

**JUNIOR HONORS TUTORIAL
LDST 399-01: SPRING 2026**

WED. 3-4.15PM JEPSON HALL 102

COURSE SLACK: https://join.slack.com/t/LDST399JRHONO-VHZ2107/SHARED_INVITE/ZT-3KWGGIUEE-RIVGMPvQDL0xXJd83SVBUQ

This statement acknowledges the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Pamunkey nation on which we will be learning and working throughout our time at the University of Richmond. It is important to acknowledge this land because of a legacy of silence and exploitation of indigenous peoples on the part of the United States and US Institutions, and it is our responsibility to help mitigate that history here and around the world where indigenous peoples are oppressed.

Professor Kristin M.S. Bezio

kbezio@richmond.edu

Office: Jepson Hall 134

Office Hours: Sign up for appointments: <https://calendar.app.google/K3vzLkQas2woUfpx9>

Office Phone: 804-287-6045

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to prepare you for the Jepson School's Honors Thesis, completed during your Senior year. Our goal for this semester is to introduce you to a variety of methods and topics so that you can better choose a focus for your own thesis project. By the end of the semester, you will produce a (minimum) five-page thesis proposal and identify your primary honors thesis advisor.

In order to receive honors in the Jepson School, students must meet the following requirements.

To qualify, a student must be a leadership studies major, hold at least a 3.30 cumulative GPA and at least a 3.50 leadership studies GPA, and have earned a B or higher in at least four leadership studies courses. The application form is available for qualified juniors from the associate dean for academic affairs.

In order to apply, juniors must:

- select an advisor by the Friday before spring break at 5pm (submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs with approval from that advisor)
- complete the online application form at the end of the spring semester of their second-to-last (typically junior) year
- submit their thesis proposal to their chosen advisor, the LDST 399 instructor (or alternate faculty member if their advisor is their LDST 399 instructor, and the Academic Affairs committee via the online form
- obtain a brief testament from their chosen advisor via the online form
- obtain approval from the LDST 399 instructor *or* another designated faculty member (if the student's advisor is the LDST 399 instructor) via the online form

Students who do not meet all of these requirements may not proceed with Honors.

Once accepted to the honors track, in order to receive honors in leadership studies, a student must:

- Enroll in [LDST 497](#) and [LDST 498](#), Senior Honors Thesis I and II, during senior year.
- Successfully present one chapter, bibliography, and chapter-by-chapter outline of thesis to the student's committee by the last day of classes in the fall semester of senior year and receive a Satisfactory Progress rating from their committee.
- Successfully defend thesis before the student's committee by the last day of classes in the spring semester of senior year, receiving a Pass or High Pass from each member of their committee.
- Complete undergraduate program with at least a 3.30 cumulative GPA and at least a 3.50 leadership studies GPA.

Students in the honors track must complete all aspects of the standard Jepson curriculum. [LDST 497](#) and [LDST 498](#) can count for a maximum of one unit of advanced course credit. ("Honors in Leadership Studies": <http://jepson.richmond.edu/academics/honors.html>)

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO DO AN HONORS THESIS ANYMORE?

Just tell Dr. Bezio. You can complete 399 and do a proposal for a non-honors Thesis or an Independent Study (and get the half unit), or you can drop or withdraw from the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, students will learn the following skills:

- How to organize research materials in preparation for the senior thesis proposal
- How to search for and evaluate research materials
- How to consider potential research questions/hypotheses/working theories in preparation for the senior honors thesis
- To consider the most appropriate advisor(s) to supervise and mentor the senior honors thesis project
- How to evaluate methodological approaches to research
- How to determine appropriate scope and conceptual design for a senior honors thesis project of a single-year duration

REQUIRED TEXTS/TECHNOLOGY

How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper, by Charles Lipson (any edition, ebook or hard copy are all acceptable)

The Lipson will be very useful to you *while you are writing your thesis*, as well, so I strongly recommend getting a hard copy and using it as a reference.

