

LDST 101- Leadership and the Humanities-- Spring 2022

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FROM QUOTES TO QUESTIONS:

Caroline Walker Bynum: "Surely our job as teachers is to puzzle, confuse, and amaze. We must rear a new generation of students who will gaze in wonder at texts and artifacts . . . slow to project . . . quick to assume there is a significance, slow to generalize about it. For a flat, generalizing, presentist view of the past . . . makes it boring, whereas amazement yearns toward an understanding, a significance always a little beyond both our theories and our fears. Every view of things that is not wonderful is false."

Seriously? Aren't you here to solve puzzles rather than to be puzzled? What is presentism? Can we avoid it? And, if we're not trained to generalize from particulars, that is, to come up with statements that make sense of particulars, how can we predict and control what happens? Accurate predictions and comprehensive control--shouldn't those be aims of higher education? Amazement is extracurricular; isn't it?

William Butler Yeats: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."

What might Yeats have meant by "best" and by "worst"? What would those terms have to signify for you to subscribe to the truth packed into this line?

Marc Stears: "The divorce between our professional politicians and everyday people . . . was never more apparent to me . . . with each side relentless rehearsing its focus-grouped messages and the public looking on bemused."

Is his observation correct? Does the "divorce" seem irreconcilable? Stearns believes there are ways to get "everyday people" back into the give-and-take of political deliberations. Do you? If so, how? What does "bemused" mean in this context? Should those everyday people be blamed for being bemused?

Thucydides: "Pericles . . . was their leader rather than being led by them [the Athenians], because he did not speak to please them."

Shouldn't we expect leaders to be led by followers' preferences when, in a democracy --and ancient Athens purportedly was "the cradle of democracy"-- leaders are elected to implement what citizens want done?

George Bernard Shaw: "Democracy reads well, but it doesn't act well."

What does it mean "to read well"? Do you agree that democracy doesn't act well? Give me examples. What might make it act better?

Martha Nussbaum: "Nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful, docile, technically trained machines rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements."

Nussbaum thinks the humanities could and should serve as an antidote. Do you share her distress? If docile citizens are useful and well-trained, why should we object that, somehow, they are docile and therefore incomplete citizens? Is it fair to compare them with machines? How important is it for leaders to criticize tradition?

Aurelius Augustine: "Justice having been removed, what are kingdoms but gangs of thieves on a large scale? And what are criminal gangs but miniature kingdoms? A gang is a group of persons under the command of a leader, bound by the agreements or covenant governing the association in which plunder is divided according to a constitution of sorts. To illustrate, take the answer given by a captured pirate to Emperor Alexander the Great. When great Alexander asked why the pirate terrorized seafarers, the latter boldly replied, suggesting that his purpose and Alexander's were identical. When I do what I do with a small ship, he said, I'm called a pirate. Because you do the same with a mighty navy, you're called an emperor."

Does the anecdote prove Augustine's point about government and larceny? If you were Alexander how would you respond to the pirate's equation?

In this section of LDST 101, we're going to revisit some of these quotes and raise these questions as well as others that you'll find in the schedule portion of the syllabus **in bold print**. We don't ask such questions because the answers lay at the foundation of leadership studies; the asking does. And conversations generated by our asking ought to problematize some ideas we take for granted and prompt encounters with the problems and wannabe problem-solvers we might otherwise have left unexplored. We'll make our way thru several classics in the humanities that examine the caliber of leadership in various settings. Along the way, you'll be asked to sift and formulate opinions about the usefulness of such terms as "charisma," "populism," "absolutism," "meritocracy," and "faction." You'll also be asked under what circumstances leaders would be well-advised to shock followers instead of appeasing or consoling them. We'll inquire to what extent--and why--leaders should honor traditions and when they should cultivate misgivings about conventional wisdom. This spring I'm experimenting with a new format; instead of running first through the classics and theory before moving to the issues facing leadership in your generation, I'm mixing the old and the new--the theoretical and the practical. You'll let me know whether it works. If this appeals and if the work I'm asking you to complete (which is detailed in the schedule below) doesn't frighten you into another class . . . Welcome!!!

BUT... before you decide whether all this might be a good way to spend parts of your semester and strap yourselves into this course, check the next section on . . .

REQUIREMENTS & GRADES

Lively, informed encounters with our questions, obviously, require lively and informed participation in class discussions. I expect it; the class participation grades (see below) reflect your success in meeting that expectation as well as, alas, recurring absences and unfamiliarity with assignments.

