Description
Nonprofit organizations provide an intriguing alternative institutional form (neither private nor government) for provision of services in higher education, health care, religion, aid to the poor, research, and arts and culture. To that end, it is important to understand how nonprofits influence and are influenced by public decision-making. We first consider the role and behavior of these organizations and how they fit into the economic, political, and social landscape. We will then examine the role of nonprofits as a way to advance the public interest both broadly, and specifically in terms of how these third sector organizations both influence and are influenced by public policy and the policy process. Students are welcome and encouraged to explore their own specific area of interest related to the topic.

The class is structured so that readings and assignments throughout the semester scaffold in ways that build on and complement previous work. The final culminating assignment, a research paper, will identify a social problem that needs to be addressed; situate that problem in the literature and in practice; identify and analyze data relevant to the problem; and synthesize the evidence in ways that yield insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to the paper’s focus.

Two final points about the structure of the course. First, this is Capstone Seminar, a culminating experience in the political science major. As such, it should go without saying, that students must take responsibility for their own learning. It is expected that students will attend and prepare for every class session; submit all assignments on time; and actively participate in class activities and discussions. And second, the best way for students to get the most benefit from this experience is to remain curious. The fundamental purpose of this course is to help students transform their curiosity into inquiry. This is done by listening to the diverse voices and perspectives of our classmates and respecting each other and the process enough to speak up and share ideas. In this way, students not only get out of the experience what they put into it, they also benefit from the investment of everyone else in the class.

Learning Objectives
At the conclusion of this class students will be able to:
- Demonstrate mastery of the independent research process
- Display skills in critical analysis and effective communication
Course Policies
The following policies will govern the class.

Grading Scale
Student performance expectations are quite high in this class, yet I am confident that you are up to the challenge. There is no curve, no “rounding up”, and no extra credit – grades will only reflect the individual effort put forth in the class. Grades will be assigned based on the total points you have earned.

B- (271-285)  C- (236-251)  D- (204-213)

Summary of Due Dates and Point Distribution

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<td>One-page Proposal</td>
<td>January 24</td>
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<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>February 26</td>
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<td>Policy Brief</td>
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<td>Literature Review (draft)</td>
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<td>Peer Review</td>
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<td>IGNITE© Presentation</td>
<td>April 16 or 18</td>
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<td>Final Paper (due at the time of the final exam)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Engagement</td>
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<td>50</td>
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</tbody>
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Course Evaluation
You will have the opportunity to evaluate the course toward the end of the semester. I will remind students to bring a device to class so that they can complete the evaluation during class time.

Attendance Policy
Being in and on time (tardiness is an inexcusable form of disrespect) for class is essential. Since we learn best through reflection and application, class meeting time provides the ideal setting to foster learning. If, for whatever reason you cannot make it to class, it is your responsibility to contact me before the scheduled class time. Attendance and participation are part of your grade. Seven absences from this course, excused or unexcused, will result in your failing the course.

Additionally, all students must make an appointment to see me at some point during the two week-period prior to spring break so that we are all on the right track. Be proactive and thoughtful about this meeting because I am out of town at a conference March 9-13.

Communication and Engagement:
Please do not hesitate to contact me. My preferred method of initial communication is email. I am not very good at checking voicemail messages so leaving telephone messages is likely to be ineffective.
The way you present yourself in written and verbal form says a lot about who you are, your work ethic, and your priorities. Consider every interaction you have with faculty and your peers an opportunity to demonstrate the best version of yourself. Here are a few tips:

**Ask Three, Then Me**
All of us receive mass amounts of email every week. Often times, I will receive email from students asking questions that could easily be answered by reading the syllabus or asking a classmate. To that end, before emailing me, please ask three, then me:
1. Consult the class schedule and syllabus.
2. Check OAKS for announcements and instructions, including the Expectations, Due Dates, and Assignment-related Questions discussion board.
3. Confer with classmates.
If you still don’t know the answer to your question, please reach out to me for assistance.

**Email Etiquette**
Please be sure to follow a few simple rules when corresponding using email:
1. Include some type of respectful greeting and please spell my name correctly (e.g., Dear Dr. Millesen, Hello Dr. Millesen, Hi Dr. Millesen, or simply Dr. Millesen). Do not start your email with the word “Hey” or by simply launching into an explanation of whatever issue you might need addressed.
2. Use complete sentences and real words (e.g., “thru” is not a real word)
3. Do not add “!” to your email messages. This will not make me read or respond to them any quicker.
4. Proofread your messages
5. Sign your name
6. Give me ample time to respond before you send a follow-up. I typically answer email within 24 hours, although on the weekends it may be longer. It is unlikely that I will reply to email after 10:00pm.

**College of Charleston Honor Code and Academic Integrity**
Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to a misunderstanding will handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed by both the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.
Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration—working together without permission—is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted.

Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information stored on a cell phone), copying from others’ exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor. Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://www.cofc.edu/general/documents/handbook.pdf

Accommodations for Documented Disabilities:
The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply for services at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. You can contact Center at SNAP@cofc.edu or (843) 953-1431. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before any accommodation is needed.

Weekly Schedule
All reference materials are available in OAKS

January 8 – Introduction & Expectations
Class Activities:
Students will complete a class questionnaire, the results of which will be used to augment the resource and reference materials as well as shape the course content

January 10 – Questionnaire Review & Identifying a Social Issue
Class Activities:
• Review questionnaire data and share syllabus implications
• Identify a social issue of personal significance

January 15 – Introduction to Inquiry
What makes for a good research study?
Reference Materials:

January 17 – Accessing Relevant Data
The final project requires students to identify and analyze data relevant to a social problem of interest. Most, if not all projects will use secondary source data.
Class Activities:
Identify relevant and appropriate data sources that will yield important insights
January 22 – The Inevitable Inadequacy of Governments and Nonprofits
Why do we even have a nonprofit sector?