Students will also be expected to do readings posted on BlackBoard, as well as read additional materials relevant to their thesis projects. Please purchase a binder or other binding notebook in which to put the readings so that you can bring them with you to class *and annotate them* in a non-electronic version.

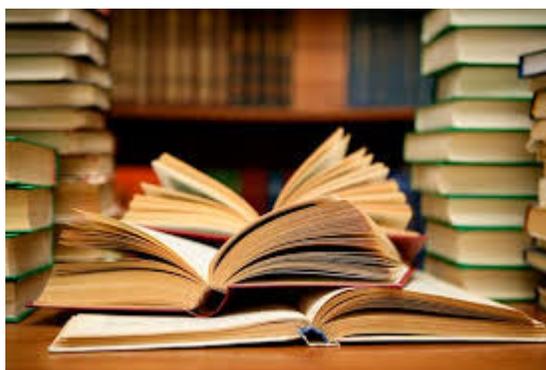
Students are asked to download *Zotero*, which is free citation software and *Slack*, which is a workplace and educational discussion platform. *Zotero* (both the app and the browser plugin) should be downloaded from <http://zotero.org>. Our *Slack* workspace should be downloaded or accessed here: https://join.slack.com/t/ldst399jrhono-vhz2107/shared_invite/zt-3kwggiuee-RlvgmPvQDL0xXJd83SVBUQ

ACCESSIBILITY

Students who need to use screen readers can request Word versions of all assignments (and the syllabus/course schedule) from Dr. Bezio. Students with accommodations *may* record Dr. Bezio's lectures, but *may not* record other students' comments without their explicit permission, and those who record classroom content *may not* distribute them or post them (per UR policy). Students who feel they need to record other material should arrange a conversation with Dr. Bezio about their concerns. Any students who have assignment accommodations should send their DANs to Dr. Bezio as soon as possible. **There are no exams in this course, so there is no need for exam-related accommodations.**

Students who are concerned that they may *need* accommodations (either temporary or long-term) and do not have them are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services (contact information at the end of the syllabus packet, on pages 6-7 and page 9).

All students will receive one 24 hour extension they can cash in on any written assignment other than the final thesis proposal that will not count as "late" for the specification rubric.



SPECIFICATIONS “GRADING”

This course uses **Specifications Grading**. Unlike a point-based grading system, specifications grading emphasizes feedback over grades, and evaluates students based on the amount of quality work completed over the course of the semester. Instead of receiving a grade (A-D) on each assignment in this course, students receive feedback on whether the assignment adequately demonstrates that they have met the learning goal for the assignment (“meets specifications”) or needs further revision (“does not meet specifications”). In this way, specifications grading has similarities to a pass-fail grading system, except that with specs grading, there are opportunities to revise-and-resubmit if specifications are not met to the student’s satisfaction on the first try... and students can also choose how much work they want to complete based on the letter grade they wish to achieve in the class.

Students will be given frameworks (see below) by which they will be evaluated within letter categories (A, B, C, etc.). Grade modifiers (+/-) will be used to account for different categories falling into different letter categories. For example, a student who meets the specifications for an A on the project and an A in either Participation or Short Writing Assignments, but a B in the other category will receive an A-. A student who meets specifications for Bs in both Participation and Short Writing Assignments and an A on their Project, will receive a B+, etc.

