

LDST 367: Leadership Applied Ethics in the Field (LEAF)

Professor: Dr. Sam Director

Email: sdirecto@richmond.edu

Office Hours: [Link to scheduling.](#)

Office Location: Jepson Hall 119D

Class time: Monday and Wednesday 1:30PM-2:45PM

Class Location: Jepson Hall 101

Course Description: here is the official course catalog description: “Examine the ethics of leadership in various applied contexts. LEAF is a public speaking course. Students will learn to debate and present arguments about moral issues related to social justice, medical ethics, business ethics, and democratic deliberation. Students will also participate in the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl competition and/or other public speaking opportunities.”

Learning Outcomes:

This course fulfills the university’s embodied communication and visual and performing arts general education requirements. For more information on those requirements, follow this [link](#). In addition to the learning outcomes specified by those general education requirements, by the end of this class, my goal is that you will have made significant progress toward:

- Becoming a proficient public speaker who is capable of using rhetoric and logical reasoning to persuade a variety of audiences.
- Understanding normative ethics and applied ethics.
- Learning how to respectfully and productively disagree with your peers about issues in ethics.

Course Structure:

Our course will have two units. Ethics and public speaking will be woven into each unit. As a result, we will be learning how to think critically about ethics and how to be effective public speakers for the whole semester.

In **Unit 1**, we will be examining different theories of normative ethics. Specifically, we will discuss the three historically dominant approaches to normative ethics: consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. We will end this unit with a structured debate about normative ethics.

In **Unit 2**, we will transition to focusing on the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Competition. Around the start of this unit, the governing organization that runs ethics bowl (APPE) will release the 15 cases for the regional competition. We will spend this unit studying each of these cases. Unfortunately, we won’t know what the exact topics of the cases will be until the unit starts. A

typical day will involve examining 2 cases using normative ethics and tools from applied ethics. As we go, we will practice actual competition rounds of ethics bowl. The unit will culminate with our participation in the regional competition of the ethics bowl and the online competition.

Course Materials: All of our assigned readings will be excerpts from books or journal articles. Each reading will be posted to Canvas. You do not need to buy any books for this class. I post all of the slides from class on Canvas as well. They will be available after that day in class.

Grading:

I grade on the following scale, and **I do not round grades up:**

- 100-99 (A+)
- 98.9- 95 (A)
- 94.9 - 90 (A-)
- 89.9 - 87 (B+)
- 86.9 - 85 (B)
- 84.9 - 80 (B-)
- 79.9 - 77 (C+)
- 76.9-75 (C)
- Etc.

Your grade will be determined by the following categories:

- Attendance (10%)
- Competing in ethics bowl (20%)
- Normative ethics debate (25%)
- Weekly work (Case notes and reading quizzes) (25%)
- Final persuasive speech (20%)

Assignments:

Participation: please see below for my policy on participation. This is a unique course where participation in discussion will be essential and thus will be a larger portion of your grade.

Ethics Bowl: we will all be participating in the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl. Your grade for this is not determined by competitive success. It is entirely possible that you will perform at a high level and still not advance to nationals. I am looking for people to give the competition their full effort. Part of this full effort will involve contributions to the team's argument and information shared document for the competition. Only 6 of you will compete in the in-person ethics bowl, as this is the size of an ethics bowl team. Technically, participation in the official competition is not required, but I do need at least 6 people to do it. In the event that not enough people have volunteered, I retain the right to select people to be on the team. The remaining 6 of you who do not compete in the in-person ethics bowl will compete in the online ethics bowl, which is the same format but over Zoom. To reiterate, everyone will be competing in ethics bowl; the only difference is whether you are going to the in-person competition or the online competition. We will talk about what ethics bowl looks like extensively, but here is the website if you want to look for

yourself: <https://www.appe-ethics.org/about-ethics-bowl-appe-ieb/>. [Links to an external site.](#) It is possible (but I think unlikely) that we will not be allowed to enter a team in the online ethics bowl competition, as it is first reserved for teams who cannot go to the in-person competition. However, I've been assured by the director of the program that our odds are very good. In the event that we are not able to send a team to the online bowl, we will have an alternate assignment for folks who are planning to do the online competition. This may involve an ethics bowl exhibition competition here at UR, a paper, or something else. We will know whether we can enter a team by early September.

