A message from your professor: It is most important this semester for you to take care of your physical and mental health. While I am committed to providing you with a learning experience that will help you build a solid foundation in research methods and prepare you for future courses in political science, your work in this class should not come at the expense of your health. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you find yourself struggling. I will work with you to support you.

Instructor: Dr. Maren Trochmann (she/her/hers)  
Location: Maybank Hall 316  
Email: trochmannmb@cofc.edu  
Meetings: T/Th, 12:15-1:30pm  
Office: J.C. Long, 9 Liberty St, 216A  
Prerequisites: None  
Zoom Office Hours: T/Th 2:30-3:30pm and/or by appointment

Welcome to Doing Research in Politics (POLI 205). This is a core course in the Political Science Major and is designed to introduce you to the world of social science research with a focus on political science and governance. I look forward to having you in class this semester!

Course Description
This course is designed to introduce students to the world of social science research, in particular political science and public policy research. As a student in this course, you will gain an understanding of what it means to be “science literate,” learn how to formulate a research question, and determine how to answer it using the proper research methodology. Students will explore research strategies, research designs, and the interpretation of research results. Students will learn the value of social science research and how to undertake the research process in a reflective manner. While this course will provide a broad overview of research methodology, including both qualitative and quantitative methods. The primary goal of this course is to strengthen the skills necessary for the research enterprise as it concerns the field of political science. Throughout the class, we will be thinking critically, engaging civilly, and practicing the values these topics require.

Student Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1) Understand and explain research approaches, philosophies, and ethics.  
   Assessment: Engagement & Participation, Homework

2) Employ critical and social scientific thinking skills to understand evidence and the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of research methods.  
   Assessment: Homework

3) Formulate research questions that respond to current debates within the literature.  
   Assessment: Research Design & Drafts, Homework

4) Create your own research project, employing case design, data collection, and analysis techniques that are appropriate to answer your question of interest.  
   Assessment: Research Design & Drafts

My Educational Philosophy
My educational philosophy is reflective of my experience as a practitioner in the public sector. I strongly believe that learning and growth occur most fully in the context of dialogue and through
deep reflection on our own experiences and values. Particularly regarding research methods, assumptions are often made about value-neutral facts and findings, without regard to how unexplored biases and necessary tradeoffs inform decision making in social science research. I believe this is essential in the development of your own toolkit of evidence-based research skills.

**Required Texts & Additional Readings**
All required readings, podcasts, or videos will be made available electronically through the OAKS system, accessible via MyCharleston. I have intentionally designed this course utilizing Open Educational Resources (OER) or freely available resources via the [https://library.cofc.edu/](https://library.cofc.edu/).

### Assignments, Due Dates, and Grading Scale
You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this class. As a general rule, late assignments are not accepted. If you need an accommodation or extension, to the extent possible, please contact me prior to the due date/online submission deadline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points (Weight)</th>
<th>Description and Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement &amp; Participation</td>
<td>15 (15%)</td>
<td>Your active, enthusiastic, prepared, and civil engagement will be essential to enhance your own and your peers’ learning throughout the semester. Engagement and participation will be assessed via Exit Tickets for each module and in person discussions or other small group activities. This engagement will allow you to identify and explain research approaches, philosophies, and ethical foundations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>50 (50%)</td>
<td>As indicated in the course schedule, you will have periodic homework assignments related to course topics. These assignments review key concepts from the assigned readings or lectures and/or allow you to practice and apply the skills of this course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design Drafts</td>
<td>20 (20%)</td>
<td>Each draft is worth up to ten (10) points. The first draft (due 10/9) will include your research design only up to your literature review and research question. The second draft (due 11/13) should show that you have incorporated feedback from the instructor and your peers. It will contain the full research design elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Design</td>
<td>15 (15%)</td>
<td>The final draft (due 12/8) will include a full literature review, research question(s), and detailed research design, which will demonstrate how you have incorporated feedback and applied course material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>*Additional details and rubrics for each assignment will be posted on OAKS and discussed in class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale**
There are 100 points possible in this class. Grades will be allocated based on your earned points.

