



LDST 346 *The Democratic Prospect*  
**SPRING 2022 COURSE SYLLABUS**

Instructor: Dr. Ken Ruscio

Course Information: LDST 346

Class Meeting Time: TR 10:30-11:45 am

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Office: Jepson Hall, Room 233

Office Hours: By appointment or office hours (generally 10:00-noon and 1:00-3:00, Wednesdays)

*[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 to the remark, the crisis at which we have arrived may with propriety be regarded as the era in which that decision is to be made; and a wrong decision of the part we shall act may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind. (Alexander Hamilton, Federalist Papers, #1)*

**Course Description:**

This course examines American democracy by reviewing current critiques, key historical periods in its development, and central philosophical principles. Democracy as a form of government is currently being questioned and even challenged. Interpreting and responding to those challenges are central objectives of the course. The course begins with an overview of the current condition of democracy. We then step back to study key stages in its development and important statements that frame its central features, such as the rule of law, accountability, citizenship, equality, freedom, and rights. This is fundamentally a course in American democratic theory—past and present—as revealed through the statements and actions of key individuals during critical periods, including our own. We conclude with a close look at a few specific challenges and one contemporary theoretical assessment. Underlying the main theme is the question of what kind of leadership is necessary and appropriate in such a complex system.

**Course Objectives and Overview:**

The goals are to acquire a deep understanding of what we mean by democracy, to assess its present condition and, ultimately, to arrive at an informed and knowledgeable judgment about its future prospects. That requires a critical understanding of current critiques but also the historical and philosophical underpinnings of American political thought. Students may arrive at different conclusions. Some may be pessimistic and concerned. Others may be optimistic and hopeful. But all should be knowledgeable and capable of raising the level of debate on these subjects beyond the classroom.

The course is divided into three parts.

First is an assessment of democracy today. We will review important current studies, and analyses. The goal is to gain insight into the questions others are asking and start to formulate our own questions.

In the second part, we will develop a foundation for answering those questions by stepping away from the contemporary scene. We will review primary documents and statements from key individuals at critical times in the development of

American democracy. This will necessarily be a selective review not with the intention of covering every aspect but to gain an appreciation for democracy's values, norms, and institutional structures.

Finally, we return to modern times and a different set of critiques. The goal here is to arrive at our own assessment, to look to the future and identify the reasons why we are hopeful or concerned, reassured by what we studied or worried about the path we are on.

### **Required Texts and Readings:**

There are five books required for the course.

1. *How Democracies Die*. Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt. (Crown 2018)
2. *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism*. Anne Applebaum (Doubleday, 2020)
3. *The Federalist Papers*. Hamilton, Madison, and Jay. (Signet Classics. Charles R. Kesler, editor.)
4. *Democracy in America*. Alexis deTocqueville. (There are many editions, but strongly recommended is the Mansfield-Winthrop translation, University of Chicago Press, paperback, 2002)
5. *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty*. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. (Penguin Press, 2019)

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.

I also strongly recommend a daily reading of a main newspaper—*The Wall St Journal*; or *the New York Times*; or *The Washington Post*; or *The Financial Times*. 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. Those will be occurring on a daily basis. 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.

20% Class Engagement: *active* attendance; evidence that you have read carefully the assigned material; and weekly reactions to our discussions and readings or just general observations about the material we cover. The weekly reactions must be submitted by email by noon on Friday of each week. These need not be lengthy but they should be thoughtful and reflective. They will not be individually graded but I will usually (almost always) offer comments and reactions.

15% Group Report: Early in the semester, we will divide the class into four groups. Each will be assigned a recent major study on the state of democracy. The group will make a 30-minute presentation in class, summarizing the report and highlighting the key findings. A brief written summary will also be made available to the class.

20% Quiz #1: This will be an 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 in the second part of the course.

25% An Interpretative Paper/Final "exam": For the third part of the course, we will explore the prospects for democracy in your lifetime. In this paper, which will also serve as a kind of final exam, you will provide your own assessment about democracy's prospects, drawing from our work throughout the semester.