Normative Ethics Debate: at the end of unit 1, we will have debates about normative ethics. This assignment will be evaluated not on the basis of whether you persuade me of your position; instead, you will be graded based on clear communication, use of public speaking tools, and ability to engage critically with opposing ethical theories. There is a separate rubric on Canvas outlining all the requirements for this assignment. In brief, the 12 of you will be divided into 6 teams of 2. Each of you will do one debate round. Each round will be approximately 30 minutes long and will involve speeches, rebuttals, and cross-examination.

Weekly Work: in unit 1, we will have reading quizzes each day. In unit 2, we will have weekly work in the form of case notes. These will involve you writing a brief on each case and outlining what you think the key moral issues are in the case. Additionally, there will be a shared Google Doc in which we compile and summarize all of the case notes in preparation for the competition.

Final Persuasive Speech: our final exam will involve a ten-minute persuasive speech in which you defend a substantive view about one of the cases from the semester (or about a different issue in ethics of your choosing). This speech will require you to blend all of the tools you've learned about public speaking and all of the ethical theories discussed in the class.

Class Policies:

- *Plagiarism:*
 - As student at the University of Richmond, you are bound by the Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits the use of any unauthorized assistance. For this course, the use of text-generating artificial intelligence tools (such as, but not limited to, ChatGPT) will be considered unauthorized assistance. This includes the use of generative AI for any stage of the work from conception to completion. To clarify my AI policy: I consider **any use at all of AI to be prohibited**. This includes asking AI to find sources, come up with arguments, format your paper, etc. I realize that the private sector (including many of your internships) uses generative AI a lot. I myself have even published research defending the potential uses of AI in medicine. I say this to show that I'm not against AI. I just think it has its proper place. In the private sector, as long as you are not breaking the law, your boss probably doesn't care about *how* you produced your work. In education, I care a lot about *how* you produce your work. Learning how to produce your own ideas and synthesize them is one of the key values achieved by a liberal arts education. Using AI to write your papers clearly conflicts with this goal.
 - Also, consider the practical benefit to yourself. Students across the country are using AI to cheat in college. While this may get them a degree, it will rob them of

developing strong writing and critical thinking skills. Think of how much more successful you will be if you spend the time now to invest in your soft skills. I would wager a lot of money that the students who invest the time now in traditional college education will outperform the students who rely on AI.

- The use of AI to produce your work is also deeply personally hurtful to me. I care very deeply about students becoming the best thinkers they can be. To that end, I spend a long time reading your papers and giving you detailed feedback. If all I'm commenting on is what Chat-GPT says about your topic, this is deeply disrespectful to me and my time.
- *Attendance:*
 - Attendance in class is mandatory.
 - Of course, if you have some incredibly extenuating circumstance that requires you to miss class, please let me know. For example, if you are on a university athletics team that travels frequently, have a severe illness, etc., we can figure out a solution. Missing class for reasons other than personal tragedy, illness, or university approved events or travel will not be allowed.
 - If you miss a quiz on the day of your absence, it is your responsibility to come to my office hours and take an alternate quiz. These missed quizzes will default to zeroes until you come take them in my office.
 - Please do not come to class if you are sick. I will excuse your absence.
- *Participation:*
 - Our goal is to get closer to the truth. We do this by discussing the issues with each other. So, it's very important that we all actively participate in the discussion.
 - I do not grade your participation. I don't think there is a way to do this that would accurately reflect your true participation without becoming incredibly burdensome for both you and me. For example, if I were to require you to make at least one comment per class, I would need to be marking that down while we are discussing (which would feel a little awkward and unnatural), and there may be days where you are just soaking in the discussion and don't have something to say. This tally keeping could be avoided if I were to grade your participation on my memory of how often you contributed during the semester. However, I don't trust my memory well enough to accurately assess participation in this way. I think that participation is something we do as the bare minimum for class, so I don't think people should need an incentive to participate.
- *Discussion Etiquette:*
 - We will be discussing important and often controversial issues. Given this, we should try to be charitable to our fellow classmates and not jump to harsh conclusions about their views. If a fellow classmate says something that strikes you as false, *or even offensive*, try to interpret his or her claim in the best possible light. The same goes for the authors that we will be reading.
 - However, even though we should be charitable to our classmates and authors, we should still voice disagreement with each other. In a college classroom, it is not rude to disagree with someone; to disagree with someone's reasoning is to acknowledge that person as a peer who is worthy of being debated. Disagreeing with someone does not mean that you are dismissing their views. Rather, it means that you are engaging with their views. **This policy extends to me. I heavily encourage you to disagree with me.**

