Instructor: Dr. Ken Ruscio  
Course Information: LDST 390-01  
Class Meeting Time: TR 10:30-11:45 am  
Email: kruscio@richmond.edu  
Office: Jepson Hall, Room 233  
Office Hours: By appointment

“(It) seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force. If there be any truth in the remark, the crisis at which we are arrived may with propriety be regarded as the era in which that decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we shall act may, in this view, deserved to be considered the general misfortune of mankind.”

Alexander Hamilton  
Federalist Paper #1

Course Description:  
In a democracy political power is constrained, and therefore leaders who exercise political power must be held accountable. Our constitutional system is built upon this fundamental principle. If the theory is both elegant and straightforward, the actual practice of holding leaders accountable is complicated and contested. What are the connections between theory and practice? What qualities must leaders have to be effective in a system of constrained formal powers? How do we strike a balance between empowering leaders to do good while preventing them from doing bad things? The topic is timely, given the concerns about the future of liberal democracy and current leadership in modern democracies.

Course Objectives and Overview:  
The goals are to understand why accountability is central to a theory of democracy, to assess how accountability is achieved or should be achieved, to examine current cases, and ultimately to arrive at an informed judgment about accountability in today’s democracy. Students may arrive at different conclusions. Some may be pessimistic and concerned. Others may be optimistic and hopeful. But all should be knowledgeable, well versed, and capable of raising the level of debate on these subjects beyond the classroom.

The course is divided into three parts.

First is an introduction to the theory of liberal democracy, the place of accountability in that theory, and how it has shaped the constitutional structures and procedures in the United States. The goal is to build a foundation before looking at historical controversies and current cases.

In the second part, we will build on the foundation by investigating several specific topics, especially the growth of executive power in the United States, legislative oversight, an independent judiciary, journalism and a free press, and current practices such as the role of “inspectors general.” This will necessarily be a selective review not with the intention of covering every aspect but to gain an appreciation for how the theory of accountability is expressed in today’s government.
Finally, we turn to elections as perhaps the ultimate mechanism for holding leaders accountable in a democracy. By this point in the course we will be close to holding a presidential election. We can analyze current events with the goal of understanding the importance of legitimate and fair elections as expressions of the voice of the people.

**Required Texts and Readings:**

There are five books required for the course.

2. *The Federalist Papers*. Hamilton, Madison and Jay (There are many editions, but we will rely on the Signet Classics edition edited by Clinton Rossiter, 2003)

Note that in addition to the assigned books, there will be several articles, reports and documents available on Blackboard and/or through links provided by the instructor. It is advisable, especially in the cases of the PDF reports, to print the documents and bring them to class during the appropriate class period.

I also strongly recommend—to the point of virtually requiring—a daily reading of a main newspaper: *The Wall St Journal*; or *The New York Times*; or *The Washington Post*. Also useful is a website Lawfareblog.com, which frequently publishes informed articles on matters related to the course. We will always reserve the option of using class time to discuss an important development that reflects some of the key questions of the course. If you have a story you’d like to have us discuss, you should always feel free to let me know in advance of class, even if it is just a few minutes in advance. That would be considered a strong indication of “class engagement” (see below.)

**Grading:**

The assignments are designed to help you understand, interpret and critique the material. The last assignment/exam is designed to see if you can offer your own independent, knowledgeable, and well-informed conclusions about the issues.

20% **Class Engagement**: Active attendance; evidence that you have read carefully the assigned material; and weekly reactions to questions I will pose based on our discussions and readings or just general observations related to the material we cover. The weekly reactions must be submitted through email by noon on Friday of each week. They need not be lengthy but should be thoughtful and reflective. They will not be individually graded but I will occasionally offer comments and reactions.

20% **Quiz #1**: This will be an in-class essay/short answer exam based on the material covered in the first part of the course.

20% **Quiz #2**: Another essay/short answer exam based on material covered early in the second part of the course.

