

SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

LDST 102 - Fall 2026

Course Time:	Tue, Thu 12:00-1:15 (Section 4); 1:30-2:45 (Section 5)
Course Location:	Jepson Hall 102
Instructor:	Bo Yun Park
Email:	bpark@richmond.edu
Office:	Jepson Hall 236
Office Hours:	Tue, Thu 2:45 - 3:45 pm

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the study of leadership from the vantage point of social scientists. Drawing on readings from the different subfields of social science—including economics, political science, psychology, sociology, and anthropology—we will explore the different topics related to leadership and the numerous challenges that today's leaders face in the United States and beyond. These will incorporate discussions on the rise of populism, the deepening of political polarization, the spread of misinformation, as well as the changes in gender and racial dynamics in the political arena. What is leadership and how do we study it? What types of political leaders are voters looking for? What kinds of political narratives resonate in today's digital age? How are populist candidates gaining popular support around the world?

Course Objectives

Together, we will learn how to think like a social scientist and deepen our understandings of leadership, not just in the United States, but across the globe. This course will equip you with the theoretical and empirical tools needed to develop your own empirical research on any topic related to leadership. You will be encouraged to explore a wide array of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including interviews, digital ethnography, computational text analysis, or experiments. You will also have the opportunity to use digital platforms in creative ways and integrate their observations into your analysis of the social world.

Specifically, this course aims to:

1. Explore the different approaches to the study of leadership.
2. Learn and analyze key topics related to leadership that social scientists look at nowadays.
3. Think critically about the different social phenomenon related to political leadership, including populism, polarization, misinformation, as well as gender and racial dynamics.
4. Connect theoretical argument and empirical research.
5. Make oral presentations in collaboration with classmates.

By taking this course, students will also be able to fulfill the Social Analysis (FSSA) field-of-study of the General Education Requirements. As listed on the General Education Curriculum website,¹

Social analysis is the systematic study of individual and social human behavior. This field of study involves a systematic theoretical and empirical examination of the patterns of human behavior within or across various societies and cultures.

Courses satisfying this requirement focus on human behavior. They teach students to analyze individual and group behavior by utilizing a variety of theoretical and empirical frameworks. All courses in this field of study must include the reading of or involve students in research on patterns of human behavior.

The mission of the Social Analysis Field of Study (FSSA) is to introduce students to major theories of individual and group behavior. Courses in the FSSA are designed to provide students with an understanding of the questions and methods used in the social sciences to answer scholarly questions.

Objective 1: Students will be able to identify and describe major theories of social behavior.

Objective 2: Students will be able to identify and describe empirical methods used to answer research questions about individual behavior.

Objective 3: Students will be able to identify and describe empirical methods used to answer research questions about group behavior.

Course Prerequisites

This course does not have any prerequisite, as it has been designed as an introductory course to the study of leadership through a social science perspective. Intellectual curiosity about the different facets of political leadership and the various ways to study them is all that is needed for the successful completion of this course. This course may be taken either before or after LDST 101.

Reading Requirements

You will not be required to purchase any textbooks for this course. All readings will be provided by the instructor. You will be expected to bring a printed copy of each reading to class to engage in a lively discussion about the material with your fellow classmates. All assigned readings will have to be done prior to the first lecture of each week listed on the course schedule.

¹ <https://gened.richmond.edu/curriculum/fields-of-study.html>

Course Assignments

Attendance and participation (15 percent). You are expected to attend every class and participate actively in *in-class discussions*. You are permitted one unexcused absence throughout the semester, but any additional absences must be notified in advance. On top of your in-class participation, your participation grade will also take into account the *annotated reading* you will submit at the end of each class. Submissions will receive a check, check + or check – depending on their quality.

Student Presentation (20 percent). You will serve as the discussant leader for one of the weeks listed on the course schedule. As discussant leaders, you will be expected to *present the main ideas* of the readings and engage in a thoughtful analysis of the main themes. Each of your two presentations should be about *15 minutes-long* and should incorporate *discussion points/analytical questions* to be shared with your peers. You may choose to draw on slides or handouts.

Midterm Exam (30 percent). The midterm assessment will take the form of an *oral exam*. This exam will evaluate your understanding of key social science theories covered in Weeks 1-7 and your ability to apply those theories to a contemporary social issue. You will analyze a newspaper article using classical theoretical perspectives (e.g., Marx, Durkheim, or Weber) or contemporary theories at the micro, meso, or macro levels of analysis. This exam will be conducted in small groups, with each student responding individually. The emphasis is on conceptual clarity, theoretical application, and analytical reasoning rather than memorization or writing proficiency. Detailed instructions and the grading rubric will be distributed in advance of the exam.

