



LDST 390 *Humility as a Political Leadership Virtue*
Fall 2022 COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Ken Ruscio

Course Information: LDST 390

Class Meeting Time: TR 10:30-11:45 am

Email: kruscio@richmond.edu

Office: Jepson Hall, Room 233

Office Hours: By appointment or office hours (usually 10:00-noon and 1:00-3:00, Wednesdays)

Course Description:

This course asks how—or even whether—humility is necessary for good democratic leadership. To answer that question we need to understand democracy as a form of government and the type of leaders best suited to rule within a democracy. The topic of humility is therefore merely our gateway into the fundamental challenge of defining “good democratic leadership.” How must the character and qualities of a leader align with the spirit and philosophy of the governing system? Is humility one of the virtues necessary for effective and legitimate leadership in a democracy?

Course Objectives and Overview:

Many college courses introduce students to a defined body of knowledge, received wisdom from scholars, evidence from research, and well-tested discussions in standard texts. The journey is like traveling along an interstate, passing mile markers, following a straight path, making an occasional stop, and eventually reaching a predetermined destination.

This course is more like hiking a winding mountain trail. There will be steep sections followed by level patches. There will be side-trips along the way, with opportunities to take advantage of scenic views and historical markers. We will occasionally backtrack to make sure we didn’t leave anything behind at previous stops. We will encounter unanticipated detours, perhaps caused by a surprise landslide blocking the trail. In the end, however, we will reach our destination and, I hope, marvel at a vista no one has seen before.

We will be looking at a question not well addressed, at least directly, in the literature on leadership or democracy. The answers are not yet apparent. The course will be an investigation. It will draw from a variety of sources, especially biography, history, political philosophy, and psychology. In the end, students (and the instructor) should arrive at some conclusions about the role of humility in leadership, but even more about the character, spirit, and philosophy of democracy itself.

Required Texts and Readings:

There are four books required for the course.

1. *On Thinking Institutionally*. Hugh Hecló (Columbia, 2008)
2. *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What you Don’t Know*. Adam Grant (Viking, 2021)
3. *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures*. Max Weber (NYRB, 2020)
4. *A Thousand Small Sanities: The Moral Adventure of Liberalism*. Adam Gopnik (Basic Books, 2019)

In addition to the assigned books, there will be several articles, reports, and documents available on Blackboard and/or through links provided by the instructor. Note, too, that there are selections from *The Federalist Papers* and from deTocqueville's *Democracy in America*, books you may have used in other courses in case you wish to have them available for this course as well.

I also strongly recommend—to the point of virtually requiring—a daily reading of a main news source such *The Wall St Journal*, *the New York Times*, or *The Washington Post*. They can be accessed for free through the University Library. We will always reserve the option of using class time to discuss an important development that reflects some of the key questions of the course. If you have a story you'd like to have us discuss, you should always feel free to let me know in advance of class, even if it just a few minutes in advance. That would be considered a strong indication of “class engagement” (see below.)

Grading:

The assignments are designed to help you understand, interpret and critique the material.

20% Class Engagement: *active* attendance; evidence that you have read carefully the assigned material; and weekly reactions to questions that arise during our class sessions or to items you've observed in the political world. The weekly reactions must be submitted by email by noon on Friday of each week. These need not be lengthy but they should be thoughtful and reflective. They will not be individually graded but I will typically offer comments and reactions.

20% Group project. The class will be divided into three groups to profile three leaders. There will be a written report as well as a class presentation. One single grade will be given for the project, encompassing both the written product and the presentation, and all group members will receive that grade. We will discuss this in detail as the time for the project approaches.

20% Quiz #1: This will be an essay/short answer exam based on the material covered in the first part of the course.

20% Quiz #2: Another essay/short answer exam based on material covered in the second part of the course.

20% Final Summary Paper. Towards the end of the course, we will attempt to integrate several of the points we addressed throughout the semester. I will ask you to provide a kind of personal “grand” reflection on the question of humility in democratic leadership. It will not be a research paper, but it will call upon you to look back on the work of the semester, identify point(s) that captured your curiosity or attention, and ultimately offer some personal perspectives on leadership in contemporary democracy. As you will see, the final section of the course will highlight two fundamental questions related to humility in a democracy—questions that will have emerged from our work during the earlier parts of the course. You could focus on either or even both of those questions, but I also want to give you the flexibility to write an informed, creative summary statement that is meaningful for you.

The Format of Class Sessions and “rules of the road:”

Because this is a class heavily dependent on discussion and mutual efforts to educate each other, I ask that you minimize in-class distractions—in the form of electronic devices, primarily.

If you cannot attend a class because of illness or an unavoidable conflict, you must let me know ahead of time. If you do not let me know in such cases, it will adversely affect your grade for class engagement.

