

Fall 2026
LDST 390: Leadership, Polarization, and the Ethics of Open-mindedness
Jepson School of Leadership Studies
University of Richmond

Instructor

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c) <https://www.thedailystar.net/author/kazi-asm-nurul-huda>

Class Hours: Monday and Wednesday: 12.00-1.15 PM

Class Venues: 107 Jepson Hall

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday: 1.15-2.25 PM and by appointment

I prefer that you use email for questions about procedural matters, appointments, and similar concerns. I usually reply promptly. If you don't receive a response within 24 hours, please understand that something beyond my control may be happening in my life. However, if the issue you're facing is substantive or complex, I strongly encourage you to meet me during office hours. It is often difficult to communicate effectively, especially when we don't yet have a clear understanding of the situation, through writing alone.

Course: Description, Objectives and Outcomes¹

LDST 390: Leadership, Polarization, and the Ethics of Open-mindedness examines the ethical and political challenges of leadership under conditions of deep disagreement and political division. The course asks why democratic societies become polarized, how polarization affects political judgment and public trust, and how leaders should respond to ideological conflict, misinformation, and competing political commitments. Particular attention is given to open-mindedness as a leadership virtue and to the question of whether leaders can remain receptive to opposing perspectives while still exercising conviction, judgment, and decisive leadership.

Drawing on political philosophy, ethics, political theory, and leadership studies, the course explores populism, political persuasion, democratic crisis, public trust, protest movements, social media, ideological rigidity, and leadership under conditions of uncertainty and disagreement. Through theoretical readings, political speeches, historical examples, and contemporary case studies, students will examine how leaders and citizens navigate disagreement, exercise authority, respond to opposition, and make judgments in polarized democratic societies.

The course emphasizes the relationship between ethical reflection and political practice. Students will critically examine competing accounts of leadership, polarization, and democratic disagreement; analyze the ethical responsibilities of leaders toward supporters, opponents, and the broader public; and consider both the value and the limits of open-mindedness. Rather than treating open-mindedness as simple neutrality, indecision, or

¹ Enrollment in this course constitutes agreement to all course policies outlined herein.

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willingness to compromise, the course asks when openness to alternative perspectives is a virtue, when conviction is warranted, and how leaders should determine the boundaries of reasonable disagreement.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **analyze** major ethical and political problems associated with leadership in polarized democratic societies.
- **explain and critically evaluate** competing theories and arguments concerning polarization, political disagreement, persuasion, public trust, and open-mindedness.
- **apply** concepts and arguments from political philosophy, ethics, and leadership studies to historical and contemporary cases of political leadership and conflict.
- **distinguish** open-minded leadership from indecisiveness, neutrality, tolerance, and uncritical compromise, and assess the appropriate limits of open-mindedness in political life.
- **evaluate** how leaders respond to ideological conflict, misinformation, protest, distrust, and uncertainty, with attention to the ethical and political consequences of their choices.
- **formulate, defend, and properly document** clear arguments about leadership, polarization, and the ethics of open-mindedness, drawing on appropriate theoretical, empirical, and case-based evidence.

Course Materials

You **do not need to purchase any books** for this class, as they can be quite expensive. Instead, all required readings, including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, blog posts, speeches, and newspaper columns, will be **posted on Canvas**. You are required to bring a printed copy of each assigned reading to class. Having the material in front of you will help you follow the lecture more effectively, as I will often refer to specific paragraphs, sentences, or concepts during our discussions.

Course Expectations

- 1) **Attend Class:** *Attendance is mandatory and contributes to your grade.* I won't call you out if you miss a class, but if you want to learn and earn a decent grade, you need to show up. If you must miss class for a legitimate reason—such as a medical emergency or a legally required activity—please let me know in advance if possible, or as soon as you can. This helps me make arrangements to support your learning. Please note that absences for discretionary reasons, such as travel you chose to schedule during class time, will not be excused.
- 2) **Complete the Readings Before Class:** *You are required to read the assigned material before the class in which it will be discussed.* Lectures and class discussions will build on the readings, so your familiarity with the material is essential for understanding and engaging with the discussion.
- 3) **Participate Actively:** *Class participation is key to making this course meaningful, and your well-behaved, thoughtful participation contributes to your grade.* Your contributions, questions, and observations, especially when the material is confusing, help everyone learn better, including me. I will regularly ask for your thoughts and feedback during lectures, and I hope you'll respond generously. If you're unsure about something, chances are someone else is too, so don't hesitate to speak up.

