Leadership Ethics
LDST 450, Sections 4 & 5

Fall 2018
Course Syllabus

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Office: Jepson Hall, Room 128
Office Hours: Open door and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will analyze and construct arguments about what leadership behaviors are morally right, what ends of leadership are morally good, and what aspects of a leader’s character are morally virtuous. In this respect, the course is similar to other courses in ethics—in that it too seeks to answer the basic question: what matters morally? However, this question takes on a particular guise in leadership contexts. Do the same things matter morally in leadership, and do they matter in the same way or to the same extent? So, this course is different from other courses in ethics in that it uses philosophy to investigate the moral distinctiveness of leadership. Our main goal will be to identify and understand the peculiar moral challenges faced by leaders, as well as potential responses and solutions.

We begin the course by framing traditional ethical questions in leadership contexts. Some examples are the following: Are leaders special? Do they have their own morality? What motivates them to lead? Does anything count morally aside from a leader’s self-interest—a leader’s wants, plans, and projects? Is it possible for leaders to act against self-interest if morality asks that they do so? Is character the focus of the ethical analysis of leaders, or should we look instead to particular actions? If ethics is concerned primarily with the actions of leaders, should our assessments of their behavior consider the intentions behind the actions—what was willed—or the consequences in which leaders’ actions result? What should be the basis of a leader’s motivation? Do consequences other than well-being and happiness matter morally?

As we work through these questions, we will pay special attention to the moral psychology of leadership. Moral psychology is a subfield of ethics dedicated to the study of the relationships between belief, motivation, and action. Throughout the course, we will use my book Leadership Ethics to consider a central component of the moral psychology of leadership: a belief about justification—namely, that leaders are sometimes justified in doing what others are not allowed to do. If leaders have a convincing reason or set of reasons to behave in ways that are proscribed for the rest of us, then ethical leadership may be consistent with breaking the moral rules. We must therefore ask whether leaders are distinctive in terms of their ability to meet demands for justification.

Justification is a central theme—perhaps the central theme in the course. But there are many other, often related themes at the core of discussions in leadership ethics. These themes also raise
questions about the moral distinctiveness of leadership. In addition to our focus on justification, we will take up egoism, authenticity, sympathy, charisma, dirty hands, moral saintliness, and moral luck. All are topics worthy of examination on their own merits, but our work on them will allow us to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the main moral theories covered in the course.

In the final section of the course, we will turn to John Stuart Mill’s classic work On Liberty. This selection might strike some as an odd choice for a class in leadership ethics. On Liberty is perhaps the most important defense of the individual choice and decision making. Mill claims that “the free development of individuality is one of the leading essentials of well-being” (54). But that is precisely why leaders and students of leadership need to read the book. A lot of leadership runs up against the freedom associated with letting individuals speak, think, and act for themselves. Leadership is about getting individuals to do things and, moreover, to act collectively as a group. We will conclude the course by examining whether central liberal values are compatible with leadership.

All of my courses are designed for rigorous discussion of the issues, which means that all participants bear an equal burden in explaining, critiquing, and developing the ideas conveyed in the readings. To facilitate this kind of engagement, I will regularly call on people and give (usually) unannounced Reading Quizzes. Each student is also required to write at least one Short Paper. Short papers are 800-1000 words and engage critically with readings identified as “short paper opportunities.” I will sometimes use these papers to structure class, so they are due the day before class. I recommend that you write more than one short paper. Your Final Paper must be based on one of your short papers. Also, each additional short paper that you write adds one point to the grade of your strongest short paper. You may choose once to write on a reading from the class just previous.

Please note that we begin and end on time and that students are expected to be in class for the entire class period. You may use computers in class, but you must first send me an email pledging that you will restrict your usage to the course-related activities of note taking and accessing course readings. Smartphones and similar devices must be turned off and placed out of view during class.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- The student should understand the relationship between morality and self-interest and, in particular, of the ways in which this relationship is manifested in the exercise of leadership.
- The student should be able to catalog the strengths and weaknesses of competing theories of moral leadership.
- Drawing on philosophical ethics, the student should become a keen moral observer of leadership and, in particular, recognize the justifications leaders give for exception making.
- The student should learn how to critique moral arguments and how to present original moral arguments.
- The student should be able to recognize the particular moral perils associated with the exercise of leadership and of the features of this process that give rise to these perils: deviation, instrumentalism, partiality, inequality, and influence.
- The student should be able to provide an ethically informed reading of leadership theory.
REQUIRED TEXTS


Reserve Readings. [R]

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING\(^1\)

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

1. Reading Quizzes 10%
2. Short Papers 15%
3. Midterm Examination 15%
4. Final Paper 30%
5. Final Examination 30%

Attendance affects your Reading Quizzes grade, your Short Paper grade (you must be present for the entire class for your paper to count), and—in all likelihood—your Examination grades. Please email me if you are unable to attend class.

