovernmental organization

Frumkin, *On Being Nonprofit*, ch. 1, pp. 1–2

Two kinds of disagreement

Different facts, or different definitions?

“What kind of thing is this?”

A hospital, a credit union, a chamber of commerce. The argument is about what the organization *does* and who benefits.

Today's session answers this one.

“Whose rules are we using?”

A state-chartered NGO, a registered village association, a church that files nothing. The argument is about which legal system is doing the sorting.

Monday's session answers this one.

The second argument is only visible because this room is from many places. Keep your starred notes: we come back to them on Monday, when Anheier gives us four different ways to draw the line and refuses to pick one.

NGO nongovernmental organization

So what do they have in common?

Frumkin, chapter 1

Three features that hold the category together

They do not coerce, they do not distribute, and nobody owns them

noncoercive

nobody can be made
to give, join, or attend

non-distributing

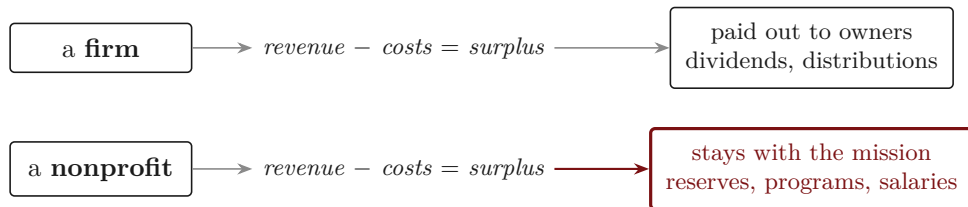
surplus cannot be paid
out to anyone

no clear owner

many claimants,
no shareholders

- **Noncoercive** pushes nonprofits *toward* the market: like a firm, a nonprofit depends on people freely choosing it. Unlike a state, it cannot tax, jail, or regulate.
- **Non-distributing** pushes them back *toward* government: neither can pay out a profit, and in both cases that is part of what underwrites public confidence.
- **Ownerless** separates them from *both*. Donors, clients, board, staff, and the community all have claims; none of them owns the place. Board members are stewards, not owners.

The non-distribution constraint



*Nonprofits may run a surplus. The constraint governs **where it goes**.*

All three are under pressure

Noncoercive? Community service as a condition of aid. Volunteering as a graduation requirement. Professional associations that grant and deny licenses to practise medicine and law.

Non-distributing? Executive compensation. Bond offerings. Large endowments invested for long-run financial return rather than immediate need.

Ownerless? Boards hold considerable leeway over the organizations they steward, most visibly when assets move, as in a conversion to for-profit status.

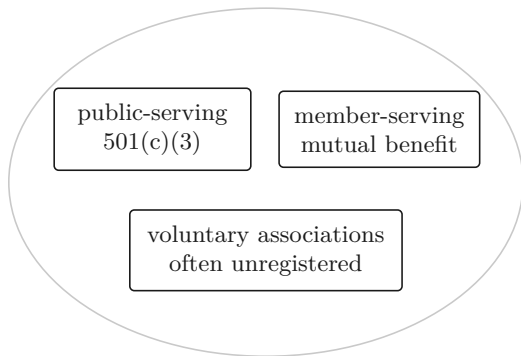
These features help compare organizations, but difficult cases remain.

Frumkin, pp. 6–8

What is actually under the tent

Frumkin's Figure 1.1 includes informal groups.

the nonprofit and voluntary sector



Public-serving. Social service agencies, private colleges, clinics and hospitals, museums, think tanks.

Member-serving. Credit unions, business leagues, service clubs, veterans' organizations, trade associations.

Voluntary associations. The clubs, networks, and neighbourhood groups that never registered anywhere.

Frumkin counts the third group on purpose: leaving it out would “grant far too much deference to the tax treatment of nonprofits.”

What's in a name?

Each term draws a different boundary.

- **tax-exempt sector** narrow, accurate, misses every unregistered group
- **nongovernmental (NGO)** defines the sector against the *state*; the term that travels best outside the US
- **independent sector** named for a 1979 trade association; independence was a wish
- **third sector** third after whom? reads as a demotion
- **civil society** old and grand; classically included the family and the firm
- **the commons** draws the boundary ethically: mutuality, shared goods, fairness
- **charitable sector** echoes Victorian alms-giving; spotlights donors over clients
- **voluntary sector** includes the informal, obscures the professionalization
- **nonproprietary** precise about ownership; does not separate nonprofits from government
- **nonprofit and voluntary sector** Frumkin's compromise, and this course's

Even “sector” is contested: it implies a consistency that a category holding both a research hospital and a book club does not have.

Frumkin, pp. 10–16

NGO nongovernmental organization

Why the naming fight is not just semantics

Each name picks an enemy.

