

## PHILANTHROPY

My course this spring will be: Philanthropy and charity: can we save our democracy through generosity?

The question I want to ask is why should it be necessary for a democracy to provide welfare benefits (a social safety net) through voluntary gifts from citizens? Isn't that why we have a progressive tax system? If it is the case that a free market system will inevitably produce great asymmetries in wealth across the population, shouldn't the free market winners pay back (through taxation) enough wealth to support their less economically successful neighbors? In other words, I want to ask whether we should consider charity and philanthropy social duties or simply social opportunities?

We will look at the problem both historically (I am, after all a professional historian) and analytically. I will try to show how, although charity has always played a role, addressing individual cases of distress, philanthropy is a different and more recent phenomenon, the product of the extraordinary accumulation of individual industrial wealth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Think John D. Rockefeller, Sr. and Andrew Carnegie. The new philanthropists sought to change the world for the better. Philanthropy was largely delivered through the mechanism of an American innovation, the philanthropic foundation. But after a century of development, there emerged a new form of megawealth, and new forms of philanthropy. Think Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg and Mackenzie Scott. We will look at both the new mechanisms used by the megaphilanthropists, and the new conceptions they brought to their giving. And we will ask, finally, whether all of this promotes or hinders the purposes of democracy in the United States (and elsewhere).

For the historical parts of the course, please read the new edition of Olivier Zunz, **Philanthropy in America: A History - Updated Edition**(Princeton U. Press, 2014) Paperback. For the analytical parts please read Rob Reich, **Just Giving: Why Philanthropy Is Failing Democracy and How It Can Do Better** (Princeton U. Press, 2020) Paperback. There is a big bibliography on recent philanthropy, and you may also want to read a popular journalistic critique: Anand Giridharadas **Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World**(Knopf, 2018).

This will be a eight-week course on Zoom. As usual, I will use a lot of video to illustrate the ideas and developments referred to in the classes, and I will try each week to allow time for questions from students. We may have a couple of guest experts to join us from time to time.

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**LEADER:** Stanley Katz recently retired as a Princeton University professor of public policy at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, and has trained in history and law.

**LOCATION:** Zoom

**TUESDAYS:** 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., 8 weeks beginning March 1 through April 19

**MAXIMUM:** Unlimited