Leadership and the Social Sciences

Don Forsyth, Instructor

LDST 102
Syllabus

Course Description
Introduction to the study of leadership through theoretical and empirical explorations of social interaction. Readings selected from anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. Emphasis on advancing the understanding of leadership through an increased appreciation of the rich complexities of human behavior. This course may be taken before or after LDST 101.

Course Goals

Content
Scholars and sages have long puzzled over the nature of leadership. Philosophers raised questions about the nature of leadership itself: its rationality, its utility, and its moral implications; political theorists examined such processes as justice, rights, law, and authority; historians studied the life course of those individuals who were able to change the outcomes of events both large and small. But in the 1900s these scholars were joined by researchers who took an empirical, social science, approach to leadership.

One of the primary aims of this course is to review so of the results of their work, as well as examine the methods they use to extend our understanding of leadership. We will consider such questions as:

- What is leadership, and how do different societies conceptualized leadership?
- What is power, and how does “power” differ from “leadership?”
- Why do people follow leaders?
- Do leaders have distinctive personalities?
- How do leaders communicate with, and persuade, others?
- Why do leaders emerge within bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states?
- Are women and men equally suited to lead?
- Does leadership have genetic and/or evolutionary roots?
- How does leadership differ depending on domain?
- How do psychological factors shape followers’ perceptions of their leaders?

Process
Beyond declarative content—the facts, theories, and findings—we will also examine the process of leadership study: how social scientists generate theories and do research. We will not only learn things like “Theory Y predicts this will happen” or “Such and such study supported this hypothesis,” but also the assumptions that guide the research.

Skills
I hope you will participate actively in this course, and so develop a number of academic and scholarly skills, including gains in critical thinking, ethical thought, writing and communication, information search and retrieval, technological skills, scientific skills, and study skills. You may also develop leadership skills, but this course is not a “how to” course.

Course “Mission”
The course is a key component of the overall University of Richmond curriculum. Hence, it sustains “a collaborative learning and research community that supports the personal development of its members and the creation of new knowledge. A Richmond education prepares students to live lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a global and pluralistic society.” As a course in the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, this course strives to educate people “for and about leadership”. The key word in the name is studies.
Leadership and the Social Sciences

**Topics**

LDST101 examines the philosophy, history, and political side of leadership. LDST102 (this course!) examines leadership from the perspective of the social sciences, so we will be searching through all the social sciences (anthropology, economics, sociology, history, political science, geography, psychology, and others) for theory and research pertaining to leadership in all its many and varied forms. Examples of topics we’ll be considering follow.

- Authority, Obedience, and Leadership
- Dark Side of Leaders' Personalities
- Do Leaders Make a Difference?
- Do People Need Leaders?
- Empirical Procedures in Studying Leadership
- Endorsing Leaders
- Ethics of Leadership
- Evolutionary Perspectives
- Followership
- How Effective Are Leaders?
- Inequities and Leadership
- Influence and Persuasion
- Intelligence and Leadership
- Leadership across Cultures
- Leaders as Skilled Decision Makers
- Leadership and Social Domination
- Men, Women, and Leadership
- Neuropsychology of Leadership
- Origins of Leadership in Human Society
- Perceiving & Evaluating Leaders
- Personality, Situations, and Experiences
- Power and Leadership
- Self-presentational Processes
- Shared and Democratic Leadership
- Social Identity and Leadership
- Status and Hierarchy
- Strengthening the Relational Side of Leadership
- Psychodynamics of Leadership

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

We will use a variety of structured learning experiences to achieve course goals, including lecture, discussions, demonstrations, activities, projects, and audiovisual events. Our class sessions serve several purposes: they clarify difficult topics discussed in the readings, raise questions about the scientific method, stimulate you to think critically about leadership, and provide you with the opportunity to express your understanding of leadership in your own words. It is essential that you prepare for class by doing reading, reviewing, and analyzing the assigned topic prior to the day class examines the topic.

We will also do things beyond the confines of the class, depending on availability. We may, for example, conduct research projects to further examine questions raised by readings, as well as attend presentations by experts visiting campus. Also, this class uses World Wide Web-based instruction extensively, and I’ll remain in touch with you via email.

**Text and Readings**

You will acquire much of your information about leadership, both in this class and for the rest of your life, by reading and studying texts. This course uses books, articles, and online sources. The two required books are:


How to Win Friends and Influence People. New York: Pocket Books (978-0-671-02703-2)

We will supplement these books with specific readings. Only “real” readings will be assigned; if we aren’t going to examine the reading, then I identify the reading as “optional” and you won’t be required to know its content. The readings are original source papers and chapters and selected to give you an “inside look” at how social science is done.

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**Donelson R. Forsyth, Professor**

Don is a social psychologist who studies leadership, ethics, group dynamics, and a variety of other interpersonal processes. He received his BS from Florida State University and his Ph.D. from the University of Florida. He holds the Leo K. and Gaylee Thorsness Chair in Ethical Leadership.