- More generally, my policy is to make the classroom a place of open expression and dialogue. I care a lot about *why* you believe what you believe (much more so than I care about *what* anyone believes). This course is a chance to explore ideas and to see where you think the truth leads. If you leave the course with all of the same beliefs about ethics that you entered with, that is completely fine with me, so long as you critically examined your reasons for your beliefs. Obviously, if you find that your reasons do not support your beliefs, then you either need to find better reasons or adopt new beliefs. I have no agenda, and there is no particular view advocated by the course. Of course, I do have many strongly held views, but my goal is not that you adopt my beliefs, and you certainly are not graded based on adherence to those beliefs. There will never be a case where you are graded purely on the content of your views or whether they align with my personal views. You will only ever be graded on the strength of the arguments you offer in defense of your views.
- If the goal of this class is to allow free exploration of ideas in the pursuit of truth, none of us can constrain the speech or thought of others. It is difficult to test an idea if we don't discuss and analyze it. For this reason, I affirm a strong policy in favor of free expression in the classroom. This, of course, entails a strong policy in favor of debate, criticism, and examination of each other's beliefs and arguments. The goal is that iron can sharpen iron in the discussion. As college students, it is extremely unlikely that you have made up your minds about most issues of social importance, and the classroom cannot be a place of intellectual exploration if you fear social sanctions from your peers for expressing your views. Again, this still means that we can, and should, vigorously disagree and debate views that our peers endorse.
- If you are concerned that your view will be offensive to me or your classmates, I encourage you to still express your view (in the most diplomatic and persuasive way possible). I can guarantee that you won't offend me.
- Another general policy relating to discussion etiquette is that we should never assume to know what each other's views are based on what anyone says in class. For example, (although abortion is unlikely to come up in class), you can be pro-choice in your views but still think that a particular pro-choice argument is bad. If you criticize that pro-choice argument, nobody should infer that you are pro-life and vice versa with a pro-life person who finds a particular pro-life argument implausible. More generally, we can separate people from propositions that people say. There will be many times that I say things in class that I do not believe, and you should not infer that I hold those views. If someone, myself included, says something in class, we should only infer that they think their claim is worthy of discussion, not that they believe their claim.
- See also: [UR's statement on freedom of speech and expression](#).
- *Bringing Your Whole Self to the Classroom:*
 - I want you to be able to be fully yourself in my classroom. I view this as part of having a robust culture of freedom of expression and academic freedom. Also, your education is supposed to be about helping *you* learn, so it would be odd if I asked you to leave parts of your identity behind when you enter the classroom. So, if you are an atheist, I want you to feel fully able to be an atheist in my classroom; if you are a Christian, I want you to feel fully able to be a Christian in my classroom; etc. The same goes for any view on any topic; religion is just a useful example. If you are strongly committed to any world view or -ism (be it political, philosophical, or otherwise), I want you to be able to express that in the classroom. You should feel

