SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

LDST 102 - Spring 2026

Course Time:	Mon, Wed 12:00-1:15
Course Location:	Jepson Hall 102
Course Website:	https://blackboard.richmond.edu
Instructor:	Bo Yun Park
Email:	bpark@richmond.edu
Office:	Jepson Hall 236
Office Hours:	Wed 2:45-4:00 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 made available for download on Blackboard. You will be expected to bring a printed or electronic 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.

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[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 following: you are expected to submit an excerpt that caught your attention (whether it be a sentence, a paragraph, or a longer section) from each of the assigned readings prior to the beginning of class time. All submissions should be sent via email to the instructor and will receive either a check, check + or check – depending on its 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 and analytical questions to be shared with your peers. You may choose to draw on a PowerPoint presentation or bring handouts to be distributed in class.

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 1-8 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
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.

Speech Center (speech.richmond.edu 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.

- You can make individual appointments with a consultant at the Speech Center online: https://speech.richmond.edu/appointments/index.html
- You will also find helpful resources about speaking on the Speech Center's website: https://speech.richmond.edu/services/index.html.

Writing Center (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.

- You can make appointments with a consultant at the Writing Center online: https://writing.richmond.edu/appointments/index.html.
- You will also find helpful resources for writing on the Writing Center's website: https://writing.richmond.edu/writing-resources/index.html.

Academic Skills Center (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 (rmancast@richmond.edu) and Hope Walton (hwalton@richmond.edu) for coaching appointments in academic and life skills.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians (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 (libguides.richmond.edu). Students can contact an individual librarian(library.richmond.edu/help/liaison-librarians.html) or ASK a librarian for help via email (library@richmond.edu), text (804-277-9ASK), or chat (library.richmond.edu/chat.html).

Career Services (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 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) 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.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity and Collaboration

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are vital for any intellectual community. For the oral or written assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics or seek advice from your peers. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit is the result of your own research and writing. You should also adhere to standard citation practices in the discipline by properly citing any written works that you reference in your assignments. You will be expected to pursue yout academic studies with integrity and must follow the Honor Code. The shortened version of the honor pledge is the following: "I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work."

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).

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) is considered unauthorized assistance, and using it in connection with any assignment that you submit to me will be considered an Honor Code violation. This includes the use of generative AI for any stage of the work from conception to completion.

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 Student Center for Equity and Inclusion (SCEI) 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.

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[1] 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

[2] 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

[3] 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

[4] Rolón-Dow, R. (2019). Stories 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

- *January 12*:   No required readings.
- *January 14*:   Collins, Randall. 1994. "Rise of the Social Sciences" in *Four Sociological Traditions*. New York City: Oxford University Press.

Week 2 – Introduction to Leadership and Leadership Studies

- *January 19*:   No Class: MLK.
- *January 21*:   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 3 – Leadership in Max Weber's Writings

- *January* 26:   Weber, Max. 1958. "Science as a Vocation." *Daedalus* 87(1):111–34.
  Optional Reading: Weber, Max. 1919. "Politics as a Vocation."
- *January* 27:   Tucker, Robert C. 1968. "The Theory of Charismatic Leadership." *Daedalus* 97(3):731–56.

Week 4 – Leadership in Emile Durkheim's Writings

- *February 2*:   Durkheim, Emile (1982 [1895]). "What is a social fact?" in *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press.
- *February 4*:   Herzog, Lisa (2018). "Durkheim on Social Justice: The Argument from 'Organic Solidarity.'" *American Political Science Review*, 112(1):112-124.

Week 5 – Leadership in Karl Marx's Writings

- *February 9*:   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
- *February 11*:   Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1952. Capital; Manifesto of the Communist Party. Chicago, Ill, Encyclopaedia Britannica; Benton. HeinOnline.

Week 6 – Leadership at the Micro Level: Rational Choice and Embeddedness

- *February 16*:   Becker, Gary S. 1992. "The Economic Way of Looking at Life", Nobel Lecture, Presented at Chicago University, December 9, Chicago, IL.
- *February 18*:   Granovetter, Mark. 1985. "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness." *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3):481-510.

Week 7 – Leadership at the Meso Level: Constructivism and Interactionism

- *February 23*:   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.
- *February 25*:   Goffman, Erving. 2005. "On Face-Work." Pp 5-45 in *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face to Face Behavior*. Chicago: Aldine Transaction.

Week 8 – Leadership at the Macro Level: Power and Social Justice

- *March 2*:   Domhoff, G. William. 2006. "Who Rules America?" Pp 290-295 in *Who Rules America? Power and Politics, and Social Change. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.*
- *March 4*:   DeMarrais, Elizabeth and Timothy Earle. 2017. Collective Action Theory and the Dynamics of Complex Societies. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 46(1): 183-201.

SPRING BREAK

Week 9 – Midterm Exam Week

- *March 16*:   In-Class Oral Exam
- *March 18*:   In-Class Oral Exam

Week 10 – Leadership, Race, and Gender

- *March 23*:   Harrison, Faye. 1995. "The Persistent Power of 'Race' in the Cultural and Political Economy of Racism." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 24:47-74.
- *March 25*:   Boyle, Kaitlin M., and Chase B. Meyer. 2018. "Who Is Presidential? Women's Political Representation, Deflection, and the 2016 Election." *Socius* 4:2378023117737898.

Week 11 – Leadership and Populism

- *March 30*:   Bonikowski, Bart, and Noam Gidron. 2016. "The Populist Style in American Politics: Presidential Campaign Discourse, 1952–1996." *Social Forces* 94(4):1593–1621.
- *April 1*:   Berman, Sheri. 2021 "The Causes of Populism in the West." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24(1):71-88.

Week 12 – Leadership and Political Polarization

- *April 6*:   Baldassarri, Delia, and Peter Bearman. 2007. "Dynamics of Political Polarization." *American Sociological Review* 72(5):784–811.
- *April 8*:   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 13 – Leadership and Social Media

- *April 13*:   Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, Maria Petrova, Ruben Enikolopov. 2020. "Political Effects of the Internet and Social Media." *Annual Review of Economics* 12(1):415-438.
- *April* 15:   Kreiss, Daniel, and Shannon McGregor. 2018. *Political Communication* 35:155-177.

Week 14 – Leadership and Misinformation

- *April* 20:   Ruths, Derek. 2019. "The Misinformation Machine." *Science* 363(6425):348–348.
- *April* 23:   Jerit, Jennifer, and Yangzi Zhao. 2020. "Political Misinformation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23(1):77–94.

FINAL EXAM ON APRIL 28, 2026