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 complete control—shouldn’t those be the aims of higher education? Amazement is extracurricular; isn’t it?

Ludwig Wittgenstein: “One keeps forgetting to go right down to the foundations. One doesn’t put the question marks deep enough down.”

OK, so one of our challenges is to put the question marks deep down, but what the deuce does that mean?

Keith Thomas: “The humanities offer an indispensable antidote to the vices which inevitably afflict a democratic, capitalist society. They counter the dumbing down of the media by asserting the complexity of things...and they challenge the evasiveness and mendacity of politicians by placing a premium on intellectual honesty.”

Really? Thomas has a rather ambitious agenda for the humanities. Can the humanities somehow take on the media and effectively challenge sly, evasive politicians? And how do the humanities put a premium on honesty?

Aurelius Augustine: “Justice having been removed, what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale? What are criminal gangs but petty kingdoms? A gang is a group of persons under the command of a leader, bound by an agreement or covenant that governs the association in which plunder is divided according to a constitution of sorts... For the answer given by a captured pirate to Alexander the Great was amusing but true. 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 vessel, he noted, I am called a pirate. Because you do the same with a mighty navy, you are called an emperor.”

Does the anecdote prove Augustine’s point about government and larceny? If you were Alexander how would you answer the pirate’s equation?
Jonathan Clark: “Perhaps the quest for core values will only cease when a new Aristotle shows us that democracy is now but a term for the various means by which the few govern the many.”

George Bernard Shaw: “Democracy reads well, but it doesn’t act well.”

Doesn’t the term, “democracy,” suggest that the many govern the few? When has it worked that way in practice? Under what conditions? Might the quest for “core” (or shared) values be more stirring and effective, if the many ever wanted to take back “democracy” from the few. What might Shaw have meant about “read[ing] well” and acting badly? How might leaders assist democracies to “act well”?

Lord Byron: “I deny nothing but doubt everything.”

One can construe this as something to celebrate, inasmuch as Byron seems to commend both tolerance and an inquisitive spirit. Perhaps the poet can afford the two, but is it practical for one who wishes to lead others to be so set against denying some options and inflexibly maintaining that other courses, practices, and policies are beyond question or doubt?

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 that the humanities could and should serve as an antidote. Do you share Nussbaum’s distress? If docile citizens are useful and well-trained, 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?

Robert Penn Warren’s Willie Stark campaigning for votes: “He didn’t start out thinking about all the other hicks and how he was going to do wonderful things for them. He started out thinking of number one, but something came to him on the way. How he could not do something for himself and not for other folks or for himself without the help of other folks? It was going to be all together or none.”

Doing for oneself and doing for others: you’d probably find that each of these “doings” gets packed into leaders’ motives, and onlookers often find it hard to tell one from the other. Or do you think there’s an easy was to distinguish between selfish (or self-centered) and selfless leaders? And once leaders realize they must take measures—perhaps unsavory ones—to keep “number one” in positions to do for others, the distinction gets blurred, does it not? Are there ways to ensure that leaders think first of others, and of themselves only as an afterthought? Is that desirable?

Joseph Goebbels: “Politics is the highest art there is, since the sculptor shapes only the stone, the dead stone, and the poet only the word, which in itself is dead. But the statesman shapes the masses, gives them stature and structure, breathes in form and life, so that a people arises from them.”

Goebbels had absolute control over the dissemination of information as Hitler’s minister of propaganda. The people or volk that “arose” due to his efforts did some dreadful things to neighbors whose stature was, to say the least, diminished. But that doesn’t mean that Goebbels was incorrect about statesmanship’s superiority to the arts and humanities. Can you make a case for the poet and the sculptor, answering Goebbels? How, as a statesman might you breathe “life and form” into the
masses and avoid the lethal consequences that Goebbels and his friends in the third Reich thought legitimate, if not also necessary to the process of shaping a nation?

Susan Sontag: “The photographer’s intentions do not determine the meaning of a photograph, which will have its own career, blown by the whims and loyalties of the diverse communities that have use for it.”

Nonsense? Aren’t the loyalties and disloyalties—as well as the whims—of communities determined by the images that artists/photographers give them? Isn’t the person behind the camera in control? Don’t the persons, factions, and media-moguls, who pay the freight, frame what viewers see? And doesn’t what we see shape how we think about wars, leaders, candidates, poverty, nobility?