Final Exam (35 percent). The final assessment will take the form of an oral exam as well. This exam will evaluate your understanding of key social science theories and your ability to apply course materials from across the semester (Weeks 1 – 14) to better understand leadership, power, and social processes in contemporary social life. As in the midterm, the exam will be conducted in small groups, with each student responding individually. The emphasis is on conceptual clarity, theoretical application, and analytical reasoning rather than memorization or polished performance. Detailed instructions and the grading rubric will be distributed in advance of the exam.

Grading

Your final course grade will be calculated by converting each of your assignment letter grades according to the standardized numeric scale (A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.00, C- = 1.7, D = 1.0, F = 0.9) and weighting. The weights are below:

1. Attendance and participation (15 percent of your grade)
2. Oral Presentation (20 percent of your grade)
3. Midterm exam (30 percent of your grade)
4. Final exam (35 percent of your grade)

Your work will be evaluated based on:

1. Understanding and application of course materials
2. Focus and cogency of argumentation
3. Use of appropriate logic and evidence

4. Clarity and organization in argumentation
5. Originality

Resources



Weinstein
Learning Center



The Weinstein Learning Center is your go-to destination for academic support. Our services are tailored to help you achieve your academic goals throughout your time at the University of Richmond. To learn more and view service schedules and appointment times, visit wlc.richmond.edu. Available services are outlined below.

Academic Coaching

Work with a professional or peer coach to boost executive functioning. Refine skills such as time management, organization, study strategies, note-taking, and test preparation.

Content Tutoring

Connect with peer tutors who provide tailored support in a variety of courses within the School of Arts & Sciences, Robins School of Business, and Jepson School of Leadership Studies

English Language and Intercultural Learning

Meet with a professional or peer educator for one-on-one or group consultations, workshops, and other services focused on English, academic, and/or intercultural skills.

Quantitative and Programming Support

Enhance your quantitative and programming abilities by learning more about programming languages, data visualization, and statistical analysis for research projects.

Speech Studio

Prepare and practice for academic presentations, interviews, and other speaking projects with experienced peer consultants. Learn practical strategies for engaging your audience, focusing your ideas, and getting your message heard.

Technology Studio

Visit our Technology Studio for the tools and support you need to create multimedia projects. We offer consultations and access to creative software, video and audio recording tools, 3D and poster printing, VR, and camera equipment checkout.

Writing Studio

Collaborate with peer consultants who can offer feedback on written work and suggest pre-writing, drafting, and revision strategies. Student writers at all levels of experience and across all majors can attend.

August 2026



Weinstein Learning Center

SERVICES OVERVIEW

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● APPOINTMENTS

▲ DROP-INS

◆ WORKSHOPS

ACADEMIC COACHING ●◆

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CONTENT TUTORING ●▲

Connect with peer tutors who provide tailored support in a variety of courses within the School of Arts & Sciences, Robins School of Business, and Jepson School of Leadership Studies.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ●▲◆

Meet with a professional or peer educator for one-on-one or group consultations, workshops, and other services focused on English, academic, and/or intercultural skills.

QUANTITATIVE AND PROGRAMMING ●▲

Enhance your quantitative and programming abilities by learning more about programming languages, data visualization, and statistical analysis for research projects.

SPEECH ●▲

Prepare and practice for academic presentations, interviews, and other speaking projects with experienced peer consultants. Learn practical strategies for engaging your audience, focusing your ideas, and getting your message heard.

TECHNOLOGY STUDIO ●▲

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WRITING ●▲◆

Collaborate with peer consultants who can offer feedback on written work and suggest pre-writing, drafting, and revision strategies. Student writers at all levels of experience and across all majors can attend.



**FOR SCHEDULE AND
LOCATION INFORMATION,
PLEASE VISIT
WLC.RICHMOND.EDU.**

Course Policies

Honors 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.” <https://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/index.html>

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

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

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/

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.¹ Recent research has found that, when professors do not address microaggressions in class, microaggressions foster alienation of marginalized groups.² 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).³ 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.⁴

The University of Richmond is committed to building an inclusive community. To this end, the Hub for Student Inclusion and Community was created in 2021 and offers ongoing support and assistance for a diverse student body.⁵ 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.

¹Sue, 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>

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

³Nadal, 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>

⁴Rolón-Dow, R. (2019). Stones of Microaggressions and Microaffirmation: A Framework for Understanding Campus Racial Climate. *NCID Currents*, 1(1).

⁵ <https://inclusion.richmond.edu/>

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction to the Social Sciences and Leadership Studies

- August 25: No required readings. *Optional:* Collins, Randall. 1994. “Rise of the Social Sciences” in *Four Sociological Traditions*. New York City: Oxford University Press.
- August 27: Ahlquist, John S., and Margaret Levi. 2011. “Leadership: What It Means, What It Does, and What We Want to Know About It.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 14(1):1–24.

