Spring 2018 LDST 101: Leadership and the Humanities

Dr. Thad Williamson

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W/F 3 pm -5:30 p.m.

Office hours: 4:30-5:30 Wednesday or by appointment

Class Overview

The aim of this class is to explore fundamental questions related to both leadership as a social process and leadership as a social relationship. A particular focus of the class will be the connection between large-scale social structures (i.e. political states) and the ethical character of individual citizens and citizen-leaders. This connection is made at the outset of the course at the theoretical level by Aristotle and at the practical level in our case studies of the lives of Arthur Ashe (a citizen leader working within the context of democratic institutions) and Nelson Mandela (a citizen leader working in opposition to a non-democratic government who had the opportunity to reshape an entirely new regime). In between these case studies, we will examine fundamental questions of political theory related to the justification of political rule and the proper design of political institutions; and examine in some detail the design of American political institutions, key social forces influencing their operation, and the role citizen-leaders have played in promoting civic equality within an often hostile context of racism and inequality.

Students will have the opportunity to explore their own interests through an independent, semester-long research project on a topic related to the intersection of sports, leadership, and social justice in the United States. A list of possible topics will provided by the second week of class, although students are encouraged to come up with their own as fits their interests.

Course Expectations

To succeed in this course, you will need to meet several core expectations. These are not optional and not negotiable.

- You must attend every class (arriving on time—i.e. two minutes early).
- You must prepare for class by doing the assigned reading in a thoughtful manner, prior to class
- You must be attentive in class
- You must make an effort to participate in class discussions
- You must complete the written assignments on time

In addition, it is also highly advisable that you:
• Visit the professor periodically in office hours, especially when you have questions
• Take good notes both while reading and in class
• Review those notes after each class session
• Write down questions as you are reading you would like to raise in class
• Spend time with your classmates talking about the ideas in the reading outside of class time

Finally, there are a few key classroom comportment rules we will observe:

• All electronic devices (phones, laptops, etc.) must be turned off and put away before entering the classroom, and must stay off until you leave the classroom
• You should go to the bathroom prior to class and not get up in the middle of class to go, barring a genuine emergency
• Don’t bring food into the classroom, but beverages are acceptable provided you dispose of them appropriately after class
• Pay both the professor and your classmates the respect of listening to what they have to say. The way to indicate you are listening is through periodic eye contact.

Developing Thinking, Reading and Writing Skills

*Learning to Read for College*

Reading must be the fundamental default activity of all college students. When you are not doing anything else, you should be reading. This class will require that you do a lot of reading. In your first year of college as a whole, it’s likely you will be asked to read more serious, demanding books than you’ve read in your entire life to this point.

We live in a culture that has devalued deep reading and thinking. Why then read books, as opposed to just a series of short articles or excerpts? Because books are still the best technology we have for allowing a sophisticated train of thought—or body of knowledge—to be communicated from one human mind to another. A book allows the author to explore an event, person, or question in sustained depth, to present a sustained argument supported by evidence, to make connections between different events or phenomena, or to explore all sides of a disputed question thoroughly. Or a book may simply expand or stimulate our imaginations, our moral consciences, our sense of what is possible in human life. To read an interesting, important, or imagination-expanding book is one of life’s great pleasures—but it is a pleasure it takes effort to cultivate. Think of reading a book as engaging your mind with someone else’s mind in an extended, in-depth conversation. If your reading takes the form of a thoughtful, internal conversation with the author, when it comes time to write your papers—your actual chance to “talk back” to the author and his or her ideas—you won’t be struggling to generate material from scratch; instead you will simply be transcribing and refining the conversation you’ve already had in your brain. Good writing is fundamentally a result of good thinking, and
good thinking comes about via the practice and habit of being in conversation with good thinkers—such as the authors we will be reading this semester.

But how then to read thoughtfully? First, cut out the distractions. Turn off social media, the Internet, and anything else that might tempt you to turn your mind away from what you are reading. Find a quiet space where you can concentrate fully on the text. Second, set yourself an attainable goal for how long you will concentrate fully on reading the text. Whether its thirty minutes, an hour, or two hours, set a goal, and stick to that goal, with the aim of increasing it over time. If you can learn how to sit in the library or somewhere for three consecutive hours, reading for 45-50 minutes at time, then taking 10-15 minute breaks each hour, you will over the course of the week get a lot done—and more importantly, have a lot of fruitful conversations with great thinkers and writers. Third, take notes as you go—either in the text margins, or in a notebook. This is helpful in keeping track of the author’s train of thought, and will help you remember arguments and key points when you go back to review or re-read. Fourth, when you are done reading a section, write down a few key points the author made, or alternatively some questions you have about the author’s arguments. Fifth, as you are reading, think not just about the face value arguments of the text, but also about the author’s intended audience and purpose. Why and for whom was this book written? Being able to answer that question often is very helpful in understanding the text as a whole. Sixth—and this is the most advanced skill, and one that will take time to master—think critically about what you are reading. Even the most brilliant texts, texts that have impeccable internal logic and that will make you smarter simply by reading them, have limitations of perspective and purpose. What does a text written in the 16th century about the human condition have to say that is of enduring value to us today? Thomas Hobbes can’t answer that question—it is our job as students to answer that question ourselves.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance, preparation, and participation in every class period, including two planned off-campus excursions. This means timely completion of assigned readings.