3 Papers (maximum 1,000 words) 18 pts. Each-- **feb 9, mar2 mar30.**

Class Participation 18 pts (4 quizzes: 8 points; if you're absent the day of a quiz, submit a 500-word essay responding to that class's prompt [**bold font; by noon**] to recoup your points); class discussions 10 points)

Final Paper Exam (maximum 1,750 words) 28 pts

100 pts

Papers responding to the prompts must be submitted as a word document email attachment, no later than 6 PM the day before the class. EDUCATION IS CONVERSATION, so **you may collaborate** and submit one paper with/for as many as 3 additional student colleagues.

Several taboos: late arrivals, early departures, multi-tasking.

Our sessions will ordinarily be divided into four portions: instructor's presentations with student contributions based on that day's student submissions as well as the reading assignments; then break-out groups (student conversations over food or somesuch); sessions to harvest the results of break-out groups; AND concluding sessions to preview the next assignments. **I will schedule breaks, so avoid leaving during discussions.**

You'll be responsible for readings on Blackboard as well as for all (or assigned parts of) books you'll acquire online, kindling etc. If you have questions, folks at the library's front desk will have answers.

To be sure class sections are working on the same weekly assignments, I've cancelled the Wednesday section following the MLK Monday. That (second) week, I will schedule additional office hours to field questions or concerns about the course. In place of that week's work, I'll ask you to attend two evening lectures Tues, February 22 and Thur, March 24, 7PM, (curricular conflicts are valid excuses; extra-curricular and co-curricular conflicts are

not!). The lectures, given by authors assigned for those weeks, constitute part of our classes for that week.

TEXTS *You're advised to purchase (or kindle or E-book) the following:*

1. Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men* (**BEWARE: Avoid the restored edition**)
2. Bryan Caplan, *Open Borders: The Science and Ethics of Immigration*
3. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann In Jerusalem*
4. Wendy Brown, *Walled States and Waning Sovereignty*
5. Anne Applebaum, *Twilight of Democracy*

Assigned portions of other extended readings are available on-line or on blackboard, but if you like to have your copies handy, the paperbacks are relatively cheap: Thomas More, **Utopia**; Niccoló Machiavelli, **The Prince**; William Shakespeare, **Coriolanus**.

SO-- What do we do and when do we do it?

January 12: Read Mark Edmundson's ON THE USES OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION. <https://www.ljhammond.com/essay.htm>

Has higher education become as ugly as Edmundson suggests? What, if anything, can we do about that? Edmundson, as you'll see, indicts your faculty colleagues, your college, and you. Written twenty-five years ago, that indictment still bites. It will enable us to discuss why this section of LDST 101 operates as it does and enable you to select another section, should any be open or another course. The essay is also available on Blackboard.

January 19: No class-- note additional office hours. Come, get acquainted!

January 26: Read ALL THE KING'S MEN, chapters 1-4. Watch the film IDES OF MARCH.

“Judge Irwin has come out for Callahan.” That said, Governor Stark sprints to the judge’s home at the end of chapter one, leaving a photo opportunity to get to Burden’s Landing. With chapter two, an extended flashback, you’ll learn how Willie, after a false start, became governor and how he conducts himself in office. More of that in chapter three, but chapter four is another flashback to the nineteenth century. What’s it doing there? Protagonist Cass Mastern is a profoundly different from Willie Stark, and both seem miles away from Jack Burden. Your tasks are to get your bearings on each character as well as to formulate your (dis)agreement with the governor’s assessment of “dirt.” If you were to select one episode (or character) with which (whom) to start your summary of what’s going on in this book (and what’s likely to go on), what (whom) would you choose? Compare Steven, Duffy, or Paul from the film with Jack Burden in the book.

February 2: (QZ) Read Ben-Ghiat’s STRONGMEN (blackboard, pp. 1-34); Kahan’s “Max Weber and Warren Buffet: Looking for the Lost Charisma of Capitalism” (Blackboard, pp. 144-50); KING’S MEN, chapters 5-6; watch the film WALL STREET and Barack Obama’s speech (2004; on Blackboard)

How would you compare charisma in commerce to charisma in politics? It has been said that ALL THE KING’S MEN is a “reality check” for those who would idealize charismatic political leaders; how and why would you (dis) agree? Which of the quotes at the front of the syllabus--Steers? Shaw? Or Thucydides?--would you use to start an essay of charisma and leadership?

February 9: Read Michael Klarman, “How Brown Changed Race Relations” (Blackboard, pp. 81-103); Clarence Thomas’s “Concurring Opinion” in the Seattle case; Blackboard, pp. 1-36); Watch Al Sharpton’s speech (2004; on

Blackboard); John Oliver on school segregation (on Blackboard), and films: SELMA and THE BEST OF ENEMIES.

PAPER TOPIC: Judge Breyer’s dissent in the Seattle case contended the government had a compelling interest in maintaining classrooms which reflected the pluralistic character of the country. Use any three of today’s assignments to discuss his contention and articulate your views on such a role for the government that appears to conflict with individuals’ freedom to associate with whomever they wish.

