

LDST 101- Leadership and the Humanities -- Fall 2022

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FROM QUOTES TO QUESTIONS:

Caroline Walker Bynum: “Surely our job as teachers is to puzzle, confuse, and amaze. We must rear a new generation of students who will gaze in wonder at texts and artifacts . . . slow to project . . . quick to assume there is a significance, slow to generalize about it. For a flat, generalizing, presentist view of the past . . . makes it boring, whereas amazement yearns toward an understanding, a significance always a little beyond both our theories and our fears. Every view of things that is not wonderful is false.”

Seriously? Aren't you here to solve puzzles rather than to be puzzled? What is presentism? Can we avoid it? And, if we're not trained to generalize from particulars, that is, to come up with statements that make sense of particulars, how can we predict and control what happens? Accurate predictions and comprehensive control--shouldn't those be aims of higher education? Amazement is extracurricular; isn't it?

William Butler Yeats: “The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.”

What might Yeats have meant by “best” and by “worst”? What would those terms have to signify for you to subscribe to the truth packed into this line?

David Martin Jones: “Political leaders who do not know how to dissimulate do not know how to rule.”

Does that mean that leaders who value and practice transparency are poor rulers? Jones, here, lines up with Machiavelli, for whom rule as well as the ruler and the ruled are jeopardized by candor. But don't you want leaders as rulers to be honest with you? Do you prefer Jones' leader to Thucydides' Pericles (next quote)?

Thucydides: “Pericles . . . was their leader rather than being led by them [the Athenians], because he did not speak to please them.”

Shouldn't we expect leaders to be led by followers' preferences when, in a democracy --and ancient Athens purportedly was “the cradle of democracy”-- leaders are elected to implement what citizens want done?

George Bernard Shaw: “Democracy reads well, but it doesn't act well.”

What does it mean “to read well”? Do you agree that democracy doesn't act well? Give me examples. What might make it act better?

Martha Nussbaum: “Nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful, docile, technically trained machines rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person’s sufferings and achievements.”

Nussbaum thinks the humanities could and should serve as an antidote. Do you share her distress? If docile citizens are useful and well-trained, why should we object that, somehow, they are docile and therefore incomplete citizens? Is it fair to compare them with machines? How important is it for leaders to criticize tradition?

Aurelius Augustine: “Justice having been removed, what are kingdoms but gangs of thieves on a large scale? And what are criminal gangs but miniature kingdoms? A gang is a group of persons under the command of a leader, bound by the agreements or covenant governing the association in which plunder is divided according to a constitution of sorts. To illustrate, take the answer given by a captured pirate to Emperor Alexander the Great. When great Alexander asked why the pirate terrorized seafarers, the latter boldly replied, suggesting that his purpose and Alexander’s were identical. When I do what I do with a small ship, he said, I’m called a pirate. Because you do the same with a mighty navy, you’re called an emperor.”

If you were Alexander how would you respond to the pirate’s equation?

In this section of LDST 101, we’re going to revisit these quotes at different times and raise these questions as well as others that you’ll find in the schedule portion of the syllabus **in bold print**. We don’t ask questions because the answers lay at the foundation of leadership studies; the asking does. And conversations generated by our asking ought to problematize some ideas we take for granted and prompt confrontations with the problems and wannabe problem-solvers whom we’ll find in our assigned texts as well as in our class.

This semester we’ll use some classics and some recent literature and film to assess whether and how nationalists store up trouble for citizens and leaders. It seems timely to do so, and that issue will draw us into discussions of racism, xenophobia, and authoritarianism--all of which will constitute leadership challenges for the leaders you choose and/or become. To round the term off--since I mentioned your choosing--we’ll discuss whether democracy is the best or even a viable way to meet those challenges. Along the way, we’ll tease out the familiar and some new definitions of “idealism,” “charisma,” “populism,” “absolutism,” “fact,” “faction,” “merit,” and “meritocracy.” You’ll also be asked under what circumstances leaders would be well-advised to shock followers instead of pleasing or appeasing them. And we’ll inquire to what extent--and why--leaders should honor traditions and when they would be wise to cultivate misgivings about conventional wisdom.

Welcome!!! ***BUT... before you decide whether all this might be a good way to spend parts of your semester and strap yourselves into this course, check the next section on . . .***

REQUIREMENTS & GRADES

Lively, informed encounters with our questions, obviously, require lively and informed participation in class discussions. I expect it; the class participation grades (see below) reflect your success in meeting that expectation as well as, alas, recurring absences and unfamiliarity with assignments.

2 Papers (maximum 1,500 words): 25 pts each

Due Sept. 28 and Oct. 26 -- You'll find the paper prompts beneath the assignments in the syllabus. You must submit papers as Word doc or PDF email attachments no later than 3 PM, Tuesday before class. Double space. At the end of your submission place the word count and the student ID #s (NO NAMES, please) of all those submitting. You may collaborate and submit a single paper that reflects the contributions of as many as 4 students.

