POLI 405 - 01 Capstone Seminar
Nonprofits, Advocacy, and Public Policy

Fall 2021
Thursday, 5:30pm-8:15pm, Maybank Hall 316

Prerequisite(s): Permission of the chairperson required for enrollment. Students must have successfully completed POLI 205 before enrollment. Students will normally have completed at least 27 semester hours in political science at the time of enrollment.

Instructor: Judith Millesen, Ph.D.
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Email: millesenjl@cofc.edu
Office: 14 Coming Street
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30; Thursdays 1:00-3:00; or by appointment

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 will be a research paper that uses a content analysis methodology to explore nonprofit advocacy and related messaging. The 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 to 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

Required Texts:
There are no required textbooks for this class. I rely primarily on publicly available information to provide students with the background information required to complete assignments. While the assigned readings are typically easier to read and much shorter than what might be found in an academic journal, these sources mostly provide grossly oversimplified explanations for complex concepts and ideas. Students should know that there is a rich supply of academic literature on any of the various topics we will cover throughout the semester, and I am happy to provide information about how to access these materials for those who are interested.

Additionally, I have found the Scribbr website to be an excellent resource for students at every level as they embark on a writing project. You will find references to material on the site throughout 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Draft of the Research Proposal</td>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revised Research Proposal</td>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Plan</td>
<td>October 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coding Rules</td>
<td>October 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Article Review &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Paper Draft</td>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGNITE© Presentation</td>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper (due at the time of the final exam)</td>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Engagement</td>
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<td>30</td>
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Assignment Descriptions

Research Proposal. Students will submit an initial draft of their research proposal on September 16th and a revised draft on September 30th after we have talked a bit more about nonprofit organizations and their role in public policy advocacy.
**Research Plan.** Students will outline the study parameters and appropriate samples, include hypotheses and/or research questions, and provide a clear calendar of how and when the study will be conducted within the confines of the class. The research plan is due October 7th.

**Sample Construction.** Students will need to choose a sample that fits the study and submit a 1-2 page paper that identifies the sample, explains its relevance to the phenomenon under investigation, details the type of data that will be collected from the sample, and discusses any challenges or limitations that may exist with the sample. This paper is due October 14th.

**Coding Rules.** Students will develop a detailed coding scheme that outlines each variable and how it will be measured. Ideally, the codes will reflect concepts that have been previously measured in the literature. The coding rules are due October 21st.

**Journal Article Review & Discussion.** Each student will find and discuss articles related to their final paper, sharing with the class how the authors: explained the purpose of (Introduction); developed and measured the main concepts (Methods section); presented the findings (Results section); and discussed the results in ways that linked the findings to the study’s purpose and relevant literature (Discussion section). Students should prepare a 1-2 page review of the article that explains why the student believes the article is an exemplar of a particular aspect of the overall paper. Students will receive their assignments the second week of class.

**Presentations.** All students will be required to present the research findings using an IGNITE presentation format (December 2nd in class). IGNITE is a series of 5-minute presentations, where each presenter must use 20 slides, which auto-advance every 15 seconds.

**Final Paper.** Students will work individually on a research project that uses a content analysis methodology to examine an issue of significance to the student. Specific details about the paper and its requirements will be distributed separately. An initial draft of the paper is due on November 21st. The final paper is due at 8:30pm on December 10th, the date and time of the final exam scheduled for this class meeting time.

**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.

**OAKS**
OAKS, including Gradebook, will be used for this course throughout the semester to provide the syllabus and class materials and grades for each assignment, which will be regularly posted.
**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 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, 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://deanofstudents.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/

**Weekly Schedule**
All reference materials are available in OAKS

**August 28 – Introduction, Expectations & Identifying a Social Issue**

*Class Activities:*
Students will complete an in-class questionnaire & exercise to identify a social issue of personal significance

**September 2 – The Nonprofit Sector, Advocacy & Public Policy**
This week we will discuss the size and scope of the sector as well as what is permissible and how best to advance the organizational mission through policy advocacy and lobbying.

*Reference Materials:*

**Size & Scope**
The Independent Sector website provides a lot of information regarding the [size and scope of the nonprofit sector](https://www.independentsector.org/). 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.


**Nonprofits & Public Policy**

The National Council on Aging published a brief overview (3 minute read) on the importance of nonprofit involvement in the policy process. The overview
includes a "primer" on the difference between advocacy and lobbying and links to other resources you might find interesting.

**Advocacy Work:**

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. You can find their overall policy agenda focusing on local, state, and federal issues of concern to all nonprofit organizations here. The Independent Sector publishes similar information and toolkits.

**Class Activities:**
Please be prepared to discuss some of the policy issues facing the sector in class tonight. We will talk about these issues, why they are of importance to the sector, and how individual nonprofit organizations might incorporate these issues into an overall advocacy campaign. We will also spend time identifying nonprofit organizations that align with student interests & the role these organizations play in public policy.

**September 9 – Introduction to Inquiry & Asking Good Research Questions**
What makes for a good research study?

*Reference Materials:*
  Scribbr – [Developing strong research questions](#).

*Class Activities:*
Planning your research project

*Assignments:*
  Draft Research Proposal due September 16

**September 16 – Introduction to Content Analysis**
Examine content analysis as a research tool.

*Reference Materials:*
  Colorado State University published a [guide](#) on how to conduct a content analysis
Scribbr – What is content analysis and how can you use it in your research?

**Class Activities:**
As you read, think about the common elements in each of the resources. Extract some basic principles of content analysis to discuss in class.