20% **Election Brief**: This assignment will be specified in detail as we approach the third part of the course. It will depend on the current context and nature of the national discussion—as well as the status of the course format contingent on pandemic planning. For example, one possible approach is to create three task forces within the class: one devoted to “money” as a factor in the legitimacy of elections; another focused on “media;” and another focused on access to the ballot and election security. The analysis will not focus on campaign strategies, polling, or the “horse race,” but rather on the effectiveness of elections as a means of achieving accountability in a democracy.

20% **Final Exam**: The format will not be a standard final exam. We will work out the exact details, but the general approach will be for me to develop a set of questions on accountability and its practice today. You will likely have some choice among the questions. They will be structured to help you step back from the material and reflect upon the conclusions and judgments you have reached on modern democracy, leadership, and accountability. Each of these will be explained in more detail.
The Format of Class Sessions and “rules of the road:"
On the assumption that we will be able to meet throughout the term in a classroom setting, our class will include discussion as a mutual effort to educate each other. I ask that you leave all distractions—cellphones, laptops, etc.—somewhere other than in front of you in class. If you cannot attend a class because of illness or an unavoidable conflict, you should let me know ahead of time.

Because of the guidelines related to the pandemic, seats will be assigned. We will also have to be flexible throughout the semester as those guidelines are revised according to conditions.

When you are in class, I will assume you have read the material. That doesn’t mean you will always understand it, but it will be unfair to your fellow classmates if you come to class intending to “free-ride” on the efforts of others. If for some reason you have not been able to read the material, you should let me know ahead of time to avoid those awkward moments when I turn to you and ask what you think and you have no idea.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:

Aug. 25      Introduction—First Day of Class

Part I

Aug. 27      Liberal Democracy: The Context in the World Today
• Ian Beacock, “Germany Gets It,” The New Republic, April 1, 2020
• Francis Fukuyama, “The Pandemic and Political Order,” Foreign Affairs, (July/August 2020)

Sept. 1     Some Basic Questions and Ideas
• Anne Applebaum, Twilight of Democracy.

Sept. 3     John Locke and the Origins of Liberal Democracy
• Locke, pp 269-278 and pp. 285-302

Sept. 8     Locke, continued
• Locke, pp. 350-380 and pp. 398-428

Sept. 10   Locke, continued
• The Declaration of Independence (Appendix in the Federalist Papers)
• Abraham Lincoln, Message to Congress in Special Session, July 4, 1861 https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/july-4-1861-july-4th-message-congress
• John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, “The Virus Should Wake Up the West,” Politics and Policy (April 12, 2020)

Sept. 15   The Federalist Papers: Basic Ideas
• #1,2,10,48,51
Sept. 17  The Federalist Papers: Congress and Legislative Powers
  •  # 52-58 (The House)
  •  # 62-66 (The Senate)

Sept. 22  The Federalist Papers: The Judiciary
  •  # 78-83

Sept. 24  The Federalist Papers: The Executive
  •  # 67-77
  •  Schlesinger, The Imperial Presidency, pp. 1-34

Sept. 29  Quiz #1

Part II

Oct. 1  The Imperial Presidency
  •  Schlesinger, The Imperial Presidency, pp. 420-500. Recommended pp. 377-419

Oct. 6  The Unitary Executive

Oct. 8  Introduction to Elections
  •  Milan W. Svolik, “Polarization versus Democracy,” Journal of Democracy (July 2019)
    https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-02-02-0132-0004-0079
  •  Edmund Burke, “Speech to the Electors of Bristol,” 1774
    https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/burke-select-works-of-edmund-burke-vol-4

Oct. 13  Pam Fessler, NPR Correspondent, National Desk
  •  Ms. Fessler is a veteran correspondent for National Public Radio. She covers voting issues, as well as poverty, and philanthropy. She will discuss the upcoming election, the security of voting and access to voting.

