

POLS 405: CAPSTONE
Maymester 2007
Environmental Community Development

Professor: Dr. Angela Halfacre
Class Times: M-F 8:30-12
Office: Room 104 in 114 Wentworth, Department of Political Science
Phone: 843.953.5825
Email: halfacrea@cofc.edu

Office Hours: 12:15-1:15 Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays and by other appointment.

Course Description

This capstone seminar provides students with a culminating and integrative experience at the end of the political science major course work. The seminar provides students with the opportunity to conduct research and further develop critical analysis skills.

In this capstone, we will examine community-based responses to environmental change in the lowcountry of South Carolina. An understanding of resident citizen perceptions about development patterns is crucial to effective and sensitive environmental management approaches. Capstone participants will review environmental perception and decision-making, public participation, conservation governance, and land use management literatures and participate in seminar discussions about trends in these research areas. The students, in teams, will participate in rigorous research examination (i.e., students will plan and *complete* a research project during the three week capstone) of community environmental views. We will focus our analysis at the local level, and gather data about private neighborhoods and resident perceptions about approaches to governance, conservation, and community.

Through participant observation, content analysis of neighborhood documents and local media, photographic documentation, and interviews with resident landowners, we will assess the range of neighborhood approaches in the

Charleston area. At the close of the course, teams will present findings in a research panel session and situate our local case studies within the broader, academic literature.

Course Requirements

This is primarily a reading and research seminar. All students are expected to read intensively and discuss the readings critically. The principal products of the class are a thoroughly read bibliography, presentation and critical thinking skills, and an independent research project. Each student will participate actively and knowledgeably in class discussion.

Class Participation and Data Collection

Students should strive to participate in a quality fashion. By quality, I mean the ability to summarize critically the readings you have done, to elaborate and defend a position in argument, and to listen to others and respond to their arguments. Your field experiences will reflect your motivation, sensitivity to respondent needs, and time set-aside to collect data. Please plan on spending significant time collecting your original data.

Annotated Bibliography and Literature Reviews

You cannot do well in this capstone without participating, and you cannot participate well without preparation and thought. None of us has a flawless mind or a silver tongue. The point is to participate. It is nice, now and then, to excel at it, but the point is to practice it in order to improve. The atmosphere will be collegial, so that we can all make mistakes of interpretation or analysis without being punished for it.

Students are also required to complete the assignments included in the syllabus that are for class as well as work with other students to present background material on their research interests. Students will identify a research strand and present material on their research topic as we develop it. Annotated bibliographies and literature reviews will be required to inform our research.

The capstone should also be dynamic in form. Students are welcome to participate in the creative development of the class. Feel free to suggest ways of improving the seminar.

Research Project.

The major assignment of the course is a team research project examining neighborhood experiences in the lowcountry of South Carolina. Specifically, all teams will examine neighborhoods in the Charleston area.

Students in the class will be organized into four neighborhood-based research teams. Collection and analysis of original quantitative and qualitative data (e.g., participant observation, etc.) is central to this assignment. Your literature review will focus on the topic of interest to each of you; I will assist you with identifying key previous research.

Student teams will also be required to present their findings to the rest of their colleagues on May 30. Each team will be allotted up to 20 minutes for their class presentations which must cover:

Introduction to the Topic and Research Question,
Literature Review,
Data and Methods,
Results, and
Conclusion/Discussion.

At the close of this session, we will conduct a workshop on May 28 and May 29 to compile our results in a comprehensive report. The report will be due by May 31 at 4pm.

Further details about this assignment will be provided in class. Completion of this project is intended to aid the students in high-quality independent research.

Evaluation

Evaluation of student performance will be based on:

Class and Data Collection Participation	20%
Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review	20%
Team Case Study Research Presentations	40%
Research Paper Contribution	20%

Absence Policy

Absences for class will not be excused unless the student provides verifiable documentation of accident, illness, or college or legal obligation. Unexcused absences from the class will result in a score of zero for that day's participation. An alternative assignment for excused absences will be by arrangement with the instructor.

For Maymester especially, it is crucial that students participate in all class sessions and allow **significant time outside of class** to pursue the required research.

