LDST 300: Theories and Models of Leadership  
Spring 2016

“It is theory which decides what can be observed”  
–Einstein, 1926

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:  
Wed 3:00-5:00 & by appointment

Course Description:
This course builds off of LDST 102, which approaches leadership from the perspective of the social sciences (e.g. psychology, economics, anthropology). Relative to non-science, science stresses data collection for generating knowledge, but scientists also rely on theory to guide them in collecting and interpreting data. Knowledge progresses by creating, refining, and/or discarding theories, based on available data. This course takes the scientific side of leadership studies seriously, for it reviews the many and varied conceptual frameworks that theorists (primarily psychologists) have developed in the past 50 years in their scientific studies of leadership. We will need to be selective, given the number of theories that have been examined by researchers, but we will cover those that are best known. We'll spend the first few weeks of the course getting oriented. That will require spending some time discussing the nature and role of theories and models in scientific research, in general. Then we will investigate leadership theories, one by one, evaluating them in terms of their scientific merit. By the end of the course, we will develop a general "taxonomy" of leadership theories.

Readings:
The readings for this course consist primarily of empirical social science articles (see Reading List below). All of the readings will be available online or through BlackBoard.
How you will be graded:

1. Discussion (25% of grade)

The format of the class is primarily group discussion of 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, pairs of students (P1-P8) will be assigned as experts for most readings; one student will summarize the main points of the reading for the class (5-10 minutes) and then the other student will critique the reading (5-10 minutes). Each pair of students will present four times during the course. For the articles describing particular leadership theories, each presenter must relate their summary or critique to: (a) a historical or contemporary example of leadership, and (b) other theories encountered so far in the course, and (c) criteria of good theories (see Appendix). We will discuss what constitutes good theory in our first week of class. I encourage presenters to use notes and to use media (PowerPoint, internet, etc). After their presentations, the assigned students will lead the class in discussion of the reading. All students are expected to discuss the readings. 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. Use the bathrooms before you arrive to class.

2. Reaction Papers (25% 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. Reaction papers should be turned in at the start of the class during which we are scheduled to discuss the particular reading. Each reaction paper should only be a page long (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. These papers do not need to be time-consuming; I am not grading you on grammar and you may write them in note-form. Reaction papers will be graded on a check plus, check, check minus basis.

3. Midterm Exam (25% of grade)

The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions having you compare and contrast material we’ve read and discussed.

4. Final Paper (25% of grade)

The final paper allows you to explore further one of the theories of leadership discussed in class. You must cite class readings and at least 3 additional readings based on your own research. You can choose to either defend or criticize your theory, but either way you must
compare your theory to other theories discussed in class, based on available evidence and criteria of a good theory. You may argue your theory is better or worse than others, or you may argue that your theory is commensurate with the other theories you discuss. **Most important: have a clear argument/thesis.** The most effective papers will consider evidence counter to the thesis, and then show why the evidence for the thesis is more persuasive. The paper should include a minimum of 10 pages (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; (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. Further details about the final paper will be provided in class.

**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 is: “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. **During class time, no phones are allowed.** Laptops may be used for class-related work, such as reading online documents related to this class, accessing the class Blackboard page, or taking notes. **Do not use a laptop for personal matters during class,** and that includes during group activities, discussions, presentations, or media clips: Your email and other personal apps should not be open during class. If you are multitasking (e.g., completing work for another class on a laptop during this class), I may ask you to leave 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](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/](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/](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](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](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/](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**

Jan 11  
**Introductions**

Jan 13  
**The Scientific Method**


Jan 18  
**No Class (MLK Day)**

Jan 20  
**Folk Theories and Bias**


Jan 25  
**Statistics and Replication**


Jan 27  
**In-class Debate: Is Science Broken?**


Feb 1  
**Leadership Theory Overview**


Feb 3  
**Personality**


Feb 8  
**Intelligence**


Feb 10  
**Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership**


Feb 15  
**Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership (continued)**


Feb 17  
**Contingency Theory**


Feb 22  
**Implicit Leadership Theory**


Feb 24  
**Cultural Leadership Theory**

Feb 29  **Leader-Member Exchange Theory**


Mar 2  **MIDTERM**

Mar 7  **No Class (Spring Break)**

Mar 9  **No Class (Spring Break)**

Mar 14  **Shared Leadership**


Mar 16  **Social Network Theory**


Mar 21  **Social Identity Theory**


Mar 23  **Evolutionary Theory**
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 13</td>
<td>Gender (continued)</td>
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Apr 18  Terror Management Theory

• Kirkpatrick, L. & Navarrette, C.D. (2006). Reports of my death anxiety have been greatly exaggerated: a critique of terror management theory from an evolutionary perspective. Psychological Inquiry, 17, 288-298. P1

Apr 20  Course wrap-up


Apr 26  FINAL PAPER due (by 5pm, in my mailbox or at my office)
Appendix

HOW TO EVALUATE A THEORY

The purpose of a good theory is to provide a conceptual framework for viewing and understanding phenomena. From this perspective a theory is either useful or not useful. A theory helps guide and focus attention, identify and define important variables, and postulate the relationships among them. A good theory is not just another 'good idea,' but it is based on empirical data that makes it an adequate map of the territory for the current time. Furthermore, a good theory is never "proven," which would mean that it holds up under all known conditions--that simply cannot be tested. Instead, scientific method finds it easier to "disprove" or eliminate certain alternate explanations (hypotheses) which means that what is left over is more probable and closer to the "truth."

