CRITICAL THINKING & METHODS OF INQUIRY
LDST 250-01 & -02: SPRING 2017
01 TUES./THURS. 10.30-11.45  JEPSON HALL 109
02 TUES./THURS. 12.00-1.15  JEPSON HALL 108
COURSE WEBSITE: HTTPS://BLOG.RICHMOND.EDU/CRITICALTHINKING/

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
The goal of this course is to help students develop critical thinking skills and provide an introduction to methods of research inquiry. In a society inundated with information from modern media – television, radio, movies, news, and the internet – it is crucial that we as responsible citizens be able to distinguish the good information from the bad, the truth from falsehood. Leaders are frequently required to make judgments about topics and in situations they know little about – critical thinking skills help them to assess what information they have in order to make good judgments about people, information, and ideas. It is also important for us – whether we are leaders, followers, or both – to be able to view the information and opinions with which we are presented from multiple standpoints, and to be able to assess and judge what we see and hear in context and with regard to our own ethics and mores. As members of a university, national, and global community, it is our responsibility to question not only what appears in the media, but the ideals and ideologies we already hold; as critical thinkers, it is important for us to bring these critical skills to bear not only in our examination of leadership and on the leaders we have chosen to follow, but also in our efforts to maintain life-long learning.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
In this course, students will learn the following skills:
- How to critically read, listen, and observe
- How to evaluate information and locate bias
- How to analyze arguments and systems
- How to anticipate problems and counterarguments
- How to construct an analytical and well-researched argument in writing and in speech
- How to reflect on their own views and biases

REQUIRED TEXTS
The Righteous Mind by Jonathan Haidt (Vintage)
How to Lie with Statistics by Darrell Huff (Norton)
Doing Good Better by William MacAskill (Gotham)
The Power of Critical Thinking by Lewis Vaughtn (Oxford)

All texts are available at the University of Richmond Bookstore. Additional readings will be provided on Blackboard (BB).
## Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Starter</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Critical Blog/Response</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attendance/Class Participation (10%)

All students are expected to attend classes regularly and to contribute to class discussions. Your grade will be based on whether you are present (and on time) and whether you contribute regularly and thoughtfully to class discussions. Students absent more than two class periods must either provide adequate documentation of participation in a University-sponsored event, or of a serious illness, injury, or other emergency, or receive a penalty to their grade.

Students unable to participate or uncomfortable participating verbally may write a 600-word discussion response to the day’s material and class discussion to be turned in electronically by midnight on the day of the class in question.

### Weekly Response Blog (10%)

Each student is expected to write a brief, informal reaction to the readings assigned for the week or to respond to other students’ reactions. There will be ten of these collected throughout the semester. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the readings and to engage with them thoughtfully. Responses will not be graded on style or organization, only content. The blog assignment may be found here: [http://blog.richmond.edu/criticalthinking/reading-response-blog-assignment/](http://blog.richmond.edu/criticalthinking/reading-response-blog-assignment/). This is also where you will go to post your entries. The 10.30am class will post/comment on Tuesdays, the 12pm class will post/comment on Thursdays.

Three times per semester, each student is expected to post one entry (a total of three) on a lecture or seminar event held at the University. These events include, but are not limited to, Jepson Forum Events or departmental speaker series lectures. Students will be able to find events through JepsonBytes and SpiderBytes, and may ask Dr. Bezio about any events they are uncertain about.

### Discussion Starter (5%)

Each student is expected to start discussion once during the course of the semester. This is **not** a formal presentation; students are expected to bring **five** questions or problems to begin the day’s discussion. At least one question must relate to each assigned work for the day and at least two questions must relate the readings to current events from outside class. Discussion questions are due on BlackBoard 24 hours before the assigned class.

### Research Project (35%)

There will be a long research project in this course which will contain several short papers, and will culminate in one longer paper. All papers and assignments are expected to be the students’ original work and follow the guidelines of the Honor Code. Papers should contain correct, formal language and a complete works consulted bibliography. Papers should be
turned in on BlackBoard (papers must be received by the due date and time and open properly to be considered acceptable). Papers will be graded using the Microsoft Word Reviewing tool and uploaded along with the grading rubrics to BlackBoard’s GradeCenter.