Classroom Policies and Procedures

You are responsible for all material presented in lectures, assigned reading, any supplemental material, homework assignments, class discussion, and any other class activities. For a student who desires a high grade, the best advice is to do the assigned readings ahead of time and to plan on rereading them, attend class regularly, complete assignments on time, and participate constructively in discussions.

If you require classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability or other special needs (visual, hearing, psychological, etc.), you should discuss this need with me at the beginning of the course. Please feel free to see me privately if you have concerns. **I will work with you to make your experience a positive one.**

Political Science Major Goals

Through this course, you will also be working on the Department of Political Science's goals for your development as an academic and citizen. This course assists with meeting each of these goals.

Specifically:

- Goal 1: read for comprehension, critically analyze text, and write effectively in a manner appropriate to the task (e.g., through your examination of the literature)
- Goal 2: comprehend the views of others and articulate and defend one's own position (e.g., through your participation in class and discussion of course literature)
- Goal 3: develop the skills of applying theories and concepts to new situations (e.g., through your examination of the literature and your research)

- Goal 4: acquire knowledge of political systems including their institutions, processes, laws and constitutions; the relations between and among nations; major political philosophies (Western and non-Western) and the context of their origins; and the bases of human political behavior in diverse political settings and roles (e.g., through your research)
- Goal 5: develop an appreciation for the range of methodologies and approaches to the study of politics as well as the scope of the discipline (e.g., through our broad examination of political science methods)
- Goal 6: conduct research and analysis, including qualitative and quantitative analysis (e.g., through your research agenda development)
- Goal 7: develop the expectation of participation in public life (e.g., through our discussion how you can contribute to society through rigorous research and the sharing of results in objective and effective manners)
- Goal 8: develop the communication, cooperation, and negotiation skills necessary to work with others in a public forum (e.g. your participation in class)
- Goal 9: develop an appreciation for the interplay of ideas in the public forum (e.g., through class participation, discussion and consideration of course articles)
- Goal 10: work comfortably in a diverse world (e.g., through your interaction with your peers, faculty, and other community individuals as you develop your research and as we identify research priorities for the field)

Plagiarism

Plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of someone else’s ideas or language as your own. Cheating is defined as giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on any graded assignment. If the student does not feel that he or she has an adequate understanding of plagiarism, cheating, or the consequences thereof, it is highly recommended that the student visit the instructor in her office.

Please see the Department of Political Science citation guidelines at <http://polisci.cofc.edu/referenceguide.html>.

GRADING SCALE

A	93-100	A-	90-92
B+	88-89	B	83-87
B-	80-82	C+	78-79
C	73-77	C-	70-72

D+	68-69	D	63-67
D-	60-62	F:	Below 60

Required Readings*

The following books are available for purchase at the College of Charleston Bookstore.

I encourage you to work with your team members to share books (to limit cost); we will discuss this approach on the first day of class.

Berg, Bruce. 2006. *Qualitative Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Nelson, Robert H. 2005. *Private Neighborhoods and the Transformation of Local Government*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

Peters, Robert L. 1997. *Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning a Master's or Ph.D.* New York: the Noonday Press.

*And a significant number of peer-reviewed, selected readings from a list distributed to each student by the instructor. Each student will be required to read several journal articles, and share their impressions with the rest of the class.

Capstone Topics

The instructor reserves the right to revise the course outline below as necessary.

Tuesday, May 15

Topics: Capstone Overview, Methods Considerations, and The Politics of Planning and Neighborhoods

In Class:

- * Overview Bjelland et. al. (2006) (see Appendix)
- * Overview Congress for New Urbanist Charter (www.cnu.org)
- * Team Designations and Neighborhood Selection
- * Literature Review Development and Article Topic Selections (Themes: Environmental perception and decision-making, Public participation, Conservation governance, and Land use management)
- * IRB Training Guidance (https://www.orga.cofc.edu/compliance_IRB-APPLICABILITY-CHART.shtml)

Wednesday, May 16

Topics: Research Range -- Community Associations and New Urbanist Literature

Readings (DUE ON THE DAY ASSIGNED):

- * Nelson, "Preface" and "Introduction"
- * Berg, "Introduction", "Designing Qualitative Issues", "Ethical Issues", "Writing Research Papers: Sorting Noodles from the Soup"
- * Carefully read and take detailed notes on Bjelland et. al. 2006
- * Review Congress for New Urbanism Charter at <http://www.cnu.org/charter>
- * Davis 1997 (distributed in class)

In Class:

- * Discussion of Our Research Approach
- * Outline of Research Presentations and Report Format

DUE: IRB Certification by SCREEN Shot [after you complete, use "shift" key and "print screen" key; next, email the body to BECKERL@COFC.EDU by pressing "shift" key and "insert" key].