Knowing how to evaluate a theory is an important skill in deciding which framework is most appropriate for examining a given situation. Alternately, if you must use a weak theory, at least you will know the precautions for interpreting its data.

The following aspects should be considered in evaluating a theory.

Parsimony

Parsimony is a long-standing criterion for evaluating theories based on the assumption that one of the purposes of a theory is to explain reality by simplification. This means that the explanation is sparing and frugal; it requires assumptions and explanations within generally accepted parameters. If exceptional assumptions are required, the theory is not parsimonious and extensive data and/or rationale would be necessary to justify their use.

- Does the theory require a 'leap of faith' in making unconventional assumptions?
- If unconventional assumptions are used, are these justified by reason or empirical evidence?
- Does it really add to our understanding of a phenomena, or is it just a restatement of something already accounted for adequately by another theory?

Operationality

A good theory should have key terms and concepts that are operationally defined. That is, the means used to specifically demonstrate or measure them are part of the definition. Many interesting ideas are untestable because they cannot be sufficiently reduced to their operations. An operational definition enables different researchers to conduct similar studies and derive similar conclusions.

- Are the definitions spelled out in terms of the measurements required to obtain them?
- Are the definitions sufficiently clear so that two or more people could follow them and obtain similar results?
- Does it clearly identify the central variables and their relationships that are critically important?

Generativity

A good theory should generate hypotheses about events within the scope of the theory. Also referred to as a 'heuristic' quality of theories, it should suggest ideas or even stimulate controversy, disbelief, and resistance as a means of extending inquiry. It should stimulate thinking and offer tentative explanations that account for a phenomena.
• Does this formulation of the theory allow hypotheses to be formulated?
• Are the assertions stimulating to thinking and discussion?
• Is much research generated by this theory?

Power

Power or usability refers to the ability of the theory to account for events with increasing accuracy and utility. There are four levels of power:

• Description: The theory provides a language to make discriminations in experience, label variables and their relationships. This answers the question, 'What is it?'
• Explanation: The theory emphasizes relationships among the variables in the theory, their direction, magnitude, and influence (causation) of outcomes. This answers the question, 'How does it work?'
• Prediction: Understanding of the relationship among variables under different conditions and across time enables extrapolation of expected outcomes that have not yet been observed. This answers the question, 'What happens next?'
• Control/intervention: A thorough understanding of the variables, their relationships, and influences may permit intervention to change the outcome. This answers the question, 'What can be done about it or how can we influence it?'

Falsifiability

A good theory must be defined clearly enough and have propositions questionable enough to enable experiments designed to disprove it. That is, a theory must be open to change and disconfirmation. It is through rejection of incorrect ideas that knowledge is advanced. Premises that are inviolate and unquestionable reflect faith and not theory.

• It is possible to test and to challenge the basic premises?
• Are the criteria clear that would justify rejection of the premises?

Importance

Important and relevant events should be accounted for by the theory. It's scope (e.g., macro/micro) is not as important as whether the theories are dealing with questions of importance and relevance—the implications and consequences of its being accurate.

• What difference does using this theory make?
• Does the explanation derived from its use really make a difference?

Internal consistency

The concepts and propositions contained within a theory must be logically consistent with each other. They should be logically related, build on each other, or contribute to the explanatory power of each other.

• Do the concepts contradict each other? If so, is there an acceptable explanation of the contradiction?
• Do the concepts logically build on each other and form a rational explanation?
• Are the premises on which the conclusions justifying the concepts are based, justified and logically consistent?

Scope
Theories vary in their range or comprehensiveness with which they purport to account for various events. 'Micro' theories deal with selective, perhaps even obscure events, while 'macro' theories attempt to include many variables over a larger context.

• What does it purport to account for and NOT account for?
• Do the propositions cover all relevant elements within the declared scope?
• Does it operate within its range of convenience or is it inappropriately extended outside its scope?

Organization
A useful theory attempts to bring together several concepts and discuss them in a meaningful way. It does not treat concepts in isolation, but helps describe their relationships. In addition, it systematically builds on and expands current knowledge.

• What are the assumptions and value biases underlying the propositions of the theory? Are they acceptable, consistent, and justifiable?
• How are the concepts related to each other?
• Is previous knowledge used as a foundation for extending current theory, or is it just a patchwork of known information and goes no further?
• If the theory is hierarchical (one level includes or operates on another), are use of these levels adequately supported?

Empirical support
A sound theory should enable itself to be tested in ways that provide evidence whether its propositions should be accepted or rejected.

• Have experiments been conducted that shed light on the accuracy and utility of the theory?
• How is contradictory evidence handled?
• Are the research designs appropriate for drawing conclusions about the adequacy of the theory?
• Is there evidence, not just logic, that tends to support the assertions of the theory?

David X. Swenson PhD LP