free to reason in the following way, “as a [insert view], I think X, because of reasons Y.” For example, if you are religious and think that humans are obligated (not just permitted) to forgive all wrongs done to them, you should be free to express that view and be honest about your reasons for that view; if you are a socialist, you should be able to claim that we should nationalize all productive property; if you are a libertarian and think that non-consensual taxation amounts to coerced labor, you should be able to say that; etc. In some cases, you may only believe what you believe because of private evidence, and that’s okay. We all draw our beliefs from diverse pools of evidence, and we can all assess whether other people’s evidence is plausible to us. One goal of this class is for you to think about what you believe about ethics *given the evidence you find plausible*, and another goal of the class is to learn how to discuss and possibly persuade others on issues of ethics by appealing to *evidence they find plausible*. Additionally, I hope that you have the chance to evaluate if the evidence you find plausible is, actually, plausible after all. Overall, everyone is free to express their views and state their **actual reasons** for their views, and the rest of us can all critique each other on two levels: (1) whether our beliefs really follow from our evidence and (2) whether we are basing our beliefs on the appropriate evidence to begin with. For example, if the topic of abortion were to come up (which is not very likely in our class), a religious person should feel free to say that they think abortion is morally wrong because they interpret their particular inspired text as saying that God ensouls the fetus at conception, making it a person with the right to life. People who don't find that sacred text plausible can reply by either stating reasons they don't find the text to be authoritative or by trying to argue that the text doesn't actually support the view that fetuses are ensouled by God at conception. A non-religious person should also feel free to defend abortion on the grounds that there is nothing special about human beings that makes us have the right to life at conception. A religious person could respond by re-asserting the authority of Scripture or by trying to engage with the non-religious person on her own terms, perhaps by arguing that there are compelling secular reasons for believing that personhood begins at or close to conception.

- One clarification: I do not mean the preceding discussion to preclude the possibility that some people are wrong or to preclude the possibility that you may change your mind as a result of this class. One result of being honest about your reasons for your views is that you may realize that your views are not based on very good reasons and that you need to reject your initial view!
- *Dr. Director's Views on the Topics from Class:*
 - Students often want to know what I, as the professor think about the various issues that we talk about in class. I often have very strongly held views about the topics from class, but my policy is to remain as neutral as possible in my capacity as the teacher of this course. I do this for a variety of reasons, but it’s mainly because I think that discussion goes best when we separate people from their beliefs as much as possible. Additionally, I want students to be able to explore all ideas without feeling concerned about having to disagree with the professor’s views. Also, while I aspire to have very well thought out views on all topics in philosophy, the fact that I hold one view over the other should not settle the matter for you.
 - I am trying something new this semester for the final unit, which is about leadership and the good life. I’ve decided to drop the neutrality principle for this unit. I do not mean that I will be advocating for a particular view which you must endorse; I only

mean that I plan to retain the option to be open about my own views of what the good life is. For a number of reasons, I've come to the view that we cannot have a serious discussion and debate about the good life and the purpose of humanity without putting all of our cards on the table.

- However, on the last day of class, we will have an ask me anything session where you can ask me what I think about any issues from class or ethics and philosophy generally.
- *Technology:*
 - Laptops, cellphones, etc. will not be allowed in class. There is lots of evidence that we (and the people around us) learn better when technology is absent and when we have to write things by hand. Phones cannot be out on your desk. They need to be hidden from sight in a bag or in your pocket.
 - If you have a disability accommodation that allows you to use technology in class, I am happy to accommodate this.
 - If you receive an urgent phone call, please feel free to step out of class to take it.
 - Recording of class will not be allowed, largely to aid in the goal of creating a space of free expression in the classroom.
- *Office Hours:*
 - The scheduling link to my office hours is listed above. If you would like to talk about material from or adjacent to class, clarify a point from class, get help with an assignment, talk about your grade, etc., feel free to make an appointment with me. I also genuinely want to get to know you as my students. You are always welcome to come say hello while I'm in my office.
- *Late Work:*
 - My policy is that for every day that your assignment is late, you will lose a full letter grade on it. If an assignment is due at 12:00, I consider 12:01 to be a full day late.

Course Schedule:

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading	Assignment Due
8/25	Intro to the course and discussion of AI usage	Patrick Lin. "Why We Are Not Using AI in This Course, Despite Its Obvious benefits."	
Unit 1: Normative Ethics			
8/27	Normative Ethics: Consequentialism	James Rachels, "The Debate Over Utilitarianism." In <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> . 110-124.	
9/1	Normative Ethics: Absolute Deontology	Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> (26-33).	