In this section of LDST 101, we’re going to raise these questions as well as others that you’ll find in the schedule portion of the syllabus. We do so not because the answers lay at the foundation of leadership studies. The asking does. The conversations generated by our asking should draw our various premises into the open, problematize some answers we may take for granted, prompt intriguing encounters with problems, with problem-solvers, and with a number of issues we might otherwise have left unexplored.

We’ll spend a few sessions contemplating why we’re here (in a class on leadership and the humanities, at a university, at this university, and on this planet (two sessions ought to be sufficient). Then we shall consider whether and why we need leaders and try to find standards to measure the effectiveness and integrity of leaders.

First, we’ll look at leaders on the brink of war--in 1914 and 1962. We’ll watch for mistakes, ask what role chance and expertise played in both episodes. We’ll try to imagine what it might mean to be defenseless and how precautions and pride factored into the mix that took the world to war in 1914 and kept it from war in 1962.

Then we’ll get even more contemporary and ask about the challenges that diversity poses to leadership in our society. We’ll investigate some of the recent literature on race and immigration before looking at the ways in which the Supreme Court alarmed a drowsy country. Did the decision in Brown vs the Board of Education of Topeka Kansas wake the United States up to inequities to any good and lasting effect?

After the first mid-term, we’ll head back to “the old masters” to see if we can learn anything by confronting Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas More. We’ll read what Machiavelli has to say about monarchy and the military in The Prince and hear a case for “ferocious populism” in his Discourses. More’s Utopia is really two books in one. The first asks whether it is wise to counsel kings; whereas More’s second book, introducing the early sixteenth century to a perfect, harmonious society may sacrifice too much to achieve equality and harmony.

After the break, just as the federal election in this country heats up, we turn to politics. We’ll watch what’s happening here in late October and study the strategies of the formidable “boss” who stalks through Robert Penn Warren’s prize-winning novel, All the King’s Men. We’ll talk about Huey Long, Obama, Romney, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Willie Stark.
Just before the second mid-term and the turkey break, we’ll tie foreign policy, diversity, and politics together, spending a short week on one of the most pressing problems facing leadership in your time; we’ll examine the issues that swirl around Islamophobia and terrorism. Our guest, Professor Kurzman, author of Missing Martyrs and a specialist in Islamic Studies particularly interested in Iran, obviously is the perfect fellow to “tie” that package--policy, diversity, and politics-- informatively and provocatively.

What happens after turkey? Just when your colleagues are going berserk, probing the unfathomable, writing research papers, you’ll get to spend some downtime with William Shakespeare and his Caius Martius Coriolanus, a critic of democracy, failed leader, and all-round unpleasant protagonist (lately played by Ralph Fiennes). And we’ll conclude by re-reading the questions at the start of this syllabus while contemplating the commercialization of education.

Hope you enjoy the ride, but . . .

before you agree that this might be a good way to spend parts of your semester and strap yourselves into this challenge, attend to the next section on . . .

Requirements and Grades

Lively, informed encounters with our questions, obviously, require your lively and informed participation in class discussions, but I’ve never found a satisfactory way to “grade” class participation, save to deduct some points from the final grades of participants often absent and/or unfamiliar with assignments. Four classes will begin with quizzes during which you’ll be asked briefly to reply to a question about the day’s assignment. Your replies will be graded, and your three highest grades will constitute 21% of your final grade. Two examinations (scheduled for September 26th and November 12th) count for 25% each. The final exam counts for 30% of your final grade. Yes, that adds up to 101%, making it slightly harder to disappoint yourselves and your friends and family with your final grade.

Make-up quizzes become part of the mid-terms or the final exam following the quiz you miss. Students eligible to take make-ups have missed a quiz due to illness (present a doctor’s note) or to deaths in the family (present obituary notice). Responsibilities to represent the university also entitle absentees to take a make-up (coaches or supervisors’ reports required), but other co-curricular and extracurricular events/responsibilities do not. If students are eligible to make up missed mid-terms, they may do so during the final exam.

(NOPEs during class-time: late arrivals, early departures, mid-class breaks, laptops, multi-tasking).