“Nongovernmental” defines the sector against the state.
“Nonprofit” defines it against the market.

Each name decides who is counted.

“Tax-exempt” counts registrations. “Voluntary” counts the book club too.

Each name is politically legible.

Frumkin’s inkblot: liberals and conservatives both embrace this sector, for opposite reasons.

*Before using a sector statistic, ask: **who did they count?***

Frumkin, pp. 16–19

Four jobs the sector does

the payoff at the end of the chapter

Two questions, two axes

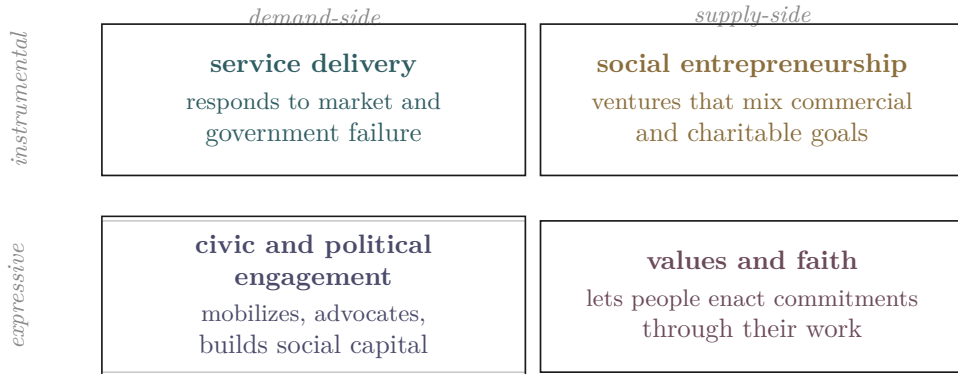
Why does it exist? **Demand:** nonprofits arise to meet needs the market and the state leave unmet, so gap-filling. **Supply:** they arise because donors, volunteers, and social entrepreneurs push resources and visions into the world, whether or not a gap was waiting.

What makes it valuable? **Instrumental:** the value is in the outcome, so services delivered and problems reduced. **Expressive:** the value is in the act, so giving, serving, and belonging can be worth doing regardless of the outcome.

Donors' priorities can compete with clients' needs.

The four functions

Frumkin's Figure 1.2, one cell at a time



Put your own organization in a cell

BRING YOUR OWN

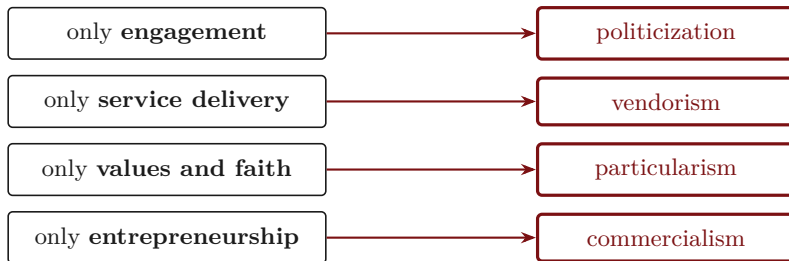
Take the organization you brought from home, or one you starred on your handout.

1. Which cell is it *mostly* in? Say it to your neighbour in one sentence.
2. Which *second* cell does it also occupy? Use its activities as evidence.
3. Would it be in the same cell if it moved here? A congregation that runs a school, a union-linked welfare fund, a state-registered youth association: some of these change cell when the legal system changes.

Two or three volunteers: explain which functions your organization combines.

An organization can perform several functions; explain which ones its work supports.

Each function, taken to excess, has a disease



*Frumkin argues that **balancing the four functions** helps sustain public trust.*

Why a democracy has a stake in this

Stanford PACS · Nancy Lindborg, “Investing in Civil Society,” January 2026

2.4 billion

people living where civic space has effectively
disappeared

since 2019

the period over which trackers report civil
society weakening under targeted effort

- Lindborg’s frame, from years in fragile states: whether a country avoids collapse or authoritarianism often turns on whether it has an **active civil society**.
- What it does maps onto Frumkin’s expressive-demand cell: it enables collective action, educates people about their rights, and **shines a light on corruption and abuse of power**.
- Her practical point for funders: *how* you fund matters as much as what. Project grants do not buy the strategy, security, and finance function that let an organization survive pressure.

PACS Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society

This is a foundation president writing about her own foundation’s strategy. Read it as an argument with an author and an interest, not as neutral background.

Where the data lives

everything you claim this term has to be checkable

The org-research stack

Financial figures and legal status

When you need. . .	Go to
a real financial number	ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer , Form 990s, free, no account projects.propublica.org/nonprofits
proof it is exempt, and how	IRS Tax-Exempt Organization Search apps.irs.gov/app/eos

These two answer almost everything you will be asked this term. Start at the first.

