**POLS 4710/5710 Class Blog Guidelines**

*To get us started, and to give you a frame for organizing your individual post, I offer the following basic guidelines for this assignment. Note: As much as I’ve tried to anticipate most of your questions in advance, the group inevitably will have others and the assignment may have an unexpected twist once we get started. We will add to this list, and adapt if necessary, as needed.*

**Post Content/Focus**

* Write for a rural nonprofit practitioner. Target your post – and your approach – to addressing this person’s professional needs and interests.
  + Second person is appropriate in this setting. It’s okay to address the reader as “you,” especially if it will help you tailor your writing to that person’s needs.
  + Write conversationally. This is a practice-focused blog, not an academic paper. How would you speak if you were face to face with your target reader?
* Avoid both sector and academic jargon.
* Draw from your proposal as you outline and write your post.
  + Focus on the practical question you said you would address, beginning with the opening sentence.
  + Provide content and resources that will lead your reader toward the contribution you said you wanted to make to his/her learning.
  + Make sure you have offered the resources/content to equip your reader to enact the practical outcome.
* Link liberally, especially when referencing information from others. Look for ways to not only link your reader to additional sources of information but to your *original* sources of information. For example, if I am sharing a quote from Cathy Trower’s new book, I would cite it this way:
  + “…Cathy Trower says in her new book, [***The Practitioner’s Guide to Governance as Leadership***](http://www.amazon.com/Practitioners-Guide-Governance-Leadership-High-Performing/dp/1118109872/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1355779588&sr=1-1&keywords=cathy+trower)(p. 25),…”(Underline here is a working web link. Go ahead and boldface your link to raise its visibility. Click on this one to see where it takes you.).
* If I were linking to an online article or website (which, frankly, is better than myriad quotes from your textbooks), I would do it this way:
  + “…Independent Sector’s **[Five Deceptively Simple Questions](http://www.chartingimpact.org/about/five-questions/)** about nonprofit impact...” (Again, the underline actually indicates a working link to the resource I’m citing.)
* Close with a call to action.

**Post Format**

* Open with a brief (no more than one sentence), compelling lead paragraph that lets the reader know immediately what you will be discussing. Tell your reader what you will discuss, in an interesting and inviting way.
* Short is best when blogging. But to give you a little room to work, I’ve set an upward limit of 800 words. That will allow you to share links to several quality resources (hint, hint!)
* Paragraphs also should be short (no lengthy sentences, either). Big blocks of gray type scare away readers, especially on a web site (like a blog).
* *Where appropriate,* bulleted lists can be a blogger’s friend. Don’t turn content into lists if it doesn’t make sense to do so. But it can be a user-friendly way to present information in a concise manner.
* Don’t mess with font type and size. Use the default settings, so that posts will be uniform in appearance.
  + To create subheads, boldface the regular type.

**Other**

* We will err on the side of caution when it comes to copyright. Therefore, we will not include images in our posts. You *will* be allowed to insert a YouTube video – since YouTube offers an embed option (that *most* contributors will leave activated), you may embed a *carefully selected* video from that site that is germane to your topic. (NOTE: that does require that you know your way around html to make this work.) Even though it is embedded, we will err on the side of stating the obvious and include a link to the original YouTube version directly underneath the video.
* Also stating the obvious: *Don’t even think about plagiarizing the work of others.* This is a public space; if I don’t catch your transgression, someone else will, and you (and I) will be in deep, deep trouble. Don’t steal from others. Don’t quote excessively from others. This should be your own synthesis of your research on a topic that you are exploring on our behalf. Connecting your readers to those great resources is exactly what you should be doing in your post. Don’t steal it; point your audience directly to it.