Each of these will be explained in more detail.

## The Format of Class Sessions and “rules of the road:”

Because this is a class heavily dependent on discussion and mutual efforts to educate each other, I ask that you minimize in-class distractions, such as cell phones, and that you guard against prolonged eye-contact with your laptop screen rather than with classmates.

If you cannot attend a class because of illness or an unavoidable conflict, you must let me know ahead of time. If you do not let me know in such cases, it will adversely affect your grade for class engagement.

When you are in class, I will assume you have read the material. That doesn't mean you always understand it, but it will be unfair to your 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:

Jan. 11 Introduction—First Day of Class

### Part I: Democracy Today

Jan. 13 Prologue

- Stelzenmuller: “German Lessons...” (Brookings, 2019) <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/german-lessons/>
- Stephens, “The West is The Author of its own Weakness,” *Financial Times*, Sept 28, 2021
- Wolf, “The Strange Death of American Democracy,” *Financial Times*, Sept. 30, 2021

Jan. 18 Democracy in the World Today

- Applebaum, *Twilight of Democracy*, Chps 1-3, pp. 1-104

Jan. 20 Continued...

- Applebaum, *Twilight of Democracy*, Chps 4-6, pp. 105-190

Jan. 25 Does Democracy Work?

- Mounk and Foa: “The End of the Democratic Century,” (*Foreign Affairs* 2018)
- Pildes, “Why So Many Democracies are Floundering,” *New York Times*, Dec. 29, 2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/29/opinion/democracy-fragmentation-america-europe.html?referringSource=articleShare>
- (Suggested) Klein, “What if American Democracy Fails the Climate Crisis?” *New York Times*, June 27, 2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/22/magazine/ezra-klein-climate-crisis.html?referringSource=articleShare>

Jan. 27 Interlude: Revisiting January 6, 2021

- (Suggested) “The Attack: Before, During and After,” Washington Post Staff <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2021/jan-6-insurrection-capitol/>
- Statement by Vice-President Michael Pence, January 6, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/06/politics/pence-trump-electoral-college-letter/index.html>

Feb 1 and 3 Group Reports: The Condition of Democracy

- Freedom in the World 2020: A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy (Freedom House) [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/FIW\\_2020\\_REPORT\\_BOOKLET\\_Final.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/FIW_2020_REPORT_BOOKLET_Final.pdf)
- Centre for the Future of Democracy “Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy.” 2020 <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/publications/youth-and-satisfaction-democracy/>
- Harvard Institute of Politics, Harvard Youth Poll. Fall 2021 <https://iop.harvard.edu/youth-poll/fall-2021-harvard-youth-poll>
- Brookings Democracy Playbook [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Democracy-Playbook-2021\\_10-Commitments-for-Advancing-Democracy.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Democracy-Playbook-2021_10-Commitments-for-Advancing-Democracy.pdf)
- IDEA Global State of Democracy <https://www.idea.int/gsod/global-report>

Feb 8 The Norms and Institutions of Modern Democracy

- Levitsky and Ziblatt: *How Democracies Die*, chapters 1, 2, and 4

Feb 10 Continued...

- Levitsky and Ziblatt: *How Democracies Die*, chapters 5, 6, and 9
- Kagan, “Our Constitutional Crisis is Already Here,” Washington Post, Sept 23, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/23/robert-kagan-constitutional-crisis/>

Feb 15 Guest Speaker (Zoom session): The Honorable J. Michael Luttig

**Feb 17 Quiz #1**

## Part II: The Tradition of Liberal Democracy in America

Feb. 22 The Liberal Tradition: John Locke and The Function and Purpose of Government

- *The Second Treatise*
  - Chapter II “Of the State of Nature,” sections 4-8
  - Chapter V, “Of Property,” sections 25-30
  - Chapter IX “Of the Ends of Political Society and Government,” sections 123-130
- Note: Many versions may be found online or in readily available texts. This is one option:
  - <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm>