Grades for the categories are determined as follows (there will be a separate rubric shared for the proposal itself a few weeks into the semester):

	A	B	C	D
Participation	Shows up to 90% of classes and events; speaks/posts/comments and average of 3+ times per class period	Shows up to more than 75% of classes and events; speaks/posts/comments an average of twice per class period	Shows up to more than 50% of classes and events; speaks/posts/comments an average of one time per class period	Shows up to 50% or fewer of classes and events; speaks/posts/comments less than one time per class period
Research Binder	Does 95% of assigned short assignments on time	Does 80% of assigned short assignments on time OR up to 90% of assigned short assignments within two weeks of their due date	Does 65% of assigned short assignments on time OR up to 80% of short assignments within two weeks of their due date	Does 50% of assigned short assignments on time OR up to 65% of short assignments within two weeks of their due date
Thesis Proposal	Meets A specifications for 3+ content categories, and at least one of Organization/Style and no C or D categories in the Proposal rubric	Meets B specifications for 3+ content categories, and at least one of Organization/Style and no D categories in the Proposal rubric	Meets C specifications for 3+ content categories, and at least one of Organization/Style and no more than one D category in the Proposal rubric	Meets D specifications for 3+ content categories and one of Organization/Style in the Proposal rubric

Class Participation

All students are expected to contribute to class discussions. Frequent absences will impact a student's ability to participate in discussion, particularly in a seminar like this one. Students unable to participate or uncomfortable participating verbally may also participate on Slack, in the following ways:

- In the #class-participation Slack thread. This thread is for discussions about readings, research, and other related issues (including questions).
- Students *may* also send reactions or responses to readings of 300+ words directly to Dr. Bezio through a Slack private message or by email.

Note: Participation posts about a topic are only available until the *next* classtime (but can be posted any time *before* classtime on the subject for that day).

Research Binder

Throughout the semester, students will be given short assignments designed to enhance their understanding of research methods or to help them streamline their own ideas. These will be evaluated on effort, thoughtfulness, and completeness, and are expected to be due at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. These assignments should be submitted **written by hand**, either in the margins of a printed article and/or on loose leaf paper (so that they can be included in the student's research binder after they have been returned). Late assignments will impact students' ability to proceed with future assignments and are factored into the specifications for the Research Binder.

Final Thesis Proposal

This proposal is the final product of the course, and will include the student's working hypothesis on a major research question, a brief review of some of the work in the chosen subject area, a bibliography of proposed sources, and a research plan to move forward with the project over the course of the following year. This proposal should be turned in to both Dr. Bezio (via Blackboard) and the student's chosen faculty mentor. Students are able to turn in portions of the final proposal to Dr. Bezio *as soon as they wish* for evaluation against the specifications for the appropriate Thesis Proposal categories (distributed separately a few weeks into the semester).

Each category (Participation, Research Binder, and Project Proposal) makes up a portion of the students' final grades.

	A	B	C	D
Course Grade	Meets specifications for an A on the project proposal and <i>at least one</i> of the two other categories, as well as a B or higher on the third category	Meets specifications for a B or higher on the project proposal and <i>at least one</i> of the two other categories, as well as a C or higher on the third category	Meets specifications for a C or higher on the project proposal and <i>at least one</i> of the two other categories, as well as a D or higher on the third category	Meets specifications for a D or higher on the project proposal and <i>at least one</i> of the two other categories

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Students are expected to be attentive to and respectful of the professor and the ideas of their peers. This includes doing one's best to be on time to class and respecting other individuals' boundaries.

Laptops and tablets are permitted in class for the purposes of facilitating discussion and taking notes, including the use of Slack as appropriate. Students should *not* be using laptops to surf the internet or use social media. Please make sure all cell phones are silenced or turned off. Students will not be allowed to answer their phones during classtime.

All course-related materials—syllabi, assignment sheets, lectures, podcasts—are not for distribution or reproduction. Students should not share these materials online or offline without the specific permission of the instructor, including with AI software or CourseHero-type websites. Doing so is a violation of the Honor Code and UR Policy.

Because we will be using online materials, students shall not:

- Disclose, share, trade, or sell class materials (including papers, podcasts, PowerPoint slides, etc.) with/to any other person, organization, business, or institution (including AI); and/or
- Post/store these materials in a location accessible by anyone other than the student, including but not limited to social media accounts.

