From quotes to questions:

Hannah Arendt: “The poets will always be accused of lying. After all, they are the only ones from whom we expect the truth.”

   What truth do you expect from poets? Are there synonyms for “lying” that you’d use to avoid the connotation of deceit yet to capture the distance poets often maintain from what you’d consider concrete, pragmatic concerns?

Ludwig Wittgenstein: “At the end of reasons comes persuasion.”

   Why do you need persuasion if the reasons are good and the argument rational?

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? Moreover, 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?

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 mean for you to subscribe to the truth packed into this line?

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?

Abu Hanifa: “Difference of opinion in the community is a token of divine mercy.”

   Does it follow that consensus is a sign of divine displeasure? Was the eighth-century sage suggesting that responsible leaders ought to forbid dissent? Can small “communities” (classrooms, committees, families) cultivate multiple, rival opinions without jeopardizing community?
Oliver Wendell Holmes: “Life is painting a picture, not doing a sum.”

Is Justice Holmes simply saying that quality of life should be more important than the quantities of goods we accumulate? Aren’t the two related? Or is he saying something directly relevant to the education you’re receiving?

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 respond to the pirate’s equation?

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?

Susan Sontag: “To be sure, nobody who really thinks about history can take politics altogether seriously.”

What could Sontag be thinking about here? Surely, political leadership is one of the most serious considerations put before us. Or is it? Her comment follows a short discussion of Sebastião Salgado’s photographs collected under the title “Migrations: Humanity in Transition.” Google those images, and see if they put “politics” in an “unserious” perspective.

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. You’ll want to take special note, because the material above could reappear on exams. But we ask these questions not because the answers lay at the foundation of leadership studies; the asking does. And the conversations generated by our asking ought to problematize some ideas we take for granted, and prompt encounters with the problems and problem-solvers we might otherwise have left unexplored.

We’ll start with several classics in the humanities that examine the caliber of leadership in various settings. Along the way, you’ll be asked to formulate opinions about the “dirty hands theory,” and the usefulness of such terms as “charisma,” “populism,” “absolutism,” and “faction.” You’ll also be asked under what circumstances leaders would be well-advised to shock followers or to appease those following them. We’ll consider to what extent and why leaders ought to honor conventions—and when
they should cultivate misgivings about conventional wisdom. Then we’ll review and assess the power of imagery and oratory before tackling what I call “applications,” taking what we learned about leadership and applying it to problems your generation is likely to face, the problems of pluralism and fascism.

If this appeals and the work I’ll ask you to complete, which is detailed in the schedule below, doesn’t frighten you into another section of LDST 101 or 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 and Grades

Lively, informed encounters with our questions, obviously, require your lively and informed participation in class discussions. “Require” means that I expect it. I deduct points from the final grades of participants who don’t meet that expectation--who are often absent and/or unfamiliar with assignments. 100 points are available. You’ll sit for 2 mid-term examinations consisting of take home and in-class portions--10/4 (35 points) and 11/13 (35 points). The remaining 30 points will be awarded for a short research paper (2,500 words -- maximum) due December 18th.

Students who miss a midterm due to illness (please obtain a physician’s note) or to deaths in the family, and students who miss a midterm to represent the university on the road may take the in-class portion within two weeks of the scheduled date. But please check your other courses. If they require curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular activities that conflict with the exam dates in my class, change sections or change courses to accommodate. Other classes’ assignments do not excuse you from my exams.

The course aims to promote conversation and collaboration. You may submit collaborate essays for the take-home portions of your mid-terms, and you may collaborate and submit the collaborative research project. Up to five students may submit a single take-home response and end-of-term research project.

Several taboos: late arrivals, early departures, mid-class breaks, laptops, multi-tasking.

You’ll be responsible for readings on electronic reserve as well as for all (or assigned parts) of books available at the student book store. ER indicates availability of electronic reserve. If you have questions, folks at the library’s front desk will have answers.