Class Participation: 10 pts

4 quizzes: 5 pts each

Due Aug. 22; Sept. 5; Oct. 17; Nov. 14 -- If you're absent the day of a quiz, submit a 500-word essay responding to that class's prompt by 5PM the day of class. There will be one question on each quiz in the form of 3 terms. You'll be asked to write no more than 2 legible, coherent, cogent sentences relating each term to the others and all 3 to a significant theme in that day's assignments. For example, let's say you're assigned the quotes at the front of the syllabus. Your quiz would list three terms: democracy, Shaw, and Pericles. And a reasonable response: "Perhaps one reason Shaw believes democracy acts badly is too many admire leaders who, as Pericles, prefer not to be led or swayed by their constituents. Yet democracies might "act" better if more leaders were candid and less concerned with consoling or comforting or pleasing their people.

Final Exam: 20 pts. Format is 5 quiz-like sets of phrases. You'll be expected to respond only to 4.

Classes will normally meet for discussion of the week's assignment and related issues for the first hour--or after the quiz, when one is scheduled. At 4PM or thereabouts, breakout groups will be asked to tackle issues related either to the first session or to the next week's assignments. After breaking for coffee or some such, the class reassembles to harvest what the breakout groups questioned or concluded. Usually, class will adjourn by 5:15 allowing you to note down what you found useful or memorable from discussions or from the instructor's presentations. To that time, laptops will remain closed. For the final, in-class portion, then you may use technology or a notebook to record your impressions. Occasionally, I'll ask you to print out your "journal," using your notes to assess my work rather than yours. Journals or printouts are submitted on request and anonymously. They are not graded. Remarks that preview the following week's assignments will either be offered before you head to your journals and/or in Panoptos posted on Blackboard, where you'll find them before you start preparation of the next class.

Several taboos: late arrivals, early departures, multitasking.

To be sure class sections are working on the same weekly assignments, I've cancelled the Monday class during Thanksgiving week and replaced it with extended office hours for those who cannot or do not elect to break early for turkey.

TEXTS

You're advised to purchase (or kindle or E-book) the following:

Thomas More, **UTOPIA**. (Available online and in most used bookstores as well as the campus bookstore and Amazon, etc.)

Wendy Brown, **WALLED STATES, WANING SOVEREIGNTY**. You'll be assigned half of this and it will be on Blackboard, but some folks like to have a book in hand.

Hannah Arendt, **EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM**.

Anne Applebaum, **TWILIGHT OF DEMOCRACY: THE SEDUCTIVE LURE OF AUTHORITARIANISM**.

William Shakespeare, **CORIOLANUS**. (Available online, of course--it's William Shakespeare, after all, but you may want to mark it up.) I'll ask you to read the first three of the play's five acts.

Robert Penn Warren, **ALL THE KING'S MEN**. Beware: do not use the restored edition (burgundy and gold cover). That would be his first not his final, prize-winning draft. I like the Harcourt edition, but Scribner's also has one.

SO-- What do we do and when do we do it?

August 24: Read Thomas More's UTOPIA, Book 1. (**QUIZ today!**)

I'll be rather longwinded here since you won't have the pleasure of watching me introduce the text and issues. Thomas More wrote this before he accepted a job with King Henry VIII of England. Book 1 seems to be the result of his contemplating just that move. Henry ran a tight ship, and his advisers were expected to tow the party line. Book 1 explains why More's fictional character would not serve a monarch under such circumstances. Friends urged Hythloday to do so--he had traveled the world--reputedly, collecting experiences that should have enabled him to offer wise counsel. Why did Hythloday decline? Why not serve a leader, whose power seemed absolute? Thomas More inserts himself into the conversation near the end to dispute the position Hythloday holds. You'll want to have a sure grasp of both More's and Hythloday's views. Pay close attention to the episode that puts Hythloday at supper with cardinal John Morton, the Lord Chancellor at the time. This week and next we'll talk about the importance and purpose of utopian literature. Why dream about perfect societies when there are so many imperfections to tackle? Enroute to that conversation, let's talk about the possibility and desirability of leaders doing damage control when doing good may be impossible.

August 31: Read Thomas More's UTOPIA, Book 2.

Hythloday is keen to tell how he came across a just-about-perfect society, Utopia. We'll be comparing his notion of perfection with yours. Are there notions that you'd import from this sixteenth-century fantasy world into our modern mess? That mess allows for freedoms that Utopians did not possess, yet they sacrificed certain liberties to achieve what looks to be social harmony. More, as we learned last week, believed that incentives were required to ensure progress, and incentives led to the stratification (and a meritocracy) that fostered competition and undermined harmony. We're just over 500 years from Hythloday's birth, and perhaps we should ask whether the freedoms and competition his Utopians sacrificed have given us the sort of leadership and political culture we want. Perhaps we ought to ask whether the route More marked out in his book instead has given us the leadership and political culture Augustine described. (Check out the Augustine quote at the front of the syllabus.)