Late papers will be penalized one grade (A to A-) for each day they are late. Technical problems (computer or email) are not an acceptable excuse for lateness: back up your files on Box and/or an external jump drive, and save often.

**Group Project (15%)**
There will be a group GivingGames project in this course which consists of a group research paper and individual blog posts. Students will be assigned to a group and tasked with researching the ethics and effectiveness of a chosen charity; over the course of the semester, students will research their charities, then write a group analysis of that charity with a recommendation for or against it. During the project, students will post updates to the course blog documenting the research process and discussing their ideas and concerns. The assignment for the blog may be found here: http://blog.richmond.edu/criticalthinking/givinggames-project-blog/.

**Exams (25%)**
There will be both a midterm and a final exam. Students are expected to be present for both exams during their scheduled time. Exams will be a combination of matching, short and long answer, and essay questions. The Final Exam will be offered on two days and times. You must take the exam on one of those two scheduled times (unless you have a specific exam exemption).

**CLASSROOM POLICIES**
Students are expected to be on time to class. Lateness will impact a student’s attendance grade. Students are expected to be attentive to and respectful of the professor and the ideas of their peers.

Laptops are permitted on working days only. Please bring paper/notebook and writing implements for taking notes during regular classes. Students are expected to bring hard copies of books/chapters/articles to class. Too many laptops are used for non-class purposes during classtime and recent studies show that students learn better from taking notes by hand (http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away). Please make sure all cell phones are silenced or turned off. Students will not be allowed to answer their phones during classtime.

All written work is expected on time. Assignments turned in late will be penalized one full grade for each day they are late. Technical difficulties are not an acceptable excuse for lateness, so save work often and in different places (jump drives, email, etc.). All assignments are expected to be the student’s original work. The Jepson School follows the provisions of the Honor System as outlined by the School of Arts and Sciences.

If emergency circumstances inhibit a student from attending class or completing an assignment, the professor should be notified as soon as possible (preferably before class or the due date of the assignment). Extensions and make-ups are given only at the discretion of the professor. Exams
cannot be made up except under the most extenuating of circumstances. Students needing accommodations should speak to the professor.

JEPSON POLICIES

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.
http://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.
http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/disability-services/policies.html

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.”
http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/honor/

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

STUDENT 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 or 289-8626) helps students assess their academic strengths and weaknesses; hone their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information processing, concentration, and related techniques; work on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encourage campus and community involvement.

Career Development Center (http://cdc.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 (289-8119) assists students in meeting academic, personal, or emotional challenges. Services include assessment, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention 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 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: http://writing.richmond.edu

Boatwright Library Research Librarians assist students with identifying and locating the best resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also assist students with questions about citing sources correctly. Students can schedule a personal research appointment, meet with librarians at the library’s main service desk, email, text or IM. Link to http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask.html or call 289-8669.
COURSE SCHEDULE, LDST 250-01/02
Readings listed under a particular day are due that day.
Readings marked (BB) are available on BlackBoard.

Tues., Jan 10
Welcome to Critical Thinking and Methods of Inquiry
GivingGames Project
Long-Term “Cause for the Semester” Research Project

Thurs., Jan. 12
Reading: Power of Critical Thinking, Chapters 1-2 & Nichols, “Death of Expertise” (BB)
Assignment: Exercises 1.4, 1.7, 2.3
Cause Project: Select your top five choices from the Cause List with one sentence each why you want to research that cause. (DUE BY 10AM!)

Tues., Jan. 17
Introduction to GivingGames & Effective Altruism
Assigning Groups for the GivingGames Project
Reading: Doing Good Better Introduction, Chapters 2-3
Cause Project: Step One.