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- 4) **Approach This Class as a Collaborative Project:** *This course is not just mine, nor is it just yours; it's ours.* We are co-investigators in a shared exploration of philosophical and theoretical ideas. We will support one another in making sense of the materials, questions, and challenges we encounter. Think of our classroom as a space where collaboration, humility, open-mindedness, and mutual respect guide our discussions and understanding.

Classroom Environment

This is an “equal opportunity to learn” classroom, guided by the values of open communication and mutual respect. Everyone deserves a fair and supportive learning environment, and I am committed to fostering that. If you have suggestions on how we can better ensure such a space for all, I am always open to hearing them.

This course will involve discussion of serious and sometimes controversial questions—topics on which people may have strong disagreements. It is important to clarify how these discussions should unfold to ensure a respectful and inclusive classroom.

By emphasizing discussion, I am affirming that you are responsible not only for your own learning but also for contributing to the learning experience of your peers. The value of open, thoughtful dialogue lies in the fact that any student’s comment may unlock an idea for someone else. Likewise, you never know when another student’s insight might be the key to your own understanding of the material.

For this reason, I will make every effort to ensure that each student feels welcome and empowered to share ideas that enrich our collective learning. In that same spirit, I will not tolerate any behavior that compromises the learning environment for others.

This includes—but is not limited to—interrupting others, responding with snide or dismissive remarks, or making comments that could reasonably be perceived as disrespectful based on another person’s race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, disability status, or any other personal characteristic. If I observe or learn of behavior that suggests another student’s ideas are being dismissed or disrespected, I will intervene and take appropriate action.

Let me be clear: this policy is not about enforcing false politeness or avoiding disagreement. On the contrary, critical, sincere, and passionate debate is welcome and encouraged. The aim is to ensure that no student feels unwelcome, unheard, or unentitled to contribute. Everyone in this classroom is capable of making valuable contributions, and I want each of you to feel empowered to do so.

Class Entry and Attendance Policy

You are expected to enter the classroom before the instructor—for example, by 12:00 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays.

I will take attendance every day, either by calling the roll or by noting who is present and who is absent. Your attendance will be considered when posting grades for Participation and Engagement.

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Technology in the Classroom

The use of electronic devices—including mobile phones, laptops, tablets, e-readers, and similar devices—is strictly prohibited during class time, unless their use is permitted as part of an approved accommodation for a documented disability or medical need.

This policy is in place for several reasons:

- 1) [Multitasking is a myth.](#) Research consistently shows that multitasking reduces focus and comprehension. Even if you believe you can multitask effectively, your device use is likely to distract those around you and disrupt the learning environment.
- 2) [Handwritten notes are more effective.](#) Studies show that taking notes by hand improves retention and understanding better than typing. If you prefer a digital version of your notes, you can scan or type them up after class.

If you require the use of technology for accessibility reasons, please let me know by August 25, 2026, so we can make the necessary arrangements.

Please also note that I will generally keep the use of classroom technology, including PowerPoint presentations, to a minimum in order to foster more focused, engaged, and discussion-driven classes.

Assignments

Assessment in this course is designed to evaluate students' ability to analyze arguments, apply theoretical concepts to political cases, engage seriously with competing perspectives, and exercise independent judgment about leadership under conditions of polarization and disagreement. Because these capacities require students to demonstrate their own reasoning, a significant portion of the course assessment will take place through in-class writing, oral examination, deliberation, and other forms of direct engagement.

In-class Argument Analyses (2 analyses × 15% = 30%)

Students will complete two in-class argument analyses based on readings and ideas already discussed in the course. Each exercise will present students with one or more passages, arguments, problems, or competing perspectives from the course for analysis during class.