The following should now be available at the university bookstore

Susan Sontag, REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS

Robert Penn Warren, ALL THE KING’S MEN William Chafe, CIVILITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

William Shakespeare, CORIOLANUS (also available on line)

Thomas More, UTOPIA (also available on-line) Charles Kurzman, THE MISSING MARTYRS

Niccolo Machiavelli, THE PRINCE (also available on line)

Barbara Tuchman, THE GUNS OF AUGUST
SO--- what do we do, and when do we do it?

8/27    Welcome and Introduction

8/29    Today’s question: why are you here? I have an answer, which I’m assigning, but before you read my answer—which, of course, explains more about why I’m here, you ought to sketch 3 reasons you’re here—on the filecard provided, please. Bring the completed cards with you today. When you’ve composed your reasons, read my “Donald Rumsfeld in Prague,” the Phi Beta Kappa oration I delivered nearly ten years ago at Davidson College. It was published in VITAL SPEECHES OF THE DAY, which you access by going to the UR library page. Click on “journal titles” in the top left corner and type in “Vital Speeches.” Click on the search engine for “Vital Speeches of the Day,” which will get you to 2003 and click on the May1 issue (volume 69, number 14. You’ll find your assignment on pp. 442-45).

9/3    Today and Wednesday, we revisit two crises, the onset of World War I and the “thirteen days” known now as “the Cuban missile crisis” to observe military and political leaders coping with threats, promises, and each other. At your convenience, but before today’s class, view THIRTEEN DAYS, MRC reserve (media resource center) and read Barbara Tuchman’s GUNS OF AUGUST, pp. 1-18 & 85-158.

9/5    More GUNS, please, pp. 191-227, 491-524. What do you think Kennedy (in THIRTEEN DAYS, and--as it happened--in fact) had in mind when he advised his advisers to read Tuchman’s GUNS OF AUGUST?

9/10   Another (shorter) film at the MRC; please watch 9500 LIBERTY, another book (shorter), Susan Sontag’s SUFFERING. Also read the controversial article published by Samuel Huntington in 2004 and easily accessed in you google “Huntington Hispanic Challenge,” then let your informed fingers do the clicking. Also go to http://janetjarman.com and click on “Dream of the Rich North” and visit the exhibit at the Harnett Art Museum (in the Modlin Center on campus), “Photographs by Dorothea Lang and her Contemporaries.” Check out Nussbaum’s quote (at the start of the syllabus); tell me whether and why you’d call Huntington and the citizens you encounter in the film “docile” or “complete.” Compassion and indignation are featured along with titillation when Sontag discusses the objectives of the media presentations of suffering. Does 9500 LIBERTY seem to have been “framed” to excite any, all, or none of these? How about Jarman’s photographs and those you’ve seen in the Harnett/Lang exhibit?

9/12   Compassion? Indignation? Titillation? Think about those “objectives” as you listen to Jeffrey Allison’s guest presentation at the Harnett Museum, 1:30. The afternoon class convenes at the museum. Participants in the morning class, which is cancelled today, should attend the 1:30 lecture, unless one of their other classes is scheduled at that time.

9/19 Read Michael Klarman’s essay “How Brown Changed Race Relations: The Backlash Thesis,” http://www.jstor.org/stable/2080994 and Chafe’s CIVILITIES, pp. 3-41. We’ve stepped back from the Seattle case to 1954 and to the outcry that followed the court’s decision to desegregate. Summarize Klarman’s argument. Does the leadership style of Orval Faubus and George Wallace document what Klarman hopes to prove? How do civic leaders in the early innings of Chafe’s study of Greensboro, North Carolina stack up with or against those Faubus, Wallace, and other leaders of the “deeper” South?

9/24 Read Chafe’s CIVILITIES, pp. 42-202. Return to Robert Penn Warren’s quote at the start of the syllabus. Of course, you’ll later meet Willie Stark, into whose mouth, Penn Warren puts these words, but for now assess the Greensboro civic and leaders’ efforts in the terms that Penn Warren presents. What are they doing for “other folks”? For themselves”? Would you agree with Chafe that leaders in city government and in the colleges were “obsessed . . . with avoiding protest”? If so, should Chafe have changed the title of his book to CIVILITIES OR CIVIL RIGHTS?

9/26 --mid-term exam-- --mid-term exam-- --mid-term exam--

10/1 Read Machiavelli’s THE PRINCE and Villalon’s essay on Machiavelli’s brief for a pragmatic, militaristic monarchy, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41166952. Would you claim that Machiavelli presented political science or political satire?