Thursday, May 17

Topics: Research Agenda and Theoretical Framing

Readings (Assigned to Individual Students; all readings will be either provided electronically or in hard copy to individual students):

A. Environmental perception and decision-making

Wagenaar 2007

Kaplan et. al. 2004

Kearney 2006

Nesbitt and Weiner 2001

Newman and Lake 2006

Ueland and Warf 2006

Brown and Cropper 2001

Kim and Kaplan 2004

B. Community associations and new urbanism

Community Association Living Manual

Brunn 2006

Mohamed 2006

Langbein and Spotswood-Bright 2004

Rodriquez et. al. 2006

Lund 2003

Chen and Webster 2005

C. Community-based governance and private property

Elmendorf 2003

Nelson 2005

Chapters 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

Freyfogle 2006

Herbert 2006

D. Land use management and planning

Brown et. al. 2005

Arendt 2004

Ghose 2004

Zimmerman 2001

McCann 1995

Nasar 2003

Talen 2000

Arendt 1998, Entire

In Class:

* Distribution of Annotations (Please bring 20 hard copies to class) - Please include a full reference on the annotation.

* Framing our Topic (Discussion About Individual Articles By Teams)

Friday, May 18

Topic: Survey and Interviewing Guidance; Fieldwork Overview; Content Analysis Training

Readings: Berg, "Interviewing Techniques", "Unobtrusive Measures in Research", "Case Studies", and "An Introduction to Content Analysis"

In Class:

- * Fieldwork Training
- * Site Visits
- * Sampling Techniques

Saturday, May 19

Suggestion: Possible Fieldwork Date

Sunday, May 20

Suggestion: Possible Fieldwork Date

Monday, May 21

Topics: This Capstone and Your Future

Readings: Peters, Chapters "This Book Can Help," "What is Graduate School Like?," "Do You Need to Go?," "Should You Work First?," "Choosing a School: the Thesis Adviser," "Choosing a School: Secondary Aspects," "The Masters Degree: History and Hurdles," "The Doctorate: History and Hurdles," "Managing Yourself," "The Thesis Topic: Finding It," "The Thesis Proposal," "Oral Presentations: The Key to Being a Star," "The Social Milieu," and "Bringing It All Together: The Job"

In Class: Class Discussion – "It is all about YOU"

Tuesday, May 22

Topic: Case Study Analysis

DUE In Class: Literature Reviews (no more than three single spaced pages sent to halfacrea@cofc.edu and brought to class as a hard copy; assignment discussed in class)

Wednesday, May 23

Topic: Documents Analysis

Thursday, May 24

Topic: Survey Data Coding and Entry

Friday, May 25

Topic: Survey Data Analysis

Saturday, May 26

Suggestion: Field Work or Data Analysis

Sunday, May 27

Suggestion: Field Work or Data Analysis

Monday, May 28

MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY (Ok, yes, Suggestion: Field Work or Data Analysis)

Tuesday, May 29

CASE STUDY PRESENTATIONS AND REPORT WORKSHOP

Bring electronic versions of your literature reviews, data sets, data analysis, etc. to class.

All case study work should be completed and perfected (and, of course, ready to present!).

Be prepared to have guests.

Wednesday, May 30

RESEARCH REPORT WORKSHOP

Bring electronic versions of your literature reviews, data sets, data analysis, etc. to class.

By the end of today, you will have your Capstone draft report....

Thursday, May 31

RESEARCH REPORT (AND ALL SUPPORTING MATERIALS) DUE TO DR. HALFACRE BY 4PM IN ELECTRONIC VERSION (ON CD) AND HARD COPY VERSIONS.