Feb 22 *Anne Applebaum Lecture as part of Jepson Forum*

- Feb. 24      The Jeffersonian Tradition
- Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/virginia-statute-religious-freedom>
  - Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge <https://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/bill-more-general-diffusion-knowledge>
  - Declaration of Independence <https://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/transcript-declaration-independence-final>
  - First Inaugural Address <https://jeffersonpapers.princeton.edu/selected-documents/first-inaugural-address-0>
- March 1      The Madisonian (and Hamiltonian) Tradition
- *The Federalist Papers* #1, 2, 10, 48
- March 3      Continued...
- *The Federalist Papers* #51, 55, and 78
  - Bouie, "The Constitution was made for us, not the other way around," *New York Times*, Oct. 30, 2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/29/opinion/democracy-madison-robert-dahl.html?referringSource=articleShare>
  - Britton-Purdy, "The Republican Party is Succeeding Because We are Not a True Democracy," *New York Times*, January 3, 2022 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/03/opinion/us-democracy-constitution.html?referringSource=articleShare>
- March 8, 10    Spring Break
- March 15      "Democracy in America"
- De Tocqueville: pp. 165-231 (volume I, Part 2, chapters 1-6)
  - Recommended: Mansfield-Winthrop Introduction to *Democracy in America*
- March 17      "Democracy in America"
- De Tocqueville: pp. 479-504 (volume II, Part 2, chapters 1-8)
  - De Tocqueville: pp. 661-666 (volume II, Part 6, chapter 6)
- March 22      Confronting the Contradictions
- Lincoln: The Lyceum Address <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.htm>
  - Lincoln: First Inaugural Address <http://144.208.79.222/~abraham21/alo/lincoln/speeches/1inaug.htm>
  - Lincoln: Gettysburg Address <http://144.208.79.222/~abraham21/alo/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm>
  - Lincoln: Second Inaugural <http://144.208.79.222/~abraham21/alo/lincoln/speeches/inaug2.htm>
  - Frederick Douglass: "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2927t.html>

- Frederick Douglass: “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln”  
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/oration-in-memory-of-abraham-lincoln/>

March 24 Extending Democracy Abroad

- Woodrow Wilson Speech to Congress, April 2, 2017  
[http://wps.prenhall.com/wps/media/objects/107/110495/ch22\\_a2\\_d1.pdf](http://wps.prenhall.com/wps/media/objects/107/110495/ch22_a2_d1.pdf)
- (Suggested) Richard Haass: “How a World Order Ends, And What Comes in Its Wake” (*Foreign Affairs*, December 11, 2018) <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-12-11/how-world-order-ends>
- Franklin Roosevelt, Four Freedoms <http://web.utk.edu/~mfitzge1/docs/374/FFS1941.pdf>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf)

March 29 Widening Democracy at Home

- Brown v. Board of Education <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/347/483>
- Martin Luther King: “I Have a Dream” Speech  
<https://www.archives.gov/files/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>
- Barbara Jordan: Statement at Nixon Impeachment Hearing  
<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barbarajordanjudiciarystatement.htm>
- (Suggested) Hannah-Jones, “The 1619 Project,”  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>

*March 29 Lecture by Jonathan Rauch sponsored by the McDowell Institute*

March 31 Widening Democracy, *continued*

- Justice Ginsburg’s Opinion in the VMI Case <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/94-1941.ZO.html>

April 5 The Freedom of the Press in a Democracy

- New York Times v. United States (1971) (Pentagon Papers Case)  
[https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=17571244799664973711&q=new+york+times+v.+u.s.+\(1971\)&hl=en&as\\_sdt=6,47&as\\_vis=1](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=17571244799664973711&q=new+york+times+v.+u.s.+(1971)&hl=en&as_sdt=6,47&as_vis=1)

**April 7 Quiz #2**

### **Part III: The Democratic Prospect**

April 12 Liberal Democracy Today

- William A. Galston, “The Enduring Vulnerability of Liberal Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy*, July 2020, pp. 8-24

April 12 The Challenge of Sectarianism

- Finkel, et. al, "Political Sectarianism in America," *Science*, October 30, 2020. pp. 533-536
- Lepore, "A New Americanism," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2018

April 19 "The Narrow Corridor"

- Acemoglu and Robinson, preface and chps 1 and 2

April 21 Continued....