September 7: Read Wendy Brown, WALLED STATES, WANING SOVEREIGNTY, chapters 1 and 2. Also, read Robert Frost's poem, MENDING WALL. (**QUIZ today!**)

What are walls for? Utopias apparently needed "walls" of a sort to protect their idiosyncratic ways of doing "business." Hythloday's island was--well, insular--surrounded by water. His Polylerites were permitted to innovate undisturbed because they were surrounded by mountains. So, security--walls are for security and, if you believe Wendy Brown, are symptoms of insecurity. Do you believe Brown? Frost has a different--a more abstruse--take on walls. Tell me about it. What "walls" have become most influential in your life? Which are pernicious? What should leaders (or you) do when--quoting Brown, "walls risk offending whatever remains of commitments to universal inclusion and openness"?

September 14: Read Yael Tamir, WHY NATIONALISM, chapters 7 and 17 and C. Wright Mills, THE POWER ELITE, chapters 14 and 15 (on Blackboard).

To my mind, Tamir's defense of nationalism, with which I find fault (you may not), laps all other vindications, because it acknowledges "the awful power [ethno-nationalism] exerts." The villains of her piece are "liberals" and defenders of multiculturalism. They plump for utopian societies and forget the need to "endow life with meaning" collectively. But nationalist narratives, she says, pragmatically corrected for that. "In its prime," Tamir argues, "nationalism was the great equalizer." Well let's test that; scholars tend to think of the 1950s as one prime time for nationalism in the United States. The country had tipped the balance in a world war, fighting on two fronts. Yet C. Wright Mills, writing at that time, thought leaders, the elites, and the citizens they led were rather predatory. I'll be interested in what you think of both Tamir and Mills.

September 21: Read Hannah Arendt's EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM, chapters 1, 4-6, 8, 12, 15 and the Epilogue. (Optional: watch the film "SWING KIDS.")

Arendt has been accused of having exonerated Eichmann. What's your assessment? Has she been too critical of the show trial and insufficiently critical of the man on trial? Does her account of nationalist enthusiasms vindicate or call into question Tamir's?

September 28: Read Samuel Huntington's "HISPANIC CHALLENGE" and chapter 3 of Seyla Benhabib's CLAIMS OF CULTURE (both on Blackboard); view film 9500 LIBERTY.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IYfxIM0294&t=3947s>

PAPER PROMPT: If nationalism could lead to injustices, as extremes reported in last week's reading suggest, one might ask whether lesser evils are, so to speak, affordable and critical to preserve narratives and policies that would unite some, if not all, people in a community or country (or country club). Samuel Huntington and some citizens featured in 9500 LIBERTY tend to think so. If unconvinced, you should formulate a compelling rejoinder. Benhabib helps, yet her arguments against "inegalitarianism and exclusionary practices" give little guidance to leaders who would honor cultural differences without promoting cultural isolation or "enclavism" and without encouraging "culture wars." Is Benhabib the multicultural liberal who proves Tamir's case for nationalism and against liberalism? Perhaps you should give it a try: how would you capture the benefits of nationalism and avoid its excesses? (Double-space, no more than four collaborators; no more than 1,500 words; no names. PIDs and word count at the end. **Submit by 3 PM, Tuesday, Sept. 27th as an email attachment---Word doc preferred or PDF to: pkaufman@richmond.edu)**

October 5: Read Clarence Thomas's concurring opinion in the "informed citizens" case (on Blackboard); and watch the film SELMA.

The Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Board of Education mandated school integration when previous laws led to segregation. Thomas says segregation that results from other factors does not require remediation. Today's class assesses his reasoning, which explicitly relies on the notion that the Constitution of the United States is "color blind." We can do that more comprehensively, if we also grapple with the controversies swirling around what's called "Critical Race Theory" or CRT, and its role in current debates about curricula in the high schools and current political campaigns. I'll say more about this in the Panopto, but rather than assign editorials, I'll let you prowl around the databases and familiarize yourself with the effect of CRT on the ways educators reconstruct history and the ways we've lately been electing our leaders. Of course, I'll also expect you to relate Thomas' other arguments to your experiences with school segregation, integration, and resegregation. After viewing SELMA, tell me whether you think that Jepson should change the title of its required course, "Justice AND Civil Society" to "Justice OR Civil Society."