Students may be asked to:

- identify and reconstruct a central argument;
- explain an important assumption or implication of the argument;
- formulate a significant objection or competing perspective;
- compare the positions of two authors or approaches; and
- develop and defend their own reasoned judgment.

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These exercises evaluate conceptual understanding and argumentative reasoning rather than memorization. No additional reading will be assigned for these class sessions.

Dates: September 9 and October 19, 2026

Polarization Case Analysis (15%)

Students will complete an in-class analysis of a historical or contemporary case involving political polarization, ideological conflict, misinformation, public distrust, protest, or deep political disagreement. Students will be permitted limited access to online sources during the in-class exercise for the purpose of locating or verifying relevant evidence; however, the use of generative AI tools will not be permitted.

Students will be asked to identify the central dimensions of the conflict, analyze the response of a leader, movement, or institution, apply concepts from the course, and evaluate the ethical and political strengths and limitations of the response. Particular attention will be given to whether greater open-mindedness would have improved the response or whether the circumstances justified conviction, resistance, or refusal to compromise.

Detailed instructions for the case analysis will be provided in class.

Date: September 23, 2026

Leadership Simulation and Reflection (15%)

Students will participate in an in-class leadership simulation involving a political conflict or difficult decision under conditions of disagreement, uncertainty, or competing values. Students may be assigned different roles or perspectives and will be asked to consider competing arguments, respond to changing information, and make or evaluate leadership decisions.

Following the simulation, each student will complete an individual in-class written reflection analyzing the decisions made during the exercise. The reflection will ask students to apply relevant course concepts and consider whether open-mindedness, persuasion, compromise, resistance, or decisive action was justified in the circumstances.

Assessment will emphasize the student's individual reasoning, application of course concepts, engagement with competing perspectives, and ability to explain and defend their judgment. Students will not be graded on the particular political position they adopt.

Date: November 4, 2026

Oral Examination (10%)

Each student will complete an individual oral examination of approximately 10–15 minutes. The oral examination evaluates conceptual understanding, argumentative reasoning, and the student's ability to apply course ideas to problems of leadership and political disagreement.

Students may be asked to explain a concept or argument from the course, apply it to a political or leadership problem, compare competing perspectives, identify an objection or limitation, and defend their own judgment. Follow-up questions will allow students to clarify, reconsider, or further defend their responses.

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The oral examination is intended to assess students' ability to think with the ideas of the course, rather than simply reproduce information from the readings.

Date(s): November 30 and December 2, 2026

Final Position Paper (20%)

The Final Position Paper (2,500–2,800 words) is a semester-long project that asks students to develop and defend an independent argument concerning a central ethical or political problem examined in the course.

Possible questions include:

- Is open-mindedness a virtue of political leadership?
- Can strong political conviction coexist with genuine open-mindedness?
- When should a political leader refuse to compromise?
- What responsibilities do leaders have toward political opponents?
- How should democratic leaders respond to misinformation or ideological extremism?
- When does political persuasion become manipulation?
- Are there circumstances in which open-mindedness becomes a liability rather than a virtue?

Students may propose another question in consultation with the instructor.

Students will develop the paper progressively throughout the semester rather than completing it only at the end of the course. The process will include several stages, such as identifying a question or problem, developing a preliminary thesis, selecting and engaging relevant sources, constructing an argument, considering significant objections or alternative positions, and revising the argument in light of feedback and further course material. Some of these stages will be completed or discussed during class, and students will submit brief preliminary materials at designated points during the semester, as outline below.

