LDST 306: Leadership in Cultural and Historical Contexts

FALL 2015

COURSE TIME AND LOCATION: Mon, Wed 10:30-11:45, Jepson 101
CLASS WEBSITE: https://blackboard.richmond.edu
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Chris von Rueden
EMAIL: cvonrued@richmond.edu
OFFICE: Jepson 235
OFFICE HOURS: Fri 10:00am-12:00 & 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. I ask that you not leave during class-time unless you are in physical discomfort.

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, theoretically-motivated 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. The 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/honor/](http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/honor/)

7. **Cell phones and laptops may not be used during class.**

8. If you ever have questions outside of class, I encourage you to drop by my office. Outside of office hours, it is best to set up an appointment 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:

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

Academic Skills Center (http://asc.richmond.edu, 289-8626 or 289-8956): Assists 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): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major, connecting with internships and learning experiences, investigating graduate and professional school options, and landing your first job. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor during your first year.

Counseling and Psychological Services (http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps/ or 289-8119): Assists students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include 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 writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians (http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/ or 289-8876): Research librarians assist students with identifying and locating resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also provide research support for students and can respond to questions about evaluating and citing sources. Students can email, text or IM or schedule a personal research appointment to meet with a librarian in his/her office on the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area.
### Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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Sep 21  Gender and Leadership

Sep 23  Egalitarian Societies

Sep 28  Egalitarian Societies (cont.)

Sep 30  Egalitarian Societies (cont.)

Oct 5  Transitions to More Centralized Leadership

Oct 7  MIDTERM

Oct 12  No Class (Fall Study Break)

Oct 14  Transitions to More Centralized Leadership: Theory

Oct 19  Transitions to More Centralized Leadership: Case Studies
October 21  
**Film: Ongka’s Big Moka**

October 26  
**Transitions to More Centralized Leadership: Case Studies (cont.)**


October 28  
**(Re-) Emergence of Despotism**


November 2  
**States and Empires**


November 4  
**States and Empires (cont.)**


November 9  
**States and Empires: a focus on China**


November 11  
**Technology and Institutions**


Nov 16  

**Religion**


Nov 18  

**How Political Organization Shapes Reproduction and Inheritance**


Nov 23  

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


Nov 25  

**No Class (Thanksgiving)**

Nov 30  

**In-Class Presentations**

Dec 2  

**In-Class Presentations**


Dec 7  

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

Dec 10  

**FINAL EXAM (9am-12pm)**