TEXTS -- available at the bookstore

Wendy Brown, WALLED STATES, WANING SOVEREIGNTY  William Chafe, CIVILITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Machiavelli, THE PRINCE  Shakespeare, CORIOLANUS  More, UTOPIA

Robert Penn Warren, ALL THE KING’S MEN  Susan Sontag, REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS

Hannah Arendt, EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM
SO—what do we do and when do we do it?

8/28 Why we do what we’ll do and when.


Robert Kaplan’s essay about statesmanship and soldiering in antiquity and in late twentieth-century America has much to say about justice, government, and media today. What did you find particularly relevant and irrelevant to predicaments we face now? He says “statesmanship is about distinguishing between what is just and what is merely sanctimonious or impractical,” but does he offer criteria and definitions that would assist you—as statesmen—to make those distinctions? If so, what are they? If not, what would they look like?

9/4 Read KING’S MEN, Chapters 1 AND 2; also read Kershaw, “Beerhall Agitator,” pp. 143-49, ER.

“Judge Irwin has come out for Callahan.” That said, Governor Willie Stark sprints to the judge’s home in chapter one, leaving a photo opportunity at his birthplace to get to Burden’s Landing. Penn Warren stages the confrontation between the two splendidly. Give me your impressions of each. Chapter two is an extended flashback. You’ll learn how Willie, after a false start, becomes governor. Compare his appeal to that of the “beerhall agitator” to whom Kershaw introduces you.

9/6 Read KING’S MEN, chapter 3

We’ll start with your thoughts about the crisis precipitated by Byram White. Be sure you know how Willie resolved the crisis and what Hugh Miller and Jack Burden thought about Willie’s justifications. Look for the phrase “clean hands”; is it possible for leaders to accomplish worthy objectives while keeping their hands clean? What would that mean?

9/11 Read Machiavelli’s PRINCE, chapters 1-10, 14-26.

If you had to select only 2 chapters to assign to your class so student colleagues would get a good glimpse of what THE PRINCE was about, which 2 would you select and assign? Why those two?

9/13 Read Walzer’s essay, “Dirty Hands,” ER; also read KING’S MEN, chapter 4.

How does Walzer think problems related to corruption originate? Do you agree? Would his analysis apply to KING’S MEN? How? Why do you think Penn Warren included the chapter about Annabelle Trice and Cass Mastern?


Why does Hythloday warn you against consulting leaders who have absolute power? Why does the character Thomas More, in book 1, offer a different opinion? Do you agree with Hythloday or More? What happens at Cardinal Morton’s dinner party? Why is it significant? What does UTOPIA’s second book tell you about author Thomas More’s concept of public service? Snatch Nussbaum’s statement
quoted on the second page of this document and put it alongside your notes on the assignment from UTOPIA; tell me how her remark fits with this assignment. Now do the same with what you and Jack Burden learn in the fifth chapter of KING’S MEN; how does that fit with Hythloday’s position in the first book?

9/20  Read FEDERALIST # 10: https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers#TheFederalistPapers-10 and KING’S MEN, chapter 6.

How does James Madison, in Federalist #10 propose to solve the problem of factions? Why is there a problem with factions? Would you agree with Jack when he characterizes Adam Stanton as romantic? How would a romantic approach the problem of factions? Would you describe Madison as pragmatic? How would you describe Hythloday: romantic or pragmatic? Thomas More, the character in UTOPIA? Thomas More the author of UTOPIA? Selecting business, political, campus leaders, would you favor a romantic or pragmatic candidate?

9/25  Read Shakespeare’s CORIOLANUS, acts 1-3, and watch the Fiennes film CORIOLANUS https://login.newman.richmond.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fdigitalcampus.swankmp.net%2Frichmond281800%2Fwatch%3Ftoken%3D5b2955acbbc4d1ae924c36196f3791c4320e44ecfa249df741a56fcaebe30f12

How does the film differ from the text? Which quote at the front of our course syllabus has the most direct bearing on this assignment?