Thurs., Jan 19
Beginning Research Projects
Reading: PCT 3
Assignment: Exercises 3.2, 3.5
Cause Project: Step Two

Tues., Jan. 24
How to Find Charity Resources
Reading: DGB 7-9
GG Project: Initial Impressions Blog Post

Thurs., Jan. 26
Reading: PCT 6-7
GG Project: Give Dr. Bezio a list of five possible charities per group.
Assignment: Exercises 6.1, 6.8 (Valid or Invalid only), 7.1 (no letter designation), 7.9, 7.10.I (not II or III)

Tues., Jan. 31
Statistical Errors
Reading: How to Lie With Statistics, Chapters 1-7
Cause Project: Step Three
Thurs., Feb. 2
Reading: *PCT* 8 & *HLS* 8
GG Project: Each group **must** have a charity to research by today. Each person should write 1-2 paragraphs about your group’s chosen charity (what it is, what it does, background) and an additional 1-2 paragraphs about how you initially feel (personal connections/biases, thoughts about the cause, questions or concerns) about this charity. End your reflection with a statement of whether or not—at this point—you think this charity should receive the class donation (4-5 paragraphs total).
Assignment: Exercise 8.3

Tues., Feb. 7
Reading: *PCT* 4-5 & *HLS* 9-10
Cause Project: Step Four
Assignment: Exercises 4.2, 5.2, 5.3

Thurs., Feb. 9
Reading: *PCT* 9 & Dorner (BB)
Cause Project: Step Five
Assignment: Exercise 9.2

Tues., Feb. 14
Reading: *PCT* 10 & *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, Chapter 4 (BB)

Thurs., Feb. 16
Reading: *Collapse*, Chapters 2 & 14 (BB)
Cause Project: Step Six

Tues., Feb. 21
Review for Midterm
GG Project: Second Impressions Blog Post
Cause Project: Step Seven

Thurs., Feb. 23
Midterm Exam

Tues., Feb. 28
Game Theory and Human Behavior
Reading: *Rock, Paper, Scissors*, Chapters 3-5 (BB)
Cause Project: Step Eight

Thurs., Mar. 2
Yes We Have Class Today
Tragedy of the Commons in Play
Writing: **IF** you are not in class today, you need to write **at least two** paragraphs responding to **each chapter** of reading and post them to the Reading Response blog BEFORE classtime. This is not an optional assignment.
March 4-12 SPRING BREAK

Tues., Mar. 14
Reading: *PCT* 11
Cause Project: Step Nine
Assignment: Exercise 11.2

Thurs., Mar. 16
Reading: *The Righteous Mind*, Chapters 1-3
GG Project: List at least six sources **per person** that will be useful in researching the group’s charity (you MAY repeat from the first source list). **Three** sources must have two full paragraphs (3-5 sentences) explaining what the source is about and how it will be used—these must have been read. The other three sources will have 1-2 sentences, as with the first list.

Tues., Mar. 21
Reading: *TRM* 4-5, 7

Thurs., Mar. 23
Reading: *People’s History of the United States*, Chapters 1 & 4 (BB)
GG Project: Current Thoughts Blog Post

Tues., Mar. 28
Group Project Work Day
Reading: *DGB* 10 & Conclusion

Thurs., Mar. 30 – No Class
Group Project Work Day

Mon., Apr. 3—Group GivingGames Paper Due by 5pm

Tues., Apr. 4
GG Presentation Day & Debate
Reading: *DGB* 6
GG Project: Each group must bring a poster and present their argument for why the class should (or should not) choose to donate to their charity. Presentations should be **no longer** than 10 minutes per group. **GivingGames votes are due on BlackBoard before midnight tonight!!!**
Pre-Vote Thoughts Blog Post (on group’s charity)

Thurs., Apr. 6
The Aftermath: Time to Talk About What Happened with the GivingGames (and elimination round, if necessary)
Reading: *Paying for the Party*, Introduction & Chapter 8 (with graphs) (BB)
Cause Project: Step Ten
Tues., Apr. 11
Reading: PHUS 9 (BB)
Watch: Django Unchained
GG Project: Post-Results Blog Post

Thurs., Apr. 13
Reading: PHUS 17 & 23 (BB)

Tues., Apr. 18
Can We Fix What We’ve Broken?
Reading: Impossible, Chapters 4, 5, 21 (BB) & TRM 12

Thurs., Apr. 20
Final Exam Review & Wrap-Up

Mon., Apr. 24 at 11.59pm
Cause Project: Step Eleven

Tues., Apr. 25, 2pm-5pm: Final Exam #1 (12pm class time slot) JPSN 108
Sat., April 29, 2pm-5pm: Final Exam #2 (10:30am class time slot) JPSN 109