- A  94-100%
- A-  90-93%
- C+  77-79%
- C   74-76%
Grades of “Incomplete” (I) are reserved for those students who for some unexpected reason are unable to complete final requirements for the class. Students requesting an “I” must see me as soon as they learn of their inability to complete the assigned work and should be performing at a passing level in the class.

Extra Credit: Experiential Learning
You will be presented with several opportunities to attend virtual or live events or lectures on campus or in the community. Many of these opportunities expand your knowledge about public service and allow you to engage in experiential learning. For extra credit, you must complete a one page (single-spaced) or two page (doubled-spaced) typed written summary that clearly describes the event/lecture, uses detailed examples to clearly link the lecture or event to class readings and discussions. The response must be well-written, organized, and contain limited to no grammatical errors. The instructor will notify the class of events/lectures that qualify via OAKS announcements, and you must submit your summary within one week of the event/lecture to the OAKS Dropbox. Each extra credit event will add one percentage point to your final grade; no more than two (2) points of extra credit are allowed.

Course Policies
Communication
Please do not hesitate to contact me. My preferred method of initial communication is email.

The way you present yourself in 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.

Note: If you are unsure of your writing skill or abilities to complete the course assignments below, please be proactive in speaking to me at least two weeks prior to the due date(s). I will work with you to read early assignment draft(s) and provide feedback or guidance.

Technology
It is required that you have a computer with Internet access, microphone, and speakers. You must have a reliable Internet connection. Having to rely on the public library or Starbucks, for example, will likely make it challenging to have a consistent presence inside OAKS. If you are concerned, please contact me within the first week so we can determine if this course will be manageable for you. I have also included resources below if you have concerns about course access or financial burdens.

If you have technical problems, please contact Student Computing Support or Helpdesk using these methods: Student Computing Support at 843-953-5457 or via email studentcomputingsupport@cofc.edu or the IT Helpdesk at 843-953-3375 or helpdesk@cofc.edu. It’s important to resolve technical problems swiftly, so do not delay getting support. Computer failure or unavailability does not constitute an excuse for not completing assignments.

B+ 87-89%  C- 70-73%
B   84-86%  D  60-69%
B-  80-83%  F  59 & Below
**Time Commitment (Attendance Policy)**
This is a full semester course. We move quickly and cover a lot of material. Assume approximately **6-7 hours per week of active work** in the course.

Per the disclaimer at the top of this syllabus, I am aware of and sympathetic to the many challenges that college student experience, especially now in the time of COVID-19. If you are experiencing personal or health-related challenges, please communicate with me. There are numerous resources that I can recommend to you and, to an extent, I will work with you on deadlines. Please see this website a colleague (Dr. Hoffman in Sociology) created containing additional resources for Life-College Balance.

Depending on circumstances, sometimes withdrawing from the class is the best option. October 29th is the withdrawal deadline for this full semester class with the grade of “W”. Regardless of your circumstances, please reach out to me or somebody else for support before and/or after deciding to withdraw from the class.

**Engagement & Participation**
This is a fast-paced course and your active presence and participation is expected. Your thoughtful and civil engagement will be essential to enhance your own and your peers’ learning throughout the semester. We should show curiosity and respect for each other and our individual differences, valuing diverse perspectives during online discussions. Engagement requires us all to practice the values of fairness, justice, equity, responsiveness, and empathy. **Your participation grade will require engaging in the classroom by actively answering questions from the reading, posing your own thoughtful questions or insights from course materials, and providing examples from your own topics of interest.** Brief exit tickets (which you will submit via Google forms at the end of each section) will also be part of your engagement score.

**Health and Safety**
For COVID-19 related updates, please see: [https://cofc.edu/back-on-the-bricks/](https://cofc.edu/back-on-the-bricks/). President Hsu and campus leadership **now require** face coverings while indoors around others including in the classroom. **If at any time any student does not comply with the face covering requirement, class will be canceled for that day.** The College of Charleston continues to **strongly encourage** all students to get vaccinated and to report their vaccination status to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. For those students who are not vaccinated, health experts encourage monthly testing; the College **offers free** voluntary weekly testing on campus to facilitate this effort.