9/27  Read Mills’ POWER ELITE (ER)

Writing in the 1950s, Mills suggested that economic, military, and political elites distanced themselves from the people over whom they exerted influence. The first two were more important than the third and, purportedly, they pursued their self-interest shamelessly. Mills’ appraisals protest the mediocrity and mindlessness spreading from elites to the general public. Our discussion will put his perspectives back in their time. Your challenge is to gauge to what extent it might be correct today to say, as Mills did, that “people now accept the immorality of accomplishment as a going fact” and to suggest what, if anything contemporary leaders ought to do about it. “Older types of exemplary figures have been replaced by the fraternity of the successful,” Mills maintains; “their images are controversial, deeply involved in the immorality of accomplishment and the higher immorality in general. Increasingly,” he says, “literate Americans feel there is something synthetic about them. Their style and the conditions under which they become ‘big’ lend themselves . . . to the suspicion of the build-up.” Yet impromptu, off-the-cuff, comments (tweets) on offer from this country’s current CEO seem to suggest something Mills didn’t anticipate. Compare Trump’s candor to Coriolanus’, to Willie Stark’s. Or would you refer to Trump, Coriolanus, Willie, or leaders of your acquaintance as “built-up”?

10/2  Finish KING’S MEN

What connects the medical-center contract awarded to Gummy Larson with the “politics rotten brick” used in the schoolhouse that collapsed at the start of Willie’s career? Jack Burden’s eyes become ours, but you may have had more sympathy with Adam Stanton’s responses to Willie Stark’s political piety.
Let me know where, if anywhere, your sympathies lie. Finally, assess the novel in light of what you’ll read (in the syllabus quotations) from Augustine’s CITY OF GOD. Under what conditions—if any—is it permissible or defensible for leaders to become unscrupulous?

10/4

FIRST MID-TERM EXAM

10/9  Read Klorman’s essay on “How Brown Changed Race Relations (ER); read Chafe, CIVILITES AND CIVIL RIGHTS, introduction and chapters 1-4; and watch the film SELMA --
https://login.newman.richmond.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdigitalcampus.swankmp.net%2Frichmond281800%2Fwatch%3Ftoken%3D5b7e56af69715c56a21705dc265ea2cfff662040bfd4e3d94f4cc4e64db48ad9

Where is the “backlash” in Klorman’s backlash thesis”? Compare the leadership styles, objectives, and methods of Martin Luther King (as portrayed in SELMA) to those of Luther Hodges in CIVILITES? Would you call a movement intent on inciting violent reactions non-violent?

10/11  Read Chafe’s CIVILITIES, chapter 7; also read Clarence Thomas’ concurring opinion in the Seattle case about race-based remedial measures, http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/05-908.ZC.html and on electronic reserve as “Thomas - Seattle.”

Justice Thomas agreed with the majority opinion, which struck down integration programs in Seattle and Louisville. A footnote to his opinion claims that “nothing but an interest in classroom aesthetics and a hypersensitivity to elite sensibilities justifies . . . racial balancing programs.” He disagreed with dissenting justices who argued that “benign race-based decisions” were permissible to repair damage done by what Justice Breyer called “stubborn facts of history [that] linger”--to the great disadvantage of African-Americans. Do you agree with Thomas that there are no “benign race-based decisions”? Do you think Thomas or Breyer the more astute analyst of the problems related to pluralism? Identify an objectionable part of either Thomas’ or Breyer’s position. Identify the most compelling argument and illustration in Thomas’ opinion. If you were a supreme court justice, would you vote for government remedies to de facto segregation? Or would you concur with Thomas and the majority in the Seattle case that legal remedies should apply only to discrimination, which can be closely connected to laws denying minorities equal protection guaranteed by the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution?

BREAK

10/18  Read Susan Sontag’s REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS

Are posed pictures inauthentic? Google “Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother,” and tell us whether you saw determination or desperation. Sontag’s discussion of pictures that shock (she wonders whether “shock has term limits”; what do you think?) and pictures that soothe will make more sense if you’ll google a few of the pictures she writes about.

Use the terms “idealistic” and “realistic” to assess Churchill’s oratory, Berlin’s defense of Churchill, and the 2004 speeches by Obama’s and Sharpton. What lessons about leadership have you learned from Sontag (on imagery) and from today’s assignments (oratory)?