Oct. 15  Congressional Oversight
  •  Trump v. Vance https://www.oyez.org/cases/2019/19-635
    https://www.brookings.edu/interactives/tracking-house-oversight-in-the-trump-era/
Oct. 22  The Role of Inspectors General: Michael Missal, IG for Veterans Administration
  • The Honorable Michael J. Missal has served in his role since 2016. He will discuss his
    own experiences, his work with the executive branch and congress, and his interactions
    with other IG’s throughout government
  • Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), “On the Important Role of Inspectors General,” Floor

Oct. 27  Quiz #2

Part III

Oct. 29  Elections: Money and Media
  • Cass R. Sunstein, #republic, pages and chapters to be assigned
  • Citizens United v. FEC https://www.oyez.org/cases/2008/08-205
  • Lawfareblog.com and Stanford-MIT Healthy Elections Project https://healthyelections.org

Nov. 3  Election Day

Nov. 5  Daniel Palazzolo, UR Professor of Political Science
  • Professor Palazzolo studies elections. He'll help us interpret Tuesday's results.

Nov. 10  Elections: Media, Money, and Access

Nov. 12  Task Force 1 report

Nov. 17  Task Force 2 report

Nov. 19  Task Force 3 report

Dec 1, 3  Accountability: A Final Assessment
Expectations Regarding In-Person Attendance During the Pandemic
We are facing a challenging situation in which all of us are called on to make a good faith effort to be flexible and to make decisions in the best interest of the community, including staying home when sick. Students who are sick should not attend class, will not be required to provide formal documentation from a health care provider, and will not be penalized for absences.

However, students must:

- Notify instructors in advance of the absence if possible. Contact the Student Health Center if sick.
- Keep up with classwork and attend online class sessions if able to do so.
- Submit assignments digitally on time whenever possible.
- Work with instructors to try to reschedule any missed assignments.
- Stay in close communication with instructors.

This attendance policy puts everyone on their honor. It requires that faculty trust the word of their students when they say they are ill, and it requires that students report the reason for their absence truthfully. Falsely reporting a reason for an absence is an honor code violation.

Integrity with Class Recordings
Students shall not:

- Disclose, share, trade, or sell class recordings with/to any other person, organization, business, or institution;
- Post/store these recordings in a location accessible by anyone other than the student, including but not limited to social media accounts.

Students must also comply with any instructions or directions from their faculty regarding the use of such recordings. Students are required to destroy any recordings that were made when they are no longer needed for the student’s academic work. Failure to abide by this policy will be a violation of the Standards of Student Conduct; such issues will be sent to the appropriate University Conduct Officer.

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 8/20/2020
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 (asc.richmond.edu): 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. Tutors will be available virtually. The on-call peer-tutors available for these appointments are listed in the Box file: On-Call Online Tutors (https://richmond.box.com/s/dpe37chr2zodr3o1amtj8omjk72v2ktb). Email Roger Mancastroppa (rmancast@richmond.edu) and Hope Walton (hwalton@richmond.edu) for appointments in academic and life skills to request a Zoom conference.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians: (library.richmond.edu/help/ask/ or 289-8876): Research librarians help students with all steps of their research, from identifying or narrowing a topic, to locating, accessing, evaluating, and citing information resources. Librarians support students in their classes across the curriculum and provide library instruction, tutorials, research guides, and individual help. All research support will be provided online or by appointment and students can contact a librarian for help via email (library@richmond.edu), text (804-277-9ASK), chat, or Zoom (by appointment).

Career Services: (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 (caps.richmond.edu 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 brief consultations, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, skills-building classes, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Disability Services (disability.richmond.edu) The Office of Disability Services works to ensure that qualified students with a disability (whether incoming or current) are provided with reasonable accommodations that enable students to participate fully in activities, programs, services and benefits provided to all students. Please let your professors know as soon as possible if you have an accommodation that requires academic coordination and planning.

Speech Center (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. Remote practice sessions can be arranged; we look forward to meeting your public speaking needs.

Writing Center (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.