- Acemoglu and Robinson, chp 11, chp 13 (pp. 390-406), chp. 15

# 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](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.

[disability.richmond.edu/](http://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](http://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](http://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html)

### Addressing Microaggressions on Campus

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.<sup>1</sup> Recent research has found that, when professors do not address microaggressions in class, microaggressions foster alienation of marginalized groups.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, both students and faculty that are exposed to microaggressions more often are more likely to have depressive symptoms and negative affect (a negative view of the world).<sup>3</sup> A comfortable and productive environment where meaningful learning happens can be collectively created through actions, words, or environmental cues that promote the inclusion and success of marginalized members, recognizing their embodied identity, validating their realities, resisting sexism, ableism, and racism.<sup>4</sup>

The University of Richmond is committed to building an inclusive community. To this end, the Student Center for Equity and Inclusion (SCEI) was created in 2021 and offers ongoing support and assistance for a diverse student body.<sup>5</sup> With this in mind, as a community member at the University of Richmond, I pledge to address microaggressions in the classroom by holding myself, other students, and faculty accountable for what is said and being receptive to criticism when perpetuating these slights, snubs, or insults.

<sup>1</sup>Sue, S., Zane, N., Nagayama Hall, G. C., & Berger, L. K. (2009). The Case for Cultural Competency in Psychotherapeutic Interventions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60(1), 525–548. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163651>

<sup>2</sup>Bergom, I., Wright, M.C., Brown, M.K. and Brooks, M. (2011), Promoting college student development through collaborative learning: A case study of *hevruta*. *About Campus*, 15: 19-25. <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20044>

<sup>3</sup>Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Hamit, S., & Rasmus, M. (2014). The Impact of Racial Microaggressions on Mental Health: Counseling Implications for Clients of Color. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 92(1), 57–66. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2014.00130.x>

<sup>4</sup>Rolón-Dow, R. (2019). Stories of Microaggressions and Microaffirmation: A Framework for Understanding Campus Racial Climate. *NCID Currents*, 1(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/currents.17387731.0001.106>

<sup>5</sup> <https://inclusion.richmond.edu/>



**SYLLABUS INSERT REGARDING ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES**  
**Hope N. Walton, Director Academic Skills Center**

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** ([asc.richmond.edu](http://asc.richmond.edu)): Academic coaches assist students in assessing and developing their academic and life-skills (e.g., critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, test preparation, time management, stress management, etc.). Peer tutors offer assistance in specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.) and will be available for appointments in-person and virtually. Peer tutors are listed on the ASC website. **Email [Roger Mancastroppa](mailto:RMancastro@richmond.edu) ([rmancast@richmond.edu](mailto:rmancast@richmond.edu)) and [Hope Walton](mailto:hw Walton@richmond.edu) ([hw Walton@richmond.edu](mailto:hw Walton@richmond.edu)) for coaching appointments in academic and life skills.**

**Boatwright Library Research Librarians:** ([library.richmond.edu/help/ask/](http://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 individual appointments, class library instruction, tutorials, and [research guides](http://libguides.richmond.edu) ([libguides.richmond.edu](http://libguides.richmond.edu)). Students can [contact an individual librarian](mailto:library@richmond.edu) ([library.richmond.edu/help/liaison-librarians.html](http://library.richmond.edu/help/liaison-librarians.html)) or ASK a librarian for help via email ([library@richmond.edu](mailto:library@richmond.edu)), text (804-277-9ASK), or [chat](http://library.richmond.edu/chat.html) ([library.richmond.edu/chat.html](http://library.richmond.edu/chat.html)).

**Career Services:** ([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** ([caps.richmond.edu](http://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](http://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](http://speech.richmond.edu) or 287-6409): 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](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.