		O’Norra O’Neill. “Kant’s Ethics.” In <i>A Companion to Ethics</i> . 107-112.	
9/3	Normative Ethics: Moderate Deontology	W.D. Ross, <i>The Right and The Good</i> (16-33, 34-42).	
9/8	Normative Ethics: Virtue ethics	Linda Zagzebski. Virtue Ethics. <i>Think</i> : 15-21. Rosalind Hursthouse. “Normative Virtue Ethics.” From <i>How Should One Live? Essays on the Virtues</i> . 19-33.	
9/10	Public Speaking and Debate Crash Course	No reading	Regional cases are likely released
9/15	Normative Ethics: Debate Day 1	No reading Two debate rounds will take place.	
9/17	Normative Ethics: Debate Day 2	No reading Two debate rounds will take place.	
Unit 2: Ethics Bowl Preparation		For the entirety of this unit, the only reading will be the case text itself.	
9/22	Normative Ethics: Debate Day 3/Case 1	The final debate round will take place before we begin case discussions.	Case notes due
9/24	Cases 2 and 3	For each day in this unit, you will read the case text and any additional readings assigned. I won’t know what those are now, as the cases are not yet released.	Case notes due
9/29	Cases 4 and 5		Case notes due

10/1	Cases 6 and 7		Case notes due
10/6	Cases 8 and 9		Case notes due
10/8	Cases 10 and 11		Case notes due
Fall Break (10/10-10/13)			
10/15	Cases 12 and 13		Case notes due
10/20	Cases 14 and 15		<u>All case notes must be added to the shared Google Doc</u>
10/22	Practice rounds		
10/27	Practice rounds		
10/29	Practice rounds		
11/3	Practice rounds		
11/5	Practice rounds		Online ethics bowl takes place on 11/7
11/10	Practice rounds		
11/12	Practice rounds		
11/17	Practice rounds		
11/19			
Thanksgiving Break (11/21-11/29)			
12/1	Practice rounds		
12/3	Practice rounds		Regional in person bowl takes place on 12/5
12/8	Reflection on the semester		
Final Exam	Final Persuasive Speeches		

UR's Final Exam Schedule: <https://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/schedule/exam.html>

Syllabus Statements

AI and the Honor Code

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. This means that no student is to use, rely on or turn in work that was paid-for, copied, excessively summarized without citation, created in collaboration (without permission), produced by AI, or is otherwise not the original work of the student for the specific assignment (without explicit permission).

Disability Services

The University of Richmond's office of Disability Services strives to ensure that students with disabilities and/or temporary conditions (i.e., concussions & injuries) are provided opportunity for full participation and equal access. Students who are approved for academic accommodations must complete the following steps to implement their accommodations in each class:

- 1) Submit their Disability Accommodation Notice (DAN) to each of their professors via the Disability Services Student Portal available at this link: sl.richmond.edu/be.
- 2) Request a meeting with each professor to create an accommodation implementation plan. Disability Services is available to assist, as needed.

It is important to complete these steps as soon as possible because accommodations are never retroactive, and professors are permitted a reasonable amount of time for implementation. Students who are experiencing a barrier to access due to a disability and/or temporary condition are encouraged to apply for accommodations by visiting disability.richmond.edu. Disability Services can be reached at disability@richmond.edu or 804-662-5001.

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 Links to an external site.

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/ Links to an external site.

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."

<https://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/index.html> Links to an external site.

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[Links to an external site.](#)

Academic Skills Center (asc.richmond.edu[Links to an external site.](#)): 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](#)[Links to an external site.](#) (<https://richmond.box.com/s/dpe37chr2zodr3o1amtj8omjk72v2ktb>[Links to an external site.](#)). **Email Roger Mancastroppa** (rmancast@richmond.edu) **and Marco Ortiz** (marco.ortiz@richmond.edu) **for appointments in academic and life skills to request a Zoom conference.**

Boatwright Library Research Librarians: (library.richmond.edu/help/ask/[Links to an external site.](#) 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[Links to an external site.](#) 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[Links to an external site.](#) 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[Links to an external site.](#)) 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[Links to an external site.](#) 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[Links to an external site.](#) 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.

Weinstein Learning Center

The Center integrates, amplifies, and co-locates Speech Studio, Writing Studio, Quantitative and Programming Support, Content Tutoring, Academic Coaching, English Language and Culture, and Technology Studio services. The WLC aims to provide next-level academic support, transforming our students' development in integrated and innovative ways and complementing our robust curricular and co-curricular offerings. 1 <https://wlc.richmond.edu/>