Students must also comply with any instructions or directions from their faculty regarding the use of such materials. Failure to abide by this policy will be a violation of the Standards of Student Conduct; such issues will be sent to the appropriate University Conduct Officer.

All written work is expected on time (barring significant contingencies or accommodations, which need to be discussed with Dr. Bezio). Technical problems (computer or email) are not an acceptable excuse for lateness: back up files on Google Drive, Box, Dropbox, and/or an external jump drive, and save often. **Students are responsible for knowing how to turn in files on Blackboard and must turn in the Research Proposal as a .docx file** (.pages, .pdf, and links to Google Docs are not acceptable formats). All other short assignments (for the Research Binder) will need to be printed out and marked by hand or written by hand.

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.

AI Policy

Students who use AI for brainstorming, research, etc. are allowed to do so with documentation of which AI, and what it was asked to do (prompt, etc.). Any use of AI to compose part or all of an assignment text is prohibited in this class (grammar *check* is permitted). Students should *not* rely on AI-generated summaries to “do the reading” for the class. No student is to turn in work that was paid-for, copied, excessively summarized without citation, created in collaboration (without permission), produced *or assisted in composition* by AI, or is otherwise not the original work of the student for any specific assignment (without explicit permission). The use of any of the above without explicit permission is a violation of the University Honor Code and will be treated as such.

Emergencies

If emergency circumstances inhibit a student from attending class or completing an assignment, the professor should be notified as soon as possible (preferably before class or the due date of the assignment). Extensions and make-ups are given at the discretion of the professor. Exams cannot be made up except under the most extenuating of circumstances. Students needing accommodations should speak to the professor. Students are expected to make safe, healthy decisions on behalf of themselves and their classmates. Students experiencing symptoms or who have a positive test result of a contagious disease (including COVID) **should not come to class** and should contact their respective dean (Richmond or Westhampton) and student health.

FOR STUDENTS STRUGGLING TO COMPLETE WORK...

If you have trouble getting your assignments in on time, starting your assignments at a reasonable hour, or focusing while doing your work OR if you are currently experiencing an illness or injury (or the aftereffects of one), you may want to seek support from *both* the Academic Skills Center **and** Student Disability Services, and talk to Dr. Bezio.

There are a *lot* of people with invisible, undiagnosed, and underdiagnosed temporary and permanent disabilities in the United States, particularly students from lower income households, communities of color, and blue collar backgrounds. Disabilities, in this context, include neurodiversity that might cause a student's brain to work in a pattern that doesn't mesh well with "traditional" higher education models; a physical impairment (like migraines) that occasionally causes challenges completing assignments; a mental illness (like anxiety or depression); or another condition that isn't *explicitly* classified as a "learning disability" or a "visible disability." Disabilities might also include long COVID, a concussion, a broken arm, or a number of other conditions that are temporary, but require support for a few weeks or a few months.



If you think—based on the above descriptions—that you might qualify for support from Disability Services, please contact them ASAP, even if you've never felt you "needed" accommodations.

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 in order 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 804-662-500.

COMMON JEPSON POLICIES

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

Honor System

The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”

studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html

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

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 do so, the following resources are available to support our students: Spiders Against Bias (an anonymous peer to peer support network that aids microaggression and bias incident survivors in connecting to different resources) and the Bias Resource Team.⁵ Additionally, this semester students are leading a series of workshops, ***Not So Slight: Combating mAcroaggressions***, for students to learn how to recognize microaggressions and how to have meaningful conversations around difficult topics in an aggression-free environment.

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 *hevruta*. *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). 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>

⁵<https://commonground.richmond.edu/contact/bias-incidents/index.html>

STUDENT RESOURCES

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

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 University of Richmond. To learn more and view service schedules and appointment times, visit wlc.richmond.edu. Available services include:

Academic Skills 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 Learning

Attend one-on-one or group consultations, workshops, and other services focused on English, academic, and/or 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 assistance for research projects.

Speech and Communication

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 Learning

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.