(Due) Date	Milestone	What You Will Complete	Mode of Submission
10/7 (W)	Question/Topic Proposal	Identify the central question or problem you plan to address.	Handwritten; hard-copy submission
10/14 (W)	Preliminary Thesis	State your developing position and central claim.	Handwritten; hard-copy submission
10/26 (M)	Annotated Source List	Provide a list of at least eight scholarly sources you plan to use in your paper. At least one must be a reading assigned in this course. For each source, include the full citation and a brief annotation explaining its main argument or relevance and how you expect to use it in your paper.	Typed; hard-copy submission
11/2 (M)	Argument Outline	Provide your thesis, main supporting arguments, and at least one significant	Handwritten; completed and submitted in class

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		objection or alternative position you intend to address.	
11/18	Final Position Paper Workshop	Bring your work in progress to class for further development, discussion, and revision.	Typed hard copy brought to class
12/8	Final Position Paper Due	Submit the completed 2,500–2,800-word Final Position Paper.	Canvas submission; early submission is encouraged

The final paper must advance a clear thesis, engage seriously with relevant course readings and competing perspectives, address at least one significant objection or alternative position, and defend its conclusions through careful reasoning and appropriate evidence.

Because the paper develops across the semester, students are expected to retain their preliminary work and drafts and to be able to explain the development of their argument and defend the reasoning and sources used in the final paper.

Students must submit the final paper in the designated section of Canvas.

Due date: December 8, 2026

Participation and Engagement (10%)

Participation in this course emphasizes active, thoughtful, and open-minded engagement with difficult questions about leadership and political disagreement. Because disagreement is itself an object of study in this course, students should be willing both to articulate their own judgments and to engage seriously with positions they may reject.

Participation credit may be earned through a variety of low-stakes activities, including:

- contributing to class discussions by asking questions, developing arguments, offering interpretations, or responding thoughtfully to others;
- participating in debates, case discussions, simulations, and other in-class activities;
- identifying assumptions, objections, tensions, or alternative interpretations in course readings and arguments;
- making thoughtful connections among readings, concepts, political cases, and contemporary problems; and
- demonstrating a willingness to reconsider, refine, or defend one's position in response to reasons and evidence.

Participation values intellectual seriousness without requiring agreement. Students are encouraged to test arguments, challenge assumptions, acknowledge uncertainty, and revise their views when warranted. Careful listening and respectful engagement with competing perspectives are as important as speaking.

Attendance is expected and will be considered when posting grades for Participation and Engagement. Students are not evaluated on their political views, confidence, eloquence, or extroversion. The aim is to create a

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classroom in which difficult political and ethical disagreements can be examined rigorously, openly, and respectfully.

Grades

Grade Distribution

The various assignments are weighted as follows:

Assessment Components	Weight
In-class Argument Analyses (2)	15%*2=30%
Polarization Case Analysis	15%
Leadership Simulation and Reflection	15%
Oral Exam	10%
Final Position Paper	20%
Participation and Engagement	10%

Grade Scale

For course grades, the [University of Richmond's grading policies](#) will be followed. For purposes of converting numerical scores into letter grades in this course, the following grading scale will be used:

Numerical Scores	Letter Grade	Grade Points
96 and above	A+	4.0
93-95	A	4.0
90-92	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.3
83-86	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.3
73-76	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.7
67-69	D+	1.3
66-64	D	1.0
60-63	D-	0.7
Below 60	F	0.0

Students will receive a numerical score from 0 to 100 on each graded assignment. At the end of the semester, these scores will be combined according to the assigned weights of the course requirements and converted into the corresponding letter grade using the scale above.

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Final numerical averages may, at my discretion, be raised to the next whole number based on a student's overall class performance, participation, and conduct. For example, an average of 88.01 or 88.99 may be raised to 89, and an average of 89.01 or 89.99 may be raised to 90. However, an average between 88.01 and 88.99 will not be raised directly to 90. If such consideration is not warranted, the calculated numerical average will remain unchanged.

After any such adjustment, students must meet the minimum numerical threshold for a particular letter grade in order to earn that grade.

Late Work and Make-ups

In-class activities are designed to be completed **during class time** and generally **cannot be made up**. If you must miss an in-class activity due to a **legally required obligation, medical emergency, or comparably serious reason**, you must inform me **in advance and as soon as possible**. Failure to notify me beforehand will result in **forfeiture of the points** for that activity.