February 16: Read Thomas More’s UTOPIA, book 1 and any consecutive 25 pages of book 2; read C. Wright Mills, chapters from THE POWER ELITE (on blackboard, pp. 325-61).

What would Hythloday from More’s UTOPIA say about what C. Wright Mills characterizes as a “conservative mood” and “higher immorality” in POWER ELITE? Do you (dis)agree with Hythloday’s replies? Why? Do you think that Mills’s observations and Hythloday’s position bear on the way we conduct business and politics today? Would you say that Mills’ criticisms bear on current leadership of and practices in business and politics?

February 23: (QZ) Read Ari Adut’s introduction to REIGN OF APPEARANCES (Blackboard, pp. 1-14) and Applebaum’s TWILIGHT OF DEMOCRACY.

Evaluate the relationship between ignorance about and (dis)interest in politics, as Adut and Applebaum observe it.

(February 22-- Applebaum lecture with reception to follow)

March 2: Shakespeare’s CORIOLANUS, acts 1-3 and watch the film CORIOLANUS.

PAPER TOPIC: Use any quote at the front of the syllabus to evaluate the leadership styles on display in CORIOLANUS. Be sure that you attend to differences between the text and the film to ensure that your references apply correctly to one or the other or both. Conclude with your judgment about the workability of democratic government and the value of candor (or transparency) and guile in leadership.

Have a great break --

BUT I advise you to work on your assignment for March 14, because your paper will be due on the evening of the 13th. SO, why not prepare your assignment before leaving to enjoy your break? Just a suggestion:

March 16: (QZ) Read Bryan Caplan's OPEN BORDERS, pp. 1-51, 109-138, and 164-190; Samuel Huntington's "Hispanic Challenge" (Blackboard, pp. 1-14); Seyla Benhabib's report of "the scarf affair" (Blackboard, pp. 183-98); watch 9500 LIBERTY on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IYfxIM0294>

Be ready to prepare a briefing document for political leaders relying on you to formulate their position on the prevailing pressure to assimilate, fears of assimilation, fears of foreigners (xenophobia), and immigration policies.

March 23: Read chapters from Benhabib's THE CLAIMS OF CULTURE (on blackboard, pp. 49-104.

Cultural pluralism or multiculturalism appears to be a positive, adding to any cultural repertoire greater variety. Yet when pluralism spawns what Charles Taylor called a "politics of recognition," Benhabib sees problems. What are those problems, and how should cultural and political leaders cope with them--and to what end?

(March 24, Benhabib lecture, with reception to follow)

March 30: Read Hannah Arendt's EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM, pp. 3-35, 68-150, and 251-279 and watch the film SWING KIDS.

PAPER TOPIC: Vernon Parrington was an influential theorist one hundred or so years ago. His definitions of "realism" broke no new ground, but provide us a useful place to start. "Realism," he said, is both the tendency to deal intelligently with data or--as he said, "the facts"--and "realism" should also be understood as resistance to idealism and romanticism, which he defined as the disregard for the limitations of daily life and the refusal to attend to the counsels of experience. How would you characterize Eichmann as he is depicted by Arendt: realist or idealist? How would you characterize Arendt" idealist or realist?

April 6: Read Wendy Brown's WALLED STATES AND WANING SOVEREIGNTY, pp. 7-105; google and read Robert Frost's MENDING WALL; watch the film CRASH.

Whereas the poem and film are rather ambiguous, leaving readers / watchers to piece together a conclusion about the inevitability, origins, purposes, and desirability of walls and stereotypes, Brown's book leaves little doubt about her position on all four. Compare what Brown concludes with the inconclusive character of what the Haggis film and the Frost poem give you. Does Brown or do Haggis/Frost give you the better place to begin describing the leadership challenges facing your generation?

April 13: (QZ) Read Machiavelli's PRINCE

Which three chapters of Machiavelli's PRINCE you'd assign if--unlike your ogre-instructor--you were to assign only three to give student colleagues some idea of what Machiavelli had in mind. Why would you select those three?

April 20: Read Michael Walzer's "Political Action: Problem of Dirty Hands" (Blackboard, pp 160-80) and finish KING'S MEN, if you haven't done so.

Stray miles in any direction from Jepson and the University of Richmond, and you're bound to find that most people are perplexed when they hear about a course of studies in leadership. It's a novelty--probably, just a fad. They'll ask: "Are you studying how to be a good leader or learning how to avoid the pitfalls that make you a bad leader?" Are you ready to tell them that neither is possible? And--after having read Penn Warren and Walzer--are you ready to explain why? If yes, explain away; if no--that is, if you've come away from Penn Warren, Walzer, and other assigned texts, with the sense that it is possible to lead, be good (and good at it), and avoid being bad, tell me how and why.