Reference Materials:

January 24 – Size & Scope of the Nonprofit Sector
How big is the sector and what does it do?

Reference Materials:
The Independent Sector website provides a lot of information regarding the size and scope of the nonprofit sector. Spend some time learning about the sector’s economic impact, its contribution to society, and the public policy issues that are facing the sector today. The National Council on Nonprofits also provides information on contemporary policy issues.

McKeever, B.S. (2015). The Nonprofit Sector in Brief 2015. There is not a similar publication for 2016-2018, yet the data are available. We will update this information in class.

Due Today at 9:00am
One-page Proposal

January 29 – Nonprofits & Public Policy, Part 1
The relationship between nonprofit organizations and government.

Reference Materials:


January 31 – Nonprofits & Public Policy, Part 2
The policy influence of nonprofit organizations.

Reference Materials:


February 5 – Nonprofit Organizations & Advocacy
Many people think that nonprofit organizations cannot participate in the policy process either through lobbying or advocacy. This is simply not the case. We will talk specifically about what is permissible and how best to advance the organizational mission through policy advocacy and lobbying.

Reference Material:
Some of the best information on lobbying and advocacy can be found on the National Council of Nonprofits [website](#). In 2012, the Council on Nonprofits absorbed the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI), an organization that promoted, supported, and protected 501(c)(3) nonprofit advocacy and lobbying in order to strengthen participation in a democratic society and advance the missions of charitable organizations. This merger was far more than a sum of its parts as the National Council used its integration of CLPI’s resources to launch a new effort to significantly advance the advocacy capacity, skills, and network support of nonprofits around the country, to make their voices heard in state capitals where the decisions about the functions and funding of community-based nonprofits are made on a daily basis.

**February 7 – Launching a Successful Advocacy Campaign**
Running a successful advocacy campaign takes skill and planning.

*Class Activities:*

The Stand for Your Mission campaign is a challenge to all nonprofit decision-makers to stand up for the organizations they believe in by actively representing their organization’s mission and values, and creating public will for positive social change. Initiated by BoardSource — together with the Alliance for Justice, the Campion Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the National Council of Nonprofits, and the United Philanthropy Forum — this campaign seeks to unleash the full potential of the nonprofit sector to create positive impact by engaging board leaders more directly in the advocacy work of their organizations. We will use the [Discussion Guide](#) to frame our conversation in class.

**February 12 – Policy Area**
Once student interests have been identified, I will update OAKS with relevant reference material specific to a particular policy area. Students with similar interests will be asked to take an active role in both the identification and discussion of their preferred policy areas.

**February 14 – Policy Area**
Once student interests have been identified, I will update OAKS with relevant reference material specific to a particular policy area. Students with similar interests will be asked to take an active role in both the identification and discussion of their preferred policy areas.

**February 19 – Policy Area**
Once student interests have been identified, I will update OAKS with relevant reference material specific to a particular policy area. Students with similar interests will be asked to take an active role in both the identification and discussion of their preferred policy areas.

**February 21 – Policy Area**
Once student interests have been identified, I will update OAKS with relevant reference material specific to a particular policy area. Students with similar interests will be asked to take an active role in both the identification and discussion of their preferred policy areas.
February 26 – Conducting a Peer Review
Evaluating and assessing the work of others.

Class Activities:
Discuss the peer-review process and develop the skills required to conduct a meaningful peer review

Reference Materials:

Reynolds, J. (2012). *Peer Review Guidelines*

Here are some online resources offering tips and suggestions about how to conduct a peer review:
- [https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/peerreview/tips.html](https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/peerreview/tips.html)
- [https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/PeerReview.html](https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/PeerReview.html)

Due Today at 9:00am
Annotated Bibliography

February 28 – The Policy Brief
A nonprofit informs the policy process and creates core messages for talking about the issue, essentially answering the questions—What is the policy change that we want? How do we make the case for our position?

Reference Material:

March 5 – Writing a Strong Literature Review
Practical guidance and useful tools for conducting your literature review.

Reference Materials

Due Today at 9:00am – submit on OAKS and bring two copies to class for peer review Policy Brief

March 7 – Responding to the Peer Review
Conducting the peer review is only one part of the peer review process. It is also essential that you know how to respond to the feedback you have received.

Reference Materials:

Due Today at 9:00am
Literature Review
March 12 – NO CLASS…I am at a conference
Use class time to complete a peer review of the literature review for two of your classmates.

March 14 – Pause, Reflect, and Move Forward
No sense in introducing new material just before spring break. We will use this class time to assure that all students have what they need to move forward with their research.

March 19 & 21 – NO CLASS…SPRING BREAK

March 26 – Work Day

March 28 – Work Day

April 2 – Defining the IGNITE© Presentation
IGNITE© is a series of 5-minute presentations, where each presenter must use 20 slides, which auto-advance every 15 seconds.

Class Activities:
Overview presentation, technological aspects, and class discussion about IGNITE© presentations

Reference Materials:
You can learn more about IGNITE© presentations [here](#).

April 4 – Work session to plan the IGNITE© Presentation
Class Activities:
We will spend time in class planning the 5-minute final presentations.

April 9 – Practice Presentations
IGNITE© is harder than most people expect. Doing the presentation well requires careful planning and a lot of practice.

Class Activities:
Students will work in teams to further develop and practice their presentations.

April 11 – NO CLASS…I am at a conference
Use this time to finalize and practice your presentations. Engage the help of your peers when you are struggling or challenged, or when you simply want to celebrate your accomplishments.

April 16 – IGNITE© Presentations

April 18 – IGNITE© Presentations

April 25 – Final Papers are due by noon today