If the reason for your absence is sufficiently serious and appropriately documented, I may allow a rescheduled activity at my discretion. Please note that **avoidable or discretionary absences**—such as scheduling travel during class time—**will not be excused**, and make-ups will not be permitted in such cases.

Late submissions of assignments are not guaranteed to be accepted and may be penalized unless prior arrangements have been approved for serious reasons.

Important: The **Final Synthesis Essay** will **not** be rescheduled under any circumstances. The due date falls during final exam week and must be strictly observed, as grades must be submitted on time after careful evaluation of all essays.

Academic Integrity

I take academic integrity very seriously—I truly hate cheating. It is expected that all work submitted for this course reflects your own academic effort.

The University of Richmond has clear policies regarding academic integrity. You are responsible for reviewing these policies [here](#). Before submitting any written work, make sure you are familiar with the different forms of plagiarism. A helpful resource is: “[Nine Things You Should Already Know About Plagiarism](#).”

Please don't cheat. If you're struggling, confused, or falling behind, reach out to me. I would much rather help you than see you compromise your integrity.

Generative AI Policy

All assignments in this course 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 students may not use, rely on, or submit work that was paid for, copied, excessively summarized without citation, created through unauthorized collaboration, or is otherwise not the student's original work for the specific assignment.

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The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or similar tools) to generate, rewrite, summarize, or edit work submitted for an assignment is prohibited unless I explicitly permit such use for a particular assignment or activity. When generative AI use is permitted, I will specify how it may be used and whether its use must be acknowledged or documented.

Submitting AI-generated work as one's own, or using generative AI in a manner not explicitly permitted for an assignment, may constitute a violation of the Honor System.

Helpful Resources

[Ten Easy Tips for Reading Philosophy Texts](#)

[Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

[Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper](#)

[Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

Common Course Policies: Jepson School of Leadership Studies

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. Please see 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. For details, visit disability.richmond.edu/.

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.

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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." Please see <https://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/index.html>.

Religious Observance

Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance. Details can be found here: 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.² Recent research has found that, when professors do not address microaggressions in class, microaggressions foster alienation of marginalized groups.³ 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).⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶ 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.

Weinstein Learning Center

² 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>

³ Bergom, I., Wright, M.C., Brown, M.K. and Brooks, M. (2011), Promoting college student development through collaborative learning: A case study of *bevuta*. *About Campus*, 15: 19-25. <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20044>

⁴ 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>

⁵ 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>

⁶ <https://inclusion.richmond.edu/>

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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

Meet with a professional staff member who will collaborate with you to assess and develop your academic and life skills (e.g., critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, test preparation, time management, stress management, and more).

Content Tutoring

Peer consultants offer assistance in specific courses and subject areas. They are available for appointments (in person and virtual) and drop-in sessions. See schedules at wlc.richmond.edu for supported courses and drop-in times.

English Language and Intercultural Learning

Attend one-on-one or group consultations, workshops, and other services focused on English, academic, and intercultural skills.

Quantitative and Programming Resources

Peer consultants and professional staff offer workshops or one-on-one appointments to build quantitative and programming skills and provide statistical support for research projects.

Speech

Prepare and practice for academic presentations, speaking engagements, and other occasions of public expression. Peer consultants offer recording, playback, and coaching for both individual and group presentations. Students can expect recommendations regarding clarity, organization, style, and delivery.

Technology Studio

Visit our student lab dedicated to supporting digital media projects. Services include camera checkout, video/audio recording assistance, use of virtual reality equipment, poster printing, 3D printing and modeling, and consultation services on a variety of software.