I take deadlines and scheduled exams very seriously. In fairness to your classmates, any emergencies that arise should be brought to my attention as soon as possible before the deadline or scheduled exam. I do not accept late work, but I will accept and grade incomplete work.

\(^1\) I reserve the right the refuse to accept any work submitted without the honor pledge.
Grading legend:

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SCHEDULE (subject to change as the course progresses)

I. The Distinctive Challenge of Leadership Ethics

Wednesday, August 29
   Introduction: The Problem

Friday, August 31
   Ludwig, Chapters 1-2

Wednesday, September 5
   Ludwig, Chapters 2-3

Friday, September 7
   Ludwig, Chapter 5-6

Wednesday, September 12
   Plato, “Ring of Gyges” [C]
   Ludwig and Longenecker, “The Bathsheba Syndrome: The Ethical Failure of Successful Leaders” [C] SHORT PAPER OPPORTUNITY
   Price, Chapter 3, pp. 73-81

Friday, September 14
   Plato, “Justice and the Leader,” pp. 24-28 [C]
   Rand, “Why Self-Interest Is Best” [C]

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2 Dean, not Arnold, Ludwig.
II. Kantian Ethics

Wednesday, September 19
Kant, “Good Will, Duty, and the Categorical Imperative” [C]
Price, Chapter 2, pp. 38-43

Friday, September 21
Kant, “Good Will, Duty, and the Categorical Imperative” [C]
Price, Chapter 2, pp. 44-51

Wednesday, September 26
Flanigan, “The Ethics of Authentic Leadership” [R]
SHORT PAPER OPPORTUNITY

III. Utilitarianism

Friday, September 28
Mill, “What Utilitarianism Is” [C]
Price, Chapter 8, pp. 192-204

Wednesday, October 3
Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” [R]
SHORT PAPER OPPORTUNITY

Friday, October 5: MIDTERM EXAM

Wednesday, October 10
Bennett, “The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn” [C]
SHORT PAPER OPPORTUNITY

Friday, October 12
Weber, “Legitimate Authority and Charisma” [C]
Lindholm, “ ‘The Only God You’ll Ever See’: Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple” [C]
Flanigan, “Charisma and Moral Reasoning” [C]

Saturday, October 13 through Tuesday, October 16: FALL BREAK

IV. Justifying Leadership: Necessity, Virtue, and Moral Luck

Wednesday, October 17
Machiavelli, “The Qualities of Princes”
Price, Chapter 6, pp. 142-151

Friday, October 19
Walzer, “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands” [R]
SHORT PAPER OPPORTUNITY

Wednesday, October 24
Korsgaard, “The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil” [R]

SHORT PAPER OPPORTUNITY

Friday, October 26: NO CLASS

Wednesday, October 31
Aristotle, “Virtue Ethics”
Price, Chapter 4, pp. 101-109, 114-116

Friday, November 2
Wolf, “Moral Saints” [R]
SHORT PAPER OPPORTUNITY

Wednesday, November 7
Williams, “Moral Luck” [C]
SHORT PAPER OPPORTUNITY

VI. Final Paper Workshops

Friday, November 9

Wednesday, November 14

Friday, November 16

Tuesday, November 20: FINAL PAPER DUE

Wednesday, November 21-Friday, November 23: THANKSGIVING BREAK

VI. Leadership and the Value of Liberty

Wednesday, November 28:

Friday, October 30:
Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters 3-4

Wednesday, December 5:

Friday, December 7: COURSE SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Thursday, December 13, 9:00-12:00: FINAL EXAM (Section 4)
Friday, December 14, 2:00-500: FINAL EXAM (Section 5)
Jepson School of Leadership Studies
Common Syllabus Insert

Awarding of Credit
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.
registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html

Disability Accommodations
Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.
disability.richmond.edu/

Honor System
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.”
studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html

Religious Observance
Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.
registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html

*updated 8/10/2016
Below is a boxed statement that describes the services available from a myriad of resources. We recommend that you consider including this boxed statement in your course syllabus, on Blackboard, or perhaps on a separate handout. Of course, other support services that relate specifically to your course can also be added.

Staff members from the resources below are available for consultations about concerns related to students as well as issues related to services.

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 conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement. Hours at the Center are:

**Sunday through Wednesday 3:00-9:00 p.m. and Thursday 3:00-7:00 p.m. On-call tutors are also available.**

**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 or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

**Counseling and Psychological Services** ([http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps/](http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps/ or 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking 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.