October 12: Fall break and extended office hours

October 19: Read Applebaum's TWILIGHT OF DEMOCRACY, chapters 1-5. **(QUIZ today!)**

The Berlin Wall came down and many theorists in the 1990s endorsed the view Francis Fukuyama popularized in his almost ecstatic END OF HISTORY: for a long stretch, civilization had seen the end of illiberal, one-party states. Applebaum tells what happened next--and after that--and why. It's clearly

not a “pretty” story, but is it accurate? Was “liberalism” a “god that failed” or is liberal democracy too flawed to be god-like? You might want to save that second question for our discussion of the next assignment, but see if you can come up with a preliminary response. Applebaum will name and shame various leaders for succumbing to an authoritarian impulse, but--really--aren’t ordinary people to blame? Let’s also see if our sessions on racism, immigration, and xenophobia add to what you learn here about “the authoritarian impulse[s]” on display.

October 26: Read Shakespeare’s play CORIOLANUS, acts 1-3, and watch the Fiennes film.

What’s a humanities course without a little Shakespeare? We’re still talking about democracy and authoritarianism, but, in CORIOLANUS, he’ll take you back to the first decade of the Roman republic. I’ll supply the context in the Panopto, but when we get to class, we’ll mix and match commentary about democracy and leadership from different periods. Prepare, please, by using the quotes at the front of the syllabus to evaluate the leadership styles on display in play: those of Coriolanus, the tribunes--Sicinius and Brutus--and the senate. Attend to differences between the text and the film to ensure your references apply correctly to one or the other or both. Conclude with your judgment about the value of candor (or transparency) and deception, manipulation, and cunning or guile in leadership.

PAPER PROMPT: We’re still talking about democracy and authoritarianism, but, in CORIOLANUS, Shakespeare takes you back to the first decades of Rome’s republic. I’ll supply the context in the panopto; your task in the paper is to use several quotes at the front of the syllabus to evaluate the leadership styles on display in play: those of Coriolanus and the tribunes--Sicinius and Brutus. If you value candor and transparency in your leaders, shouldn’t Coriolanus, who pulls no punches, be a perfect candidate? Alas, but if you value effectiveness, the tribunes outclass him. Your dilemma. (Double-space, no more than four collaborators; no more than 1,500 words; no names. PIDs and word count at the end. **Submit by 3 PM, Tuesday, Oct. 25th as an email attachment---Word doc preferred or PDF—to: pkaufman@richmond.edu)**

November 2: Read Penn Warren’s ALL THE KING’S MEN, chapters 1-3.

Willie Stark is governor in chapters 1 and 3; chapter 2 is a flashback, sort of a prelude to his rise to power and his evolution--some say, his transition from idealist to realist. Use what you learn about Stark and what you’ve come to think about the relationship between democracy and authoritarianism after discussing Applebaum and Shakespeare as well as from other assignments, if you wish, to evaluate Stark’s leadership and his justifications for it.

November 9: Read ALL THE KING’S MEN, chapters 8 and 9 and Ari Adut’s introduction to his REIGN OF APPEARANCES (on Blackboard).

In class and on the Panopto, I'll try to backfill with parts of the chapters of KING'S MEN you've not been assigned, but I'm no novelist, so, anticipating my hack job, you may just want to make the novel--all the chapters--your business and pleasure this week. In class, we'll discuss Stark's fate and the parts Jack Burden, Adam Stanton, and Anne Stanton play in the novel, but you'd be well-advised, once again, to check the quotes at the front of the syllabus to see which apply to the portions you covered. As for Adut, let's define "the public sphere" and discuss the ways leaders manipulate it as well as the ways a reformed public discourse might help make for better leadership in commerce and government.

November 16: Read the ECONOMIST editorial on "The New McCarthyism," and HARPER's article, Barack Obama Inc." (on Blackboard); and view the 2004 speeches of Barack Obama and Al Sharpton at the Democratic National Convention.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueMNqdB1QIE&t=264s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SBFREiCkF8>

(QUIZ today!)

Sitting here in June, I'm having trouble predicting what democratic politics in the United States will be like when we reach this class. Hence, I've tried to pick short readings and videos that reflect on the perils and promise of political action and inaction during this century while bringing up to date our work on democracy and authoritarianism. Ideally, what you find here will supplement what's gone before, but, if developments dictate, I'll make changes. As for questions or considerations, compare the speeches given by Sharpton and Obama, using the terms idealistic and realistic. Of which early readings does the editorial on McCarthy remind you? Which and why? How does the piece on "Obama Inc." change or confirm the way you think about the wedding between political and commercial cultures? Has it made for a happy marriage? If not, how do we dissolve it?

November 21-22: Extended office hours; no class.

November 30: Read chapter 9 on "Maxims or Axioms" in David Martin Jones' HISTORY'S FOOLS; and read Mark Edmundson's "Liberal Education" (both on Blackboard).

Jones complains about "the liberal, normative, rationalist approach" to leadership; woops, what's left? Edmundson complains about universities, you, and me. What's our defense? Is there one? Are we guilty?