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Team Research Presentations*
Suggested Format

*Best Format is PowerPoint Slides

Slide 1. Title Slide

INTRODUCTION

2. "Quotation"

3. Research Question

LITERATURE REVIEW

4. Literature Review Themes

5. Literature Review Themes

6. Literature Review Themes

DATA and METHODS

7. Data and Methods

8. Case Study

RESULTS

9. Survey Respondent Demographics

10. Table One - Summary of Design Parameters

11. Table Two - Trip to Work Characteristics

12. Table Three - Household Composition

13. Table Four - Geographic Distribution of Intrametropolitan Relocations

14. Table Five – Residential Preferences

15. Table Six – Top Five Reasons for Choosing Neighborhood (in Percent of Total)

16. Theme-Based Slide

17. Theme-Based Slide

18. Theme-Based Slide

CONCLUSIONS

19. Primary/Unique Findings From Case

20. How Case Fits within Larger Literature

21. SO WHAT?

22. What's Next? (Future Research)

23. Acknowledgements

24. References

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Capstone Research Report*
Suggested Format

- 1) ABSTRACT – This abstract should be approximately 250 words and follow the format we discuss in class.
- 2) INTRODUCTION– This is a description of your research problem. Describe the importance of the problem you wish to examine. What will your research contribute to the practice of political science?

Present as much information (general to your specific research project) as you think necessary to orient your reader to the situation or problem you investigate. You should take pains to convince your audience that the topic you wish to study is important and that you have NARROWED the topic.

To elaborate, describe the problem and discuss its relationship to political science. A research question should be included in this section.

Specifically, you should present a clear, coherent, and logical argument as to why this problem is important (i.e., background of the problem should be outlined). You should describe what research you wish to pursue and why this research is necessary.

In this section, you should briefly should mention some previous literature/research in framing your problem and how your project will further previous findings.

Again, a research question and hypothesis should be included in this section. [Repetition indicates IMPORTANCE.] Explain the research question which you have selected to investigate. What will your research contribute to the practice of political science? In this section, you should state a thesis.

- 3) LITERATURE REVIEW -- You should elaborate findings from previous literature/research in framing your problem and how your project will further previous findings.

THIS WILL BE A LENGTHY COMPONENT.

Review some of the background information on this topic/research question. Library research should assist you here. Explain how the topic of your study and the issues around it has arisen in political science. Why is it important? Why is it substantively significant? Describe how this topic has been approached by other political scientists, other social scientists, or policy analysts. What hypotheses have they attempted to test? How will your analysis fit in? Will you duplicate the research or fill in the gaps? Academic works will be important sources here.

- 4) DATA AND METHODOLOGY – Outside readers should be able to make a determination of the appropriateness of the proposed research design for achieving the stated goals. Include a detailed description of your proposed research design, any data collection efforts, and data analysis techniques.

Describe the data you used in the analysis. You should include the sample size, purpose of the study, and how the data was collected.

Detail how you operationalized the variables of interest. Describe what method(s) you employed to analyze the data.

- 5) RESULTS. Based on previous literature and your subsequent research design, what are your findings? Why? Carefully report these results, and be sure to describe tables, graphs or figures to present your material.

Your tables and figures should be included after the narrative, and you should indicate in the text of your manuscript where the table, graph, or figures should be located.

Ex.

*** Table 1 About Here ***

- 6) DISCUSSION. Provide description of the importance of findings and your research in general. Outline the potential results and their anticipated application/implications with respect to the field, and identify those users and groups who will benefit from the work. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of your research, and what other data and techniques should be used for further study (either following your study or in conjunction with it).
- 7) REFERENCES. You must use at *least THIRTY* academic (e.g., peer-review articles, university press books, other academic publisher books) sources that you have examined and are cited in your research.

Be sure your bibliographical entries are in an appropriate format (if you have questions about this, ask me and/or consult the Department of Political Science's Guide to Referencing at <http://polisci.cofc.edu/referenceguide.html>).

- 8) APPENDICES. Please include any appropriate appendices. These may include question wording, coding descriptions, or other information.

* To assist with evaluations, students are asked to comment on the contributions of their peers (specifically, strengths and weaknesses). Further, the instructor will ask each team to rank it's members, and for each individual class member to provide an assessment of their own contributions. This will be discussed further in class, but will be due via email to halfacrea@cofc.edu by 4PM on June 1 (email should be marked confidential, and will only be viewed by the instructor).