**Course Schedule**
Listed below are the topics for each section and module. The instructor reserves the right to modify this schedule, as necessary. All associated homework and readings/videos/podcasts will be available in OAKS content module.

Any changes will be reflected in the content in OAKS and communicated electronically.

**Section 1: Introductions, Overview, & Expectations**

- **August 24: Introduction to the Course**
Reading: “How Politics Makes Us Stupid” by Ezra Klein Vox

Assignment: Review the syllabus

Objective(s) ➔ What are the course learning objectives, policies, expectations, and structure? What is the More Information Hypothesis and Kahan’s alternative to it?

August 26: Research Philosophies

Reading: Chapter 2 “Philosophy of Science Underlying Engaged Research” in Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research by Andrew Van de Ven (pp. 36-70, p. 298-299)

Assignment: Positionality Statement/Values Assignment (due Saturday 10/28)

Objective(s) ➔ Describe ontology and epistemology and examine your own underlying positionality and values.

August 31: Overview of the Field

Reading: Chapter 1 “Political Research” Halperin & Heath (PDF in OAKS)

Chapter 1 “‘Duh’ vs. ‘Huh’ Science” in Understanding and Applying Research Design Abbott & McKinney (pp. 3-20)

Objective(s): ➔ What are key principles of social science research, in general, and political science/policy research, in particular? What are the differences in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies?

September 1: Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research – Applied Examples

Reading: Listen to this short interview (21:03) with Dr. Ahmed on Voting in 2020. Review the Racial Bias Audit of the Charleston Police Department. Read the summary in full and skim through the full report

Objective(s) ➔ Understand how different types of political and policy research ask research question, employ research methodology, and use that work to inform real-world problems. What are the research questions and methods in these two assignments?

September 7: Research Ethics

Reading: Chapter 4 “Ethics” in Understanding and Applying Research Design Abbott & McKinney (pp. 52-62) along with CITI IRB information (online)

Related Assignment: Submit IRB CITI Certificate (due Saturday 9/11)

Objective(s) ➔ Explain the origins and importance of ethical standards in social science research.

Section 2: Research Basics – Literature Reviews, Theory, and Research Questions

September 9: Evaluating the Evidence

Reading: Chapter 3 “Observations and Empirical Data” in Understanding and Applying Research Design Abbott & McKinney (pp. 35-51)

Chapter 4 “Locating and Organizing Research Sources” in Writing the Literature Review: A Practical Guide Efron & Ravid (PDF in OAKS) (pp. 57-73)

Objective(s) ➔ Locate and analyze key sources related to your area of interest.

September 14: Literature Reviews

Review information and read links in “Literature Reviews” by Dr. Raul Pacheco Vega: http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/literature-reviews/

Objective(s) ➔ Understand and describe key elements of a literature review so you can write your own literature review on a topic of your interest.

- **September 16: Research Questions**
  Reading: Ch. 3 “Formulating the Research Problem” in Engaged Scholarship. Van de Ven. (pp. 71-99).
  Assignment: Literature Review to RQ Worksheet (due Saturday 9/18)
  Objective(s) ➔ Understand key elements of a good research question. How does a strong literature review inform the research question?

- **September 21 - 23: Theories and Hypotheses**
  Reading: Ch. 2 “Theories & Hypotheses” in Understanding and Applying Research Design Abbott & McKinney (PDF in OAKS)
  Objective(s) ➔ Differentiate theories and hypotheses. Explain how you would apply theory and develop hypotheses, as applicable, in your own research designs.

- **September 28 - 30: Case Studies**
  Reading 9/28: Chapter 1 “Case Study Research: Underlying Principles” in Case Study Research Methods Gillham (pp. 1-8)
  Reading 9/30: Chapter 22 “Case Study Research: In-Depth Understanding in Context” in The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research Helen Simons (pp. 455-470) “Theories & Hypotheses” in Understanding and Applying Research Design Abbott & McKinney (PDF in OAKS)
  Objective(s) ➔ Explain key principles of case study research. Apply principles to select a case for your own research design.