Week 2 – Leadership in Max Weber’s Writings

- September 1: Weber, Max. 1958. “Science as a Vocation.” *Daedalus* 87(1):111–34.
Optional Reading: Weber, Max. 1919. “Politics as a Vocation.”
- September 3: Tucker, Robert C. 1968. “The Theory of Charismatic Leadership.” *Daedalus* 97(3):731–56.

Week 3 – Leadership in Emile Durkheim’s Writings

- September 8: Durkheim, Emile (1982 [1895]). “What is a social fact?” in *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press.
- September 10: Herzog, Lisa (2018). “Durkheim on Social Justice: The Argument from ‘Organic Solidarity.’” *American Political Science Review*, 112(1):112-124.

Week 4 – Leadership in Karl Marx’s Writings

- September 15: Ritzer, George. 2007. “The Roots and nature of the Theories of Karl Marx.” Pp. 21-24 in *Modern Sociological Theory*. New York City: McGraw-Hill Education
- September 17: Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1952. *Capital; Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Chicago, Ill, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; Benton. HeinOnline.

Week 5 – Leadership at the Micro Level: Rational Choice and Embeddedness

- September 22: Becker, Gary S. 1992. “The Economic Way of Looking at Life”, Nobel Lecture, Presented at Chicago University, December 9, Chicago, IL.
- September 24: Granovetter, Mark. 1985. “Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness.” *American Journal of Sociology* 91(3):481-510.

Week 6 – Leadership at the Meso Level: Constructivism and Interactionism

- September 29: Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. 2011. “The Social Construction of Reality.” Pp. 43-51 in *Classical Sociological Theory*, edited by C. Calhoun, et al. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

- October 1: Goffman, Erving. 2005. "On Face-Work." Pp 5-45 in *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior*. Chicago: Aldine Transaction.

Weeks 7 – Leadership at the Macro Level: Power and Social Justice

- October 6: Domhoff, G. William. 2006. "Who Rules America?" Pp 290-295 in *Who Rules America? Power and Politics, and Social Change*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- October 8: DeMarrais, Elizabeth and Timothy Earle. 2017. Collective Action Theory and the Dynamics of Complex Societies. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 46(1): 183-201.

FALL BREAK

Week 8 – Fall Break and Midterm Exam

- October 13: Fall Break
- October 15: In-Class Midterm

Week 9 – Leadership, Race, and Gender

- October 20: Harrison, Faye. 1995. "The Persistent Power of 'Race' in the Cultural and Political Economy of Racism." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 24:47-74.
- October 22: Boyle, Kaitlin M., and Chase B. Meyer. 2018. "Who Is Presidential? Women's Political Representation, Deflection, and the 2016 Election." *Socius* 4:2378023117737898.

Week 10 – Leadership and Populism

- October 27: Bonikowski, Bart, and Noam Gidron. 2016. "The Populist Style in American Politics: Presidential Campaign Discourse, 1952–1996." *Social Forces* 94(4):1593–1621.
- October 29: *No Class – ILA Conference*. Berman, Sheri. 2021 "The Causes of Populism in the West." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24(1):71-88.

Week 11 – Leadership and Polarization

- November 3: Baldassarri, Delia, and Peter Bearman. 2007. "Dynamics of Political Polarization." *American Sociological Review* 72(5):784–811.
- November 5: Baum, Matthew, and Dannagal Young. 2019. "The 'Daily Them' : Hybridity, Political Polarization and Presidential Leadership in a Digital Media Age." Pp. 261–81 in *Hybridity, Political Polarization and Presidential Leadership in a Digital Media Age*. Routledge.

Week 12 – Leadership and Social Media

- November 10: Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, Maria Petrova, Ruben Enikolopov. 2020. “Political Effects of the Internet and Social Media.” *Annual Review of Economics* 12(1):415-438.
- November 12: Kreiss, Daniel, and Shannon McGregor. 2018. *Political Communication* 35:155-177.

Week 13 – Leadership and Misinformation

- November 17: Ruths, Derek. 2019. “The Misinformation Machine.” *Science* 363(6425):348–348.
- November 19: Jerit, Jennifer, and Yangzi Zhao. 2020. “Political Misinformation.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 23(1):77–94.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14 – Leadership and AI

- December 1: Lei, Ya-Wen, and Rachel Kim. 2024. “Automation and Augmentation: Artificial Intelligence, Robots, and Work.” *Annual Review of Sociology*. Online First.
- December 3: Gallego, Aina, and Thomas Kurer. 2022. “Automation, Digitalization, and Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace: Implications for Political Behavior.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 25(Volume 25, 2022):463–84.

Week 15 – Final Exam Review

- December 8: Final Exam Review

FINAL EXAM - UNIVERSITY EXAM SCHEDULE