Writing

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

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Tentative Schedule and Readings^{7 8} [Subject to Revision]⁹

No.	Date	Unit/Topic	Guiding Question	Reading/Assignment
1	8/24 (M)	Course Introduction		Syllabus; introduction to <i>Leadership, Polarization, and the Ethics of Open-mindedness</i>
2	8/26 (W)	Understanding Polarization	What exactly is political polarization?	Heltzel & Laurin (2020), "Polarization in America: Two Possible Futures"
3	8/31 (M)		When does political disagreement become "us versus them"?	Finkel et al. (2020), "Political Sectarianism in America"
4	9/2 (W)		Why do political opponents come to dislike one another?	Iyengar et al. (2019), "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States"
5	9/7 (M)		Does exposure to political disagreement strengthen or weaken democracy?	Jang (2009), "Are Diverse Political Networks Always Bad for Participatory Democracy?"
6	9/9 (W)	In-class Argument Analysis (I)		No additional reading
7	9/14 (M)	Polarization, Democracy, and Leadership	What happens when political opponents cease to regard one another as legitimate?	Anderson et al. (2005), "Winning Isn't Everything: Losers' Consent and Democratic Legitimacy"
8	9/16 (W)		What makes populist leadership distinctive?	Müller (2016), "Introduction: Is Everyone a Populist?" in <i>What Is Populism?</i>
9	9/21 (M)		Can strong political convictions coexist with constructive disagreement?	Haidt (2012), <i>The Righteous Mind</i> , Ch. 12, "Can't We All Disagree More Constructively?"
10	9/23 (W)	Polarization Case Analysis		In-class assessment; limited online evidence gathering permitted; no generative AI
11	9/28 (M)	Persuasion, Misinformation & the Digital Public Sphere	What distinguishes legitimate political persuasion from manipulation?	Noggle (2021), "Manipulation in Politics"
12	9/30 (W)		Why does misinformation survive correction?	Lewandowsky et al. (2012), "Misinformation and Its Correction"

⁷ All Readings will be posted on **Canvas**.

⁸ I am open to suggestions regarding the readings. If you believe there is a better reading on the topic for a particular class session, I will gladly take a look. If I find it more suitable, I may replace the original reading with your suggested one.

⁹ Whenever I make any changes to class readings, the exam/online submission schedule, or course policies, I will inform you **in advance**.

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13	10/5 (M)		How should leaders respond to misinformation?	Lewandowsky et al. (2020), <i>The Debunking Handbook 2020</i> , Part 2
14	10/7 (W)		Do social media create echo chambers—or something worse?	Nguyen (2020), “Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles”
	10/12 (M)	No Class — Fall Break		
15	10/14 (W)		When does digital political persuasion threaten autonomy?	Ward (2018), “Social Networks, the 2016 US Presidential Election, and Kantian Ethics”
16	10/19 (M)	In-class Argument Analysis (II)		No additional reading
17	10/21 (W)	Open-mindedness as a Leadership Virtue	What is open-mindedness?	Riggs (2016), “Open-Mindedness, Insight, and Understanding”
18	10/26 (M)		Is open-mindedness different from intellectual humility?	Porter & Schumann (2018), “Intellectual Humility and Openness to the Opposing View”
19	10/28 (W)		Do leaders have an obligation to listen to opposing views?	Brown (2021), <i>An Ethics of Political Communication</i> , Ch. 4, “Disengagement”
20	11/2 (M)		What does open-mindedness actually require us to do?	Watson (2025), “How to Be Open-Minded: Ask Good Questions (and Listen to the Answers)”
21	11/4 (W)	Leadership Simulation and Reflection		In-class simulation and individual written reflection
22	11/9 (M)	The Limits of Open-minded Leadership	Does open-mindedness require us to be open to every perspective?	Robertson (2025), “Free Speech and Challenges to Open-Mindedness in Higher Education”
23	11/11(W)		Are there political commitments that should not be open to compromise?	Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
24	11/16 (M)		Can a leader be both open-minded and decisive?	Huda, “Political Open-mindedness and the Discipline of Governability” (manuscript)
25	11/18 (W)	Final Position Paper Workshop		In-class workshop on argument, objections, evidence, and revision
	11/23 (M) and 11/25 (W)	No Class — Thanksgiving Break		
26	11/30 (M)	Oral Examinations		Selected Readings
27	12/2 (W)	Oral Examinations		Selected Readings
28	12/7 (M)	Course Consolidation		No additional reading
	12/8	Final Position Paper Due		Submit via Canvas

Fall 2026
LDST 390: Leadership, Polarization, and the Ethics of Open-mindedness
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University of Richmond

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