**Assignments:**
Draft Research Proposal is due

**September 23 – The Literature Review & Research Design**
We will spend time this week making sure your research is well designed, rooted in evidence, and presents a unique or interesting perspective.

**Reference Materials:**
Scribbr – How to write a literature review

**Class Activities:**
Complete a worksheet to help design and structure your literature review and research design.

**Assignments:**
Revised Research Proposal is due September 30
Research Plan is due October 7

**September 30 – Journal Article Discussion**
Students will present two types of journal articles tonight. One group will present articles that they believe effectively employ a content analysis methodology; and the other will present ones that have a well-written literature review and research design.

**Assignments:**
Revised Research Proposal is due tonight
Research Plan is due October 7

**October 7 – Accessing Relevant Content & Sample Construction**
The final project requires students to identify and analyze data relevant to a social problem of interest. The data source can be any kind of “text” (including visual images or other multimedia forms).

**Reference Materials:**
To be determined

**Class Activities:**
- Identify relevant and appropriate data sources that will yield important insights
- Discuss and how to build your sample

**Assignments:**
Research Plan is due tonight
Sample Construction Assignment is due October 14
October 14 – Coding & Data Analysis
The final project requires students to identify and analyze data relevant to a social problem of interest. Coding qualitative data is an essential first step in analyzing the content.

Reference Materials:
To be determined

Class Activities:
o Develop preliminary codes

Assignments:
Sample Construction Assignment is due tonight
Coding Rules due October 21.

October 21 – Writing the Discussion/Results & Conclusion Sections
All solid research projects conclude with a thoughtful analysis of how the results link back to the research question and relevant theory.

Reference Materials:
Scribbr – How to write a discussion section
Scribbr – How to write a thesis conclusion

Class Activities:
o Discuss preliminary findings and how to present data

Assignments:
Coding Rules due tonight.

October 28 – NO CLASS – Independent Work on Research

November 4 – Journal Article Discussion & Ignite Presentation Basics
Students will present two types of journal articles tonight. One group will present articles with strong methodology and data analysis sections and the other will share articles they believe effectively explain the results and conclusions of a content analysis study. Additionally, we will spend time talking about Ignite, a series of 5-minute presentations, where presenters use 20 slides that auto-advance every 15 seconds.

Reference Materials:
You can learn more about Ignite presentations here.

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

Assignments:
Prepare a draft of your Ignite presentation for feedback in class next week
November 11 – Ignite Presentation Practice & Final Review
Ignite is harder than most people expect. Doing the presentation well requires careful planning and a lot of practice.

Class Activities:
We will use this class time to assure that all students have what they need to move complete their research. Additionally, if you are anxious or concerned about your final presentation, please be sure to use this time to receive feedback from me and from your peers.

November 17 – NO CLASS – I am at a conference

November 24 – NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break

December 2 – Ignite Presentations due in class

December 10 – Final Papers are due by 8:30pm today
This is the date and time of the final exam for this class

Other Information, Resources, & Policies
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). For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at http://csl.cofc.edu.

Financial Challenges
If a student has difficulty affording groceries or getting sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, please contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify your professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable her to assist with identifying available resources.

Inclement Weather, Pandemic, or Substantial Interruption of Instruction
If the College of Charleston closes and members of the community are evacuated due to inclement weather, students are responsible for taking course materials with them in order to continue with course assignments consistent with instructions provided by faculty. In cases of extended periods of institution-wide closure where in-person classes are suspended, a detailed plan for a change in modality will be shared with students 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.
**F2F Courses when Students are Quarantined/Isolated due to COVID-19**

If one or more students are absent for an extended period of time due to COVID-19 (quarantine or isolation), instructors may, at their discretion, conduct the class exclusively online via OAKS for the duration of student quarantine/isolation, record class lessons to share with students, or choose an alternate accommodation that provides the impacted student(s) with the opportunity to continue in the course. The specific accommodation will vary depending on the number of students affected, the expected duration of their absence, and the needs of the class.

**Attendance Verification**

Only students officially registered (graded or auditing) for this course may attend class. During the week following the drop/add deadline, the professor will verify student enrollments in this course. Any student appearing on the class roll but determined not to have attended the class even once will be removed, except for cases where a student is absent because of quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19.

**Mental & Physical Wellbeing:**

At the college, we take every students’ mental and physical wellbeing seriously. If you find yourself experiencing physical illnesses, please reach out to student health services (843.953.5520). And if you find yourself experiencing any mental health challenges (for example, anxiety, depression, stressful life events, sleep deprivation, and/or loneliness/homesickness) please consider contacting either the Counseling Center (professional counselors at [http://counseling.cofc.edu](http://counseling.cofc.edu) or 843.953.5640 3rd Robert Scott Small Building) or the Students 4 Support (certified volunteers through texting "4support" to 839863, visit [http://counseling.cofc.edu/cct/index.php](http://counseling.cofc.edu/cct/index.php), or meet with them in person 3rd Floor Stern Center). These services are there for you to help you cope with difficulties you may be experiencing and to maintain optimal physical and mental health.

**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.

**On Campus Gender Inclusive facilities**

- Campus Resources
- College of Charleston Reporting Portals
- National Resources for Faculty & Staff
- GSEC Reports
- Documenting LGBTQ Life in the Lowcountry (CofC Addlestone Library Special Collections Project)
- College of Charleston Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
- Articles about CofC and LGBTQ+ Issues
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.

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 me if you are comfortable in doing so.

Additional Student Support Services

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

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.
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.

Additional Policies
http://policy.cofc.edu/policy.php#student