LDST 306: Leadership in Cultural and Historical Contexts

FALL 2013

COURSE TIME AND LOCATION: Tues, Thurs 12:00-1:15, Jepson 101
CLASS WEBSITE: https://blackboard.richmond.edu

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Chris von Rueden
EMAIL: cvonrued@richmond.edu
OFFICE: Jepson 235
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

Course Description:
In this course, we will study the ecological and cultural factors that shape political organization. Through cases studies drawn from primatology, cultural anthropology, and political history, students will learn about what makes human leadership unique and investigate why leadership and political organization vary across human societies, both historically and cross-culturally. Some of the questions we consider include: Why do humans adopt leader and follower roles at all? What is the nature of leadership in other social animals, particularly chimpanzees? Are there any human societies that lack leadership? Are there societies in which, on average, women wield more power than men? Why are some human societies more hierarchical than others? The goal of the course is not only to expose students to the ecological, cultural, and historical contexts that shape leadership but also to stimulate them to think critically about human social behavior in general.

Readings:
The readings for this course consist of a mix of empirical social science articles and more popular journal articles or opinion pieces (see Reading List below). All of the readings will be available through BlackBoard. In addition, three books are assigned for this course and are available for purchase at the UR bookstore:

**How you will be graded:**

1. **Discussion (15% of grade)**

   The format of the class is a mixture of lecture and open discussion about the readings. You must come prepared to class with questions and comments, having carefully read what is assigned for that class (see Reading List below). In addition, two students will be assigned as experts for each reading; one student will summarize the main points of the reading for the class (~3 minutes) and then the other student will critique the reading and connect it to the broader themes of the course (~3 minutes). This does not mean that only these students discuss the readings. Students should not be timid and all are expected to contribute to each class discussion. Attendance and lateness are also factored into your discussion grade.

2. **Reaction Papers (15% of grade)**

   You need to write a reaction to a minimum of 15 readings (whether articles or book chapters), throughout the semester. These should be critical evaluations **AS WELL AS** summaries of the main points of the readings. You will only receive partial credit if you simply summarize or if it appears you didn’t read the entire article. Reaction papers should be turned in at the start of the class during which we are scheduled to discuss the particular reading. The reaction paper should only be a page long, at most two pages (typed, double spaced, 12-point font, 1 inch margins). You must include your name and the title of the reading and use staples if you are turning in more than one page. It is up to you to decide for which of the readings you will turn in reaction papers.

3. **Midterm Exam (20% of grade)**

   The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions having you compare and contrast positions taken by authors we’ve read and material presented in lecture.

4. **Final Paper (20% of grade)**

   Throughout the course you will work in groups of 3 to research the political organization of a particular human society (details to be provided in class). In the final paper, which you write jointly with your group members, you present the results of your research. You must develop a clear argument for the paper, in consultation with me. The paper should include a minimum of 10 pages of text (double spaced, 12-point font) and structured into four sections: (1) Introduction, in which you present your argument; (2) Body, in which you defend your argument with literature from class and from your own research (3) Conclusion, in which you restate your argument and situate it within the broader context of the course; (4) References, in which you list your cited articles. Wikipedia and non-scholarly websites are not valid bibliographic sources for papers written in this class. In addition to
the paper, your group will deliver a presentation to the class on your research during the final two class periods.

5. Final Exam (30% of grade)

The final exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions having you compare and contrast positions taken by authors we’ve read and material presented in lecture. The final exam is cumulative but may emphasize the latter half of the course.

Notes:

1. To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities. [http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html](http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html)

2. Students should notify me within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance. [http://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html](http://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html)

3. Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact me as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams. [http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/disability-services/policies.html](http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/disability-services/policies.html)

4. A paper turned in late without an acceptable excuse will be docked 10 percentage points for each day it is late. Makeup exams are given under exceptional circumstances (and require a note from the Dean).

5. Students should be aware of University policies on plagiarism. Plagiarism in any form can result in failing the class or even expulsion. See the following link for advice on avoiding plagiarism. [http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/english/plagiarism.html](http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/english/plagiarism.html)

6. The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. A shortened version of the honor pledge should be written on every assignment you hand in: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.” [http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/common/PDF/Statutes%20revision%2011-12.pdf](http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/common/PDF/Statutes%20revision%2011-12.pdf)

7. Cell phones and laptops may not be used during class. Use of a cell phone or laptop during class will mean I count you as absent that day.

8. If you ever have questions outside of class, I encourage you to drop by my office. It is best to set up an appointment verbally or via email to ensure I am in my office when you come by.
I’m eager to help students but you must take the initiative to meet with me. Also, I won’t answer big questions by email.

**Campus Resources:**

**Academic Skills Center** (http://asc.richmond.edu, 289-8626 or 289-8956): Supports students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information processing, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g. calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement.

**Career Services** (http://careerservices.richmond.edu/ or 289-8547): Assists students in exploring their interests and abilities, choosing a major, connecting with internships and learning experiences, investigating graduate and professional school options, and landing a first job. We encourage students to schedule an appointment with a career advisor during their first year.

**Counseling and Psychological Services** (http://caps.richmond.edu or 289-8119): Assists students in meeting academic, personal, or emotional challenges. Services include assessment, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

**Speech Center** (http://speech.richmond.edu or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

**Writing Center** (http://writing.richmond.edu or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained peer writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

**Boatwright Library Research Librarians** (http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask.html or 289-8669): Assist students with identifying and locating the best resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also assist students with questions about citing sources correctly. Students can schedule a personal research appointment, meet with librarians at the library’s main service desk, email, text or IM.

**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

**Aug 27**

**Introductions**

**Aug 29**

**Do Humans Have a ‘Nature’?**


**Sep 3**

**Nature and Nurture**


**Sep 5**

**Evolution of Cooperation in Groups**


**Sep 10**

**Evolution of Cooperation in Groups (cont.)**


**Sep 12**

**Culture and Cooperation in Groups**


**Sep 17**

**Culture and Cooperation in Groups (cont.)**


**Sep 19**

**Hierarchy and Leadership**


**Sep 24**

**Hierarchy and Leadership (cont.)**


**Sep 26**

**Gender and Leadership**

Oct 1  Egalitarian Societies


Oct 3  Egalitarian Societies (cont.)


Oct 8  Egalitarian Societies (cont.)


Oct 10  Transitions to More Centralized Leadership


Oct 15  No Class (Fall Study Break)

Oct 17  MIDTERM

Oct 22  Transitions to More Centralized Leadership: Theory


Oct 24  Transitions to More Centralized Leadership: Case Studies
Transitions to More Centralized Leadership: Case Studies (cont.)


Film: Ongka’s Big Moka

(Re-) Emergence of Despotism


States and Empires


States and Empires (cont.)


States and Empires: a focus on China


Technology and Institutions

**Nov 21**

**How Political Organization Shapes Reproduction and Inheritance**


**Nov 26**

**How Political Organization Shapes Reproduction and Inheritance (cont.)**


**Dec 3**

**In-Class Presentations**

**Dec 5**

**In-Class Presentations**

**Dec 10**

**FINAL PAPER due (by 5pm, in my mailbox or at my office)**

**Dec 17**

**FINAL EXAM (7-10 pm)**