10/25  Read Malešević, “Beyond National Identity” (ER) and Kaufman, “Political Realism and Nationalism” (ER).

How would you distinguish nationalism from patriotism? From racism? Fichte foregrounded the roles education plays in creating national sentiment in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. What’s been your experience with education’s part in inspiring national sentiment in the twenty first? You’ll find that Malešević thinks “nationality” contrived, and I think “nationality,” when it surfaces in those anthems or images associated with nationalism is sinister. Feel free to disagree.

10/30  Read Wendy Brown’s WALLED STATES, WANING SOVEREIGNTY, chapters 1-3; Watch CRASH https://login.newman.richmond.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fdigitalcampus.swankmp.net%2Frichmond281800%2Fwatch%3Ftoken%3Doa38d7995ef8206a0aa8117aab0fd50ff2d39977d84c9694db3dc6d69f7440 Google / read Robert Frost’s poem, MENDING WALL.

Without walls (concrete walls and more abstract frontiers), would a multi-ethnic society experience debilitating collisions? Has Brown convinced you that walls are symptomatic of waning sovereignty? When do fences make good neighbors?

11/1  Watch the film 9500 LIBERTY; also read Samuel Huntington’s “The Hispanic Challenge,” http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/28/the-hispanic-challenge/

In multi-ethnic territories, when is assimilation necessary? Desirable? Culturally imperialistic?

11/4 special showing of DOCUMENTED (tba)

11/6  Watch DOCUMENTED, if you weren’t able to make the Saturday showing, get it at the MRC reserve desk; google and read the Emma Lazarus poem NEW COLOSSUS; and read “Higher Education and Immigration Status” (ER)

Should Economic costs and benefits play major roles in determining education policy? What, if any, role should poetry play? You’re president of the University of Richmond. After reading Parr’s point(s) and Tabor’s counterpoint(s) would you advocate a need-blind, full-need admission policy to trustees considering how to handle academically qualified undocumented candidates? Why? Why not? If you were president of a public university, supported by tax dollars, would you advocate admission and/or in-state tuition for academically qualified undocumented candidates?
Although some of you may experience the liberal arts as a dungeon-like affair, a set of cells (courses) isolated from “the real world” and packed away from your plans to fit in it, Edmundson suspects, for that reason, students and faculty colleagues alike treat the liberal arts as “lite entertainment.” Could he be right? He also complains that students, faculty colleagues, and administrators enthusiastically shape their conduct and enterprises to fit a business model, in which students become consumers or clients. Sift your experiences at UR and tell us (1) what makes higher education higher? And (2) have we forgotten that education is serious--dare I say--business?

SECOND MID-TERM EXAM

11/15 A VERY important class. Ms McCulley will visit class and direct a discussion of the resources available to you as you start contemplating your final “exam,” a research paper due December 18th. Consult the section on “requirements and grades,” page 3 of this syllabus for details.

11/27 No assignment. (Have you given much thought to your research topic?)

Read Arendt’s EICHMANN, chapters 1-3.

Readers fretfully ponder the book’s subtitle, “The Banality of Evil”; what does it lead you to expect? Find statements in the assignment that would help you launch a discussion of one of the quotes you find at the front of this syllabus. For example, “[A] more . . . decisive flaw in Eichmann’s character was his almost total inability ever to look at anything from the other fellow’s point of view” ---- Nussbaum. Eichmann was a leader deputized by his leader (Führer) to do several jobs. Disobedience is contagious, so are leaders (as deputies) ever justified disobeying their leaders and causing chaos? Relate what you learn about Eichmann to our discussions of nationalism.

12/4 Read Arendt’s EICHMANN, chapters 4-8, 14-15, and the epilogue. Watch the film SWING KIDS, on reserve at the MRC.

When things get bad, one option would be to disappear and lead the exodus. Another option, what Arendt calls “inner emigration.” (What exactly is that?) Yet a third option, resist and perhaps lead a resistance movement. What other options occur to you? Which option(s) did the film dramatize?

12/6 Discussion of research topics.