IRS Internal Revenue Service

The org-research stack

Mission, programs, and sector statistics

When you need...

Go to

mission, leadership, programs

Candid / GuideStar, plus the organization's own site
candid.org

how big the whole sector is

Urban Institute / NCCS, and the NTEE codes
nccs.urban.org

All four are grouped by purpose on v221.jima.me/resources, and you are welcome to add your own.

NCCS National Center for Charitable Statistics · NTEE National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities

The 990 is an American artifact

Other countries publish different records.

- Public Form 990s let you examine real nonprofit finances. Other countries provide different records.
- Some publish a comparable register: [the Charity Commission for England and Wales](#), [OSCR in Scotland](#), [Singapore's Charity Portal](#). Some publish far less. Some publish nothing at all.
- Sometimes the state holds the data but nobody can research it until somebody rebuilds it. **RICF** consolidates Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs registrations and archived annual reports into one searchable database.
- What a register publishes varies too: full accounts, or only a name and a purpose; trustee names, or none; annual filings, or a one-time registration never updated since.

BRING YOUR OWN

One country you know, before Monday. Does a public register exist? What does it publish, and what does it withhold? Bring a register URL, or explain where you searched and what you could not find.

Data Lab #0

Sheet 2; 15 minutes, laptops open. Ungraded; keep it.

IN CLASS

1. Open **ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer** and search for **one US nonprofit**: one from your own list, one you have heard of anywhere in the country, or a Bloomington organization you passed this week.
2. Open its most recent **Form 990**.
3. Find **one real number**: total revenue, total expenses, total assets, or the compensation of the highest-paid person.
4. **Screenshot it**. Note the organization, the tax year, and where on the form it came from.
5. Write one sentence: *what surprised you?*

Debrief, and what is due

One sentence each: what surprised you?

IN CLASS

A1 On-Ramp · 5 points · due Sun Sep 6 · credit / no-credit

- A candidate **Bloomington-area** organization *and* a backup, each with its **EIN** and a link to its **Form 990** (a full 990 or a 990-EZ, not the 990-N postcard), plus one sentence on subsector and why you want to visit.
- Your **first outreach email, actually sent**, pasted in with the date. Not a draft.

Start now: visits take weeks to arrange.

For Monday: Anheier, “Defining the Nonprofit Sector,” pp. 66–73, and a skim of the IRS page on 501(c)(3) exemption requirements. Bring your register answer; I will hand your handout back.

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v221.jima.me/assignments/site-visits · bloomingtonvolunteernetwork.org · cfbmc.org grant list

Week 1 review

test yourself before Monday

Can you define these without looking?

What holds the category together

Term	You should be able to say
non-distribution constraint	where a surplus may and may not go, and why that is not the same as forbidding a surplus
noncoercive	what a nonprofit cannot do that a government can
ownerless, and stewardship	why board members are not owners
public-serving <i>vs</i> member-serving	which one 501(c)(3) names, and an example of the other
voluntary association	why Frumkin insists on counting groups that never registered

Can you define these without looking?

The framework, and the tools

Term	You should be able to say
demand-side <i>vs</i> supply-side	two accounts of why the sector exists, and the uncomfortable consequence of the second
instrumental <i>vs</i> expressive	two accounts of what makes the sector valuable
the four functions	all four cells, and which two axes produce them
the four pathologies	what each function looks like taken to excess
EIN, Form 990	what each is, and where you go to read one

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Five questions you should be able to answer

1. Name Frumkin's **three shared features**, and say which sector each one pushes nonprofits *toward* and which it pushes them *away from*.
2. **Can a nonprofit run a surplus?** Answer in one sentence, and say what the constraint actually governs.
3. Pick **two names** for the sector from the ten we listed. For each, say what the name implies about *who gets counted*.
4. Put one organization you know into the **four-function grid**. Name its main cell, its second cell, and one thing that would move it.
5. You are handed a statistic about “the nonprofit sector.” What is your **first question**, and why is it not “is that true?”

If question 4 is hard, that is the normal experience and not a gap in your notes. Most real organizations sit between cells, which is Frumkin's own point when he argues that **balance** across the four functions is what keeps the sector legitimate.

Carry into Week 2

- **Read** Anheier, “Defining the Nonprofit Sector,” **pp. 66–73**, and skim the IRS page on 501(c)(3) exemption requirements. Monday settles what the arguments on your handout were about.
- **Bring** the answer to the register question: does the country you know best publish a public charity register, what does it publish, and what does it withhold? *No register* is a legitimate answer, and a more interesting one.
- **Start A1 now.** Visits take weeks to arrange, and an organization that never replies is expected rather than your fault. The fallback ladder is on the Resources page.

IRS Internal Revenue Service

v221.jima.me/week/w02 · bloomingtonvolunteernetwork.org · [ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer](#)