10/3 Read the selections from Machiavelli’s DISCOURSES, on electronic reserve, pp. 249-61, “The Advantages of Popular Government.” In his DISCOURSES, Machiavelli more generously evaluates a series of republic arrangements. Indeed, the assignment for today (and the DISCOURSES as a whole could be cited to formulate the case for what political scientist John McCormick calls Machiavelli’s “ferocious populism.” What is populism? Is Machiavelli a populist? How does your answer to this second question correspond with impressions and inferences you drew from reading his PRINCE?

10/8 Read Thomas More’s UTOPIA, book #1 and Ezra Klein’s “Unpopular Mandate,” on electronic reserve, pp. 30-33. Why does More’s principal narrator, Hythloday, advise those who would counsel leaders not to do so? Does he have a point that is relevant today? Does Klein’s article on the health care debate and the improbability of compromise in contemporary politics prove Hythloday’s point? In UTOPIA, More takes issue with Hythloday. How would More respond to Klein’s perceptions (and your perception) of political polarization in the twenty first century?


**Break**
10/22   Read ALL THE KING’S MEN, chapters 1-5. **What does Judge Irwin’s library tell you about his politics?**

10/24   Read KING’S MEN, chapter 6 and Klein’s “Unpopular Mandate,” on electronic reserve.

10/29   Read KING’S MEN, chapters 7-9, watch the original film of KING’S MEN (Oscar for best movie, 1949), MRC, and read Walzer’s “Social Movements and Election Campaigns,” electronic reserve. **What connects the medical-center contract awarded to Gummy Larson with the “politics bad brick” which was used in the schoolhouse that collapsed at the start of Willie’s career?**


11/5      Read “From Muhammad to Obama,” on electronic reserve and Kurzman’s MISSING MARTYRS, chapters 1-3. Also see the film, CRASH, on reserve at MRC. **While you rummage through the various “Islamophobic stereotypes and caricature” in the assigned reading and ponder how stereotyping or stigmatizing affected behavior, make a short list of images and anecdotes used to libel other ethnic, racial, and religious groups. “From Muhammad” ends with a cartoon that seems to be an appropriate introduction to Kurzman’s book about Muslim extremists. What distinguishes the extremists from the Islamism endeavoring to “Islamicize modernity”?**

11/7      Finish MISSING MARTYRS. **Professor Kurzman’s lecture today at 5PM takes the place of regular class sessions today. Curricular (but not extracurricular) obligations are valid reasons for your absences. Jepson hall, room 118.**

11/12    --mid-term exam--    --mid-term exam--    --mid-term exam--

11/14    break -- no class

11/19    Read Plutarch’s “Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus” and watch the film, CORIOLANUS, MRC.

T**U**R**K**E**Y
11/26  Read Shakespeare’s CORIOLANUS, Acts 1-3. You’re the director; how would you stage the first scene of the first act? Check Susan Sontag’s quote at the start of your syllabus, substitute “playwright” and “play,” respectively, for the terms “photographer” and “photograph” in her statement.” Did you agree with it then? Why? Why not? Do you agree with it now? Why? Why not?

11/28  Read Kaufman’s “What Might We Learn about Leadership from Coriolanus and CORIOLANUS.” Reread Keith Thomas’s remarks on mendacity and intellectual honesty (start of the syllabus). Given what I’ve written about candor and contempt, what you’ve seen and read about Coriolanus, should we conclude that too much honesty is a liability for political leaders?

12/3  Read Appiah’s “The Duel Dies,” electronic reserve, a chapter from Kwame Anthony Appiah’s THE HONOR CODE: HOW MORAL REVOLUTIONS HAPPEN, which suggests that moral revolutions are leaderless. But Appiah reserves a critical role for “doubters” who ridicule honored customs. Should we distinguish doubters from leaders? Compare the use of ridicule in Appiah’s chapter to the use of ridicule in “From Muhammad.”

12/5  Read Edmundson’s “Uses of a Liberal Education,” www.ljhammond.com/essay.htm. What’s your take on the commercialization of education Edmundson describes and despises? You will be evaluating this course and its instructor at the start of class; has Edmundson’s essay caused you to question the usefulness of such a process?