

FIN4715 – Measuring Success in Philanthropy and Impact Investing¹

AY2024-25 Semester 1

(Tentative – subject to change)

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Philanthropy as defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary philanthropy is an active effort with a clear intention of promoting human welfare (philanthropy, n.d.). The creation of new wealth in the past decades has pushed the traditional notion of philanthropy into strategic philanthropy where funders deploy their resources strategically to address societal problems and achieve maximum impact. With the ever-expanding need for solutions for societal problems, impact investments have emerged as credible solutions to solving the world's most pressing societal problems along with strategic philanthropy. Both strategic philanthropy and impact investments borrow the best practices, to create more strategic impact-creation practices with emphases on operational efficiency, and measurable impacts, alongside financial returns in alignment with the interests of all the stakeholders involved.

This course focuses on strategic philanthropy and impact investments with clear intentions and measurable impacts. Throughout the semester, the class will learn how to define and identify impacts and how to measure them properly. An underlying theme of this module is to identify strategic philanthropy and impact investment opportunities that create sustainable impact organizations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

A sound knowledge of philanthropy and impact investing is essential for the following participants in the intersection of social capital, private capital, and public markets: family offices, foundations, venture philanthropists, private bankers, impact and private equity investors, corporates developing a strategic CSR program, policymakers, and government agencies.

The objectives of the module are to enable students to:

1. Understand the development of philanthropy and impact investing in the region and globally.
2. Gain new knowledge and skills in impact program and project evaluation to reach the intended impacts.
3. Gain new knowledge and skills needed to monitor and evaluate impacts.
4. Examine issues and challenges in impact assessment, philanthropy, and impact investing.

This course should help students to be better participants and leaders in the strategic philanthropy and impact investing sectors.

PREREQUISITE

There is no pre-requisite for this course.

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TOPICS COVERED

The course will cover the following topics:

1. Philanthropy and its evolution
2. Impact investment
3. Impact creation cycle
4. Theory of Change and Logic Model
5. Impact assessment
6. Financing positive impact creation

COURSE MATERIALS

Course materials and readings, including lecture slides, videos, articles, case studies, and other information available from various sources will be distributed through Canvas.

ASSESSMENTS

Component	Weight
Participation	19%
Individual assignments	36%
Group Project	
Report (group)	20%
Presentation (group & individual)	20%
Groupmates evaluation (individual)	5%
Total	100%

Letter grades will be assigned based on the class distribution of the course's total scores. The grade cutoff points will be adjusted based on the class's overall performance.

Class Participation

In this module, simply attending lectures is a necessary condition, but **not sufficient** to receive a favorable class participation mark. The class participation mark will be allocated by the instructor based on the quality of the student's participation in class discussions and group presentations Q&A.

In evaluating class participation, the instructor will look for comments that are thoughtful and lead the discussion forward. The instructor's evaluation will be based on how well students have participated in class discussion, looking at the **quality**, not the quantity, of students' participation. Students can improve their participation mark considerably by coming to class prepared and staying informed of current events. Participation points are awarded **at the instructor's discretion** and are based solely on **the instructor's opinion** of students' efforts and contribution to class learning. These points are not automatically given but must be earned and they are **not subject to negotiation**.

Individual assignments

A series of individual assignments will be assigned throughout the semester. The assignments will assess students' understanding of the topics discussed in class. Please note that the assignment marking emphasizes quality, not quantity, and as such, words limits are imposed on essay answers.

Group project report (group evaluation)

Students are to work in small groups (more details to be announced later). Each group is free to decide how labor will be divided among group members, ensuring fair and equal contributions of all group members. If there are significant discrepancies in contributions, individual marks may be assigned based on each student's contribution to the group project.

Group project presentation (group & individual evaluation)

The assessment is aggregated from:

- Presentation slides (group evaluation)
- Presentation (individual evaluation)
 - All members of the group are expected to present.

Each group is free to decide how labor will be divided among group members, ensuring fair and equal contributions of all group members. If there are significant discrepancies in contributions, individual marks may be assigned based on each student's contribution to the group project.

Group project groupmates evaluation (individual evaluation)

At the end of the semester, a group evaluation survey will be distributed for each member to rate and comment on the performance of their fellow group members.

Submission of the completed groupmates evaluation is **mandatory** and non-submission will receive a **zero mark** for this assessment component.

LATE SUBMISSION

Students must submit their work before each assignment's due date. Any **late submission will not be accepted**, as such, it will be counted as a non-submission and will receive a **zero mark**.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Missing too many classes without valid reasons will affect the student's participation mark. It is also important to note that students are responsible for the materials posted on Canvas and discussed in class. Students are also responsible for all announcements made on Canvas and during class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY & PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT do not require specialist knowledge to use. Many of these AI tools are commonly used in social media, for example, to create content and disguise and refine content created from programmes like ChatGPT. We understand that students will be drawn to using these AI Tools, as they would for any other electronic aid.

However, to be clear, normal academic rules still apply. As noted in the Code of Student Conduct:

"The University takes a strict view of cheating in any form, deceptive fabrication, plagiarism and violation of intellectual property and copyright laws. Any student who is found to have engaged in such misconduct is subject to disciplinary action by the University."

With respect to AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT and image generation tools), your instructor will clarify whether the use of these tools as inputs into your assignment development process is acceptable. AI is a technology that requires skill to use, and knowledge about when and how to use it. If you use ChatGPT or any other such AI

tool in your work, you must provide a proper representation of how you used the tool and what prompts you used to generate output. Failure to cite its use constitutes academic misconduct.

Further, as with any information source, be aware that minimal efforts yield low quality results. You will need to refine your work and fact check the output, as you would double-check information from any source. Further, you should be selective in how and when you use such tools instead of using it for each and every assignment you create.

To summarise:

1. Always check with your instructors on what are the permitted uses of AI tools.
2. Have a discussion at the start of a course about the use of AI.
3. Where permitted, acknowledge your use of AI.
4. You remain responsible for the quality of your work and its appropriate representation.
5. Failure to follow the above steps can lead to a concern about plagiarism (academic dishonesty).

As always, you have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard.

Additional guidance can be found at:

- Admission Condition: <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/administrative-policies-procedures/acceptance-record#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>
- NUS Code of Student Conduct: <http://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>
- Academic Integrity Essentials: <https://libguides.nus.edu.sg/new2nus/acadintegrity#s-lib-ctab-22144949-4>
- Guidelines on the Use of AI Tools For Academic Work: <https://libguides.nus.edu.sg/new2nus/acadintegrity#s-lib-ctab-22144949-3>

REFERENCES

Philanthropy. (n.d.) *In Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/philanthropy>