- **October 5-7: Concepts and Measurement**
  Reading 10/5: Chapter 6: Concepts in Social Science Methodology Gerring (pp. 107-140, PDF in OAKS)
  Reading 10/7: Chapter 5 “Measurement” in Understanding and Applying Research Design Abbott & McKinney (pp.65-82)
  Objective(s) ➔ Understand variables, operationalization, and measurement. Specify concepts of interest to your research puzzle.

  Assignment: First Draft of Research Design due on Saturday 10/9

Section 3: Data Collection & Analysis in Qualitative Research*

- October 12: Qualitative Research Design
- October 14: Ethnography, Field Work, and Interviews
- October 19: Fall Break – No Class
- October 21: Library Day
- October 26: Content Analysis and Using Textual Data
October 28: Qualitative Data Analysis

Section 4: Data Collection & Analysis in Quantitative Research*

- October 26 - 28: Survey Research, Secondary Data, and Experiments
- November 2 - 4: Descriptive Statistics
- November 9 - 11: Crosstabs, Correlations, and T-Tests
- November 16-18: Regression Analysis
- November 23: Data Analysis Review
- November 25: Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class

Section 5: Putting It All Together*

- November 30 - December 2: Presenting & Justifying Research
- December 8: Final Research Designs Due

*Articles, assignments, and objectives will be added into OAKS for Sections 3-5.

Important Student Policies & Resources

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 an XXF 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 XX to be expunged. The F is permanent. 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 or written assignments, 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/generaldocuments/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.

**Center for Student Learning**
I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning’s (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. The CSL is located on the first floor of Addlestone Library and they can assist you with writing term papers, essays, letters, memos or book reviews from developing ideas and organizing materials to editing final drafts (in addition to other services). I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/.

**Food & Housing Resources**
Many CofC students report experiencing food and housing insecurity. If you are facing challenges in securing food (such as not being able to afford groceries or get sufficient food to eat every day) and housing (such as lacking a safe and stable place to live), please contact the Dean of Students for support (http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/about/salt.php). Also, you can go to http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/student-food-housing-insecurity/index.php to learn about food and housing assistance that is available to you. In addition, there are several resources on and off campus to help. You can visit the Cougar Pantry in the Stern Center (2nd floor), a student-run food pantry that provides dry-goods and hygiene products at no charge to any student in need. Please also consider reaching out to Professor Trochmann if you are comfortable in doing so.

**Inclusion**
The College of Charleston offers many resources for LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff along with their allies.

**Preferred Name and Pronoun Information**
I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name and gender pronouns of your choice. Please advise me of any request early in the semester via your college-issued email account or during office hours so that I may make the appropriate notation on my class list.
Religious Accommodations
The College of Charleston community is enriched by students of many faiths that have various religious observances, practices, and beliefs. We value student rights and freedoms, including the right of each student to adhere to individual systems of religion. The College prohibits discrimination against any student because of such student’s religious belief or any absence thereof.

The College acknowledges that religious practices differ from tradition to tradition and that the demands of religious observances in some traditions may cause conflicts with student schedules. In affirming this diversity, like many other colleges and universities, the College supports the concept of “reasonable accommodation for religious observance” in regard to class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and other academic work requirements, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship on the College. Faculty are required, as part of their responsibility to students and the College, to ascribe to this policy and to ensure its fair and full implementation.

The accommodation request imposes responsibilities and obligations on both the individual requesting the accommodation and the College. Faculty members are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices. Examples of reasonable accommodations for student absences might include: rescheduling of an exam or giving a make-up exam for the student in question; altering the time of a student’s presentation; allowing extra-credit assignments to substitute for missed class work or arranging for an increased flexibility in assignment dates. Regardless of any accommodation that may be granted, students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives, requirements and prerequisites as defined by the instructor and by the College.

Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Disruption Policy
If in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and Internet access. Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools.

Additional Student Support Services
http://capp.cofc.edu/Support%20Services/index.php

Additional Policies
http://policy.cofc.edu/policy.php#student
Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.