2. On-time completion of one short response paper (2 pages) and four analytical papers (4 or 5 pages).

3. Completion of independent research project on sports, leadership and justice. Draft proposal due March 2nd; updated draft outline and bibliography due March 30; in-class oral presentation (10 minutes) of project April 25 or 27th; submission of ten-page research paper and accompanying notebook of materials, April 30th. Students must keep a semester-long notebook of material related to the project.

4. Final Exam, Saturday May 5, 9 a.m.

Grading Rubric

1. Attendance, preparation, participation: 20%

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2. Four analytical papers (five pages): 40%
3. Research project (ten page paper and presentation): 20%
4. Final exam: 20%
Course of Study

Week 1. Ethics and Excellence: Arthur Ashe

Wednesday January 17: John McPhee, *Levels of the Game*

Friday January 19: John McPhee, *Levels of the Game*

Monday January 22nd: Response Paper on McPhee Due, 6 p.m. (2 pages)

Weeks 2 and 3: Ethics and the Good Life

Wednesday January 24th. Aristotle—*Nichomachean Ethics*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Attendance at MLK Community Commemoration, 5:30 p.m. (Remarks by Mayor Levar Stoney.)

Friday January 26th: Aristotle—*Ethics*, Chapters 4, 5, and 6

Wednesday January 31st: Aristotle—*Ethics*, Chapters 8 and 9

Friday February 2nd: Aristotle—*Ethics* Chapter 10; *Politics* Book 1,

Weeks 4 and 5: Living Together Well: The Art of Politics

Wednesday February 7th Aristotle—*Politics*, Books 3, 4 and 5

Friday February 9th Aristotle—*Politics*, Books 7 and 8.

Wednesday February 14th: Machiavelli—*Discourses on Livy*, Book 1, Chapters 1-30

Friday February 16th: Machiavelli—*Discourses on Livy*, Book 1, Chapters 31-60

Analytical Paper #1 Due, Monday February 19th, 6 p.m.

Week 6. Social Contracts Theorized

Wednesday February 21st: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (short excerpt); John Locke, 2nd Treatise on Government


Week 7. Social Contract Implemented: U.S. Constitution, Federalist Papers

Wednesday February 28th. The U.S Constitution and Amendments; Robert Dahl, *How Democratic is the U.S. Constitution* (Chapters 1 and 2).

Friday March 2nd. Alexander Hamilton et al, *The Federalist Papers*, #1, #2, #6, #9, #10, #39, #49, #51.

*Draft Proposals for Research Project Due in Class, March 2nd.*
Analytical Paper #2 Due, Monday March 12th, 6 p.m.


Wednesday March 14th. Anna Julia Cooper, A Voice from the South, pp. 1-84.


Week 9. Money and Power: Karl Marx & Maggie L. Walker


Friday March 23rd. (Tentative): Class Field Trip to Maggie L. Walker Historical Site class meeting at UR Downtown. Gertrude Marlowe, Right Worthy Grand Mission.

Analytical Paper #3 Due, Monday March 26th, 6 p.m.

10, 11, 12. Resistance, Revolution, Statesmanship: The Long Walk of Nelson Mandela

Wednesday March 28th. Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom

Friday March 30th. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom

Updated Draft Outline and Bibliography for Research Project in Class Due in Class, March 30th.

Wednesday April 4th. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom

Friday April 6th. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom

Wednesday April 11th. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom

Friday April 13th. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom

Analytical Paper #4 Due, Monday April 16, 6 p.m.

13. Starting Where You Are, Using What You Have: Arthur Ashe and Social Justice

Wednesday April 18th. Eric Allen Hall, Arthur Ashe: Tennis and Justice in the Civil Rights Era

Friday April 20th. Eric Allen Hall, Arthur Ashe: Tennis and Justice in the Civil Rights Era

[Weather permitting, class to be held outside at the Arthur Ashe Monument on Monument Avenue followed by early class dinner in Carytown.]

14. Student Research Presentation on Sports, Leadership and Justice

Wednesday April 25th

Friday April 27th
Research Paper (10 pages) due Monday April 30th 6 p.m.

Final Exam, Saturday May 5th, 9 a.m.