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Cardinal Newman, 1852
Activities, Assignments, Quizzes, Exams….

We will carry out a variety of activities during the semester, including quizzes, exams, papers, etc. In some cases some of these projects may be completed by groups rather than individuals.

Quizzes: usually administered online, open book, 10 questions typically

Short papers: reaction papers, brief summaries of readings, self-assessments, reports on short term projects (usually submitted via Blackboard)

Events: The Jepson School is based on academic “commons” model, so it assumes that students are engaged in learning both in and out of class. Students will be asked to attend several “events” that occur outside of regular class hours.

Exams: We will have 2 examinations. Items on the tests will cover all course material, no matter what its source (e.g., lecture, text, video). Exams will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer.

Research: Students are required to take part in research and/or attend local and/or regional presentations of research. The research requirement is described in detail in Blackboard.

Grades

Your grade in the course depends on your successful completion of assigned tasks and overall engagement. A grade of B will be awarded to those who complete assignments skillfully and are fully engaged. Higher or lower grades will be awarded for superlative or lower quality work. I will warn you, by the date for withdrawal, if I consider your work to be of failing quality. However, because much of your grade in class is based on material turned in after that date (e.g., your term paper, final exam) this feedback will not be dispositive.

In general—but not entirely—grades will be criterion-referenced, individualized, and teacher-generated. First, most of the grading in this class is not normed, but in some cases members’ scores will be determined by relative rank. Second, scores will be based on individual and collective work. Third, some portion of your grade will be based on others’ evaluations of your work.

This course deals with complex subjects and is challenging and you should budget your time demands accordingly.
Instructor Responsibilities

As the instructor, I will help you learn the course material by giving lectures, leading discussions, assigning activities that ask you to think about leadership processes, answering your questions, and giving you feedback about your progress towards your goals. Remember that my primary responsibility is to help you learn about (a) leadership processes, (b) the social science of leadership, and (c) to think critically, and scientifically, about leadership processes (and claims about leadership processes). If you have any questions about course material, please email me, call, or come to my office.

Student Responsibilities

You are responsible for completing the assigned readings, coming to class, studying the material, taking the required examinations, completing the assigned activities, and logging into Blackboard regularly. Your task of learning will be much easier if you (a) ask me questions about the readings and topics; (b) keep up with the readings; (c) communicate with classmates regularly; (d) talk to me during office hours; and (e) take advantage of electronic resources available to you. This course will require between 20 and 25% of your week’s time spent on academics, and more if you are unfamiliar with the methods of social science, just beginning advanced studies, or a relative slow reader. Budget your time accordingly. You are ultimately responsible for your learning in this class: if you earn an A you can be proud of your accomplishment, but should you fail you will have to bear the blame.

Policies

- Please plan to arrive on time and remain until the final minute of class.
- If you must be absent from class for religious reasons, because you are involved in University-level athletics, or some other good reason, inform me by email of the conflict.
- If you are ill on the day of an examination, leave a voice mail message prior to the class.
- Our classroom is OUR space so do not communicate with non class members during class time. In other words, you are welcome to use a laptop device in class, but use the laptop for displaying readings and notes, and for taking notes. This is a 1-strike rule.
- Please be certain to review and comply with the University’s academic integrity policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 25/27</td>
<td>What is leadership?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 1/8</td>
<td>What is the “science” of leadership?</td>
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<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>Is leadership part of human nature?</td>
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<td>Sept 15/17</td>
<td>Leadership in a cultural context</td>
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<td>Sept 22/24</td>
<td>Does evolution favor leaders?</td>
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<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>Is leadership in the eye of the beholder?</td>
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<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>Do men and women lead differently?</td>
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<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Do leaders make a difference?</td>
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<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Oct 13/15</td>
<td>What is the leader’s personality?</td>
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<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Do leaders have a dark side?</td>
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<td>Oct 22/24</td>
<td>What makes a leader? Outliers</td>
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<td>Oct 27/29</td>
<td>How do leaders establish their status and identity?</td>
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<td>Nov 3/5</td>
<td>How do leaders claim identities?</td>
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<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>How do leaders influence followers?</td>
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<td>Nov 12</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Nov 17/19</td>
<td>How do leaders win friends and influence people?</td>
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<td>Dec 1/3</td>
<td>Followership</td>
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<td>Dec 13</td>
<td>Final Exam, 9 AM for Afternoon Section</td>
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<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>Final Exam, 7 PM for Morning Section</td>
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Policies

"If you cannot control the urge to check your email and messages during class, do not bring your laptop or smart-phone."

Calendar

The following is a tentative calendar of topics and events. As we progress through the material, and find that we need to spend more (or less) time on a topic, we will adjust the schedule accordingly. In all cases, consult Blackboard for the latest information about required readings, assignments, and events.