When you are in class, I will assume you have read the material. That doesn't mean you always understand it, but it will be unfair to your fellow classmates if you come to class intending to “free-ride” on the efforts of others. If for some reason you have not been able to read the material, you should let me know ahead of time so that we can avoid those awkward moments when I turn to you and ask what you think and you have no idea.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:

- Aug. 23 Introductions
- Aug. 26 First Impressions...*"a bent in one's disposition"*
- Heclo, pp. 81-89 (our "methodology" for the course.)
 - Mark Canada, "Lessons on Humility and truth-seeking from Benjamin Franklin," *The Conversation*, February 14, 2021. <https://theconversation.com/talking-politics-in-2021-lessons-on-humility-and-truth-seeking-from-benjamin-franklin-153924>
 - Chip Cutter, "Rich Lesser, CEO Whisperer, on his toughest moments," *Wall Street Journal*, June 25, 2021.
- Aug. 30 A Basic (Mis)perception...*"courage of convictions and the willingness to listen and learn"*
- Jason Gay, "A conversation with grace and humility," *Wall Street Journal*. June 10, 2022
 - Tish Harrison Warren, "America has a scorn problem," NYT. May 15, 2022
 - Michael Lewis podcast, "Against the Rules," Season 3, Episode 7. "The Person who knows."
- Sept. 1 Profile 1: George Washington, *"...faults of my incompetent abilities."*
- Farewell Address <https://www.ushistory.org/documents/farewelladdress.htm>
- Sept. 6 Profile 2: Thomas Jefferson, *"...indulgence for my own errors."*
- First Inaugural Address <https://jeffersonpapers.princeton.edu/selected-documents/first-inaugural-address-0>
 - Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/virginia-statute-religious-freedom>
 - Heclo, *Thinking Institutionally*, pp. 109-128
- Sept. 8 Profile 3: Abraham Lincoln, *"...this task of gratitude."*
- The Lyceum Address <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.htm>
 - Heclo, *Thinking Institutionally*, pp. 98-109
 - First Inaugural <http://144.208.79.222/~abraham21/alo/lincoln/speeches/1inaug.htm>
- Sept 13 The Characteristics of Democracy, *"...the aim of every political constitution."*
- *The Federalist Papers* #1, 57, and 68 (various sources and Blackboard site)
- Sept. 15 Democracy in America, *"...great privilege (is) to have repairable mistakes."*
- DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America*:
Vol. 1, part two, chapter 6: "...The Real Advantages."
Vol. 2, part two, chapter 4: "...Combat Individualism."
Vol. 2, part two, chapter 8: "...self-interest well understood."

- Sept. 20 Isaiah Berlin, “...it is on earth that we live.”
- “The Pursuit of the Ideal” (PDF on Blackboard site)
- Sept. 22 Adam Gopnik, “*Democracy as a Rhinoceros.*”
- *A Thousand Small Sanities*, pp.1-82
- Sept. 27 **Quiz #1**
- Sept. 29 Case Study #1: Oliver Wendell Holmes and *Abrams v. U.S.* (1919)
- <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/250/616>
- Oct. 4 Intellectual Humility, “...I err, therefore I learn.”
- Adam Grant, *Think Again*, chapters 9 and 10. (pp. 185-224)
- Oct. 6 Case Study #2: The Cuban Missile Crisis
- We will hear a podcast, and watch a film, *Thirteen Days in October*
- Oct. 11 Break
- Oct. 13 (a) Trust; (b) Public Reason; (c) Discussion of Group Projects
- Hecló, *Thinking Institutionally*, chapters 1 and 2
- Oct. 18, 20, and 25: Our Group Presentations
- Oct. 27 Confident Humility
- Adam Grant, *Think Again*, chapters 1-4
- Nov. 1 Interpersonal Rethinking
- Adam Grant, *Think Again*, chapters 5-7
- Nov. 8 Polarization and Binary Bias
- Adam Grant, *Think Again*, chapter 8
 - Finkel, et. al, “Political Sectarianism in America,” *Science*, October 30, 2020. pp. 533-536
- Nov. 10 **Quiz #2**

Nov. 15 Problems to solve. Episode I

- Michael Ignatieff, *Fire and Ashes: Success and Failure in Politics*, chps 9-10, (PDF on Blackboard)
- Václav Havel, *Politics, Morality & Civility*. The Trinity Forum Reading.

Nov. 17 Episode II:

- Paul Woodruff, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue*, chapter 10 (PDF on Blackboard)

Nov. 22 Preliminary Final Reflection

Nov. 29 Episode III:

- Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures: The Politician's Work*, pp. 45-115
- Hecló, *Thinking Institutionally*, Chapter 5

Dec. 2 Episode IV:

- Nan Keohane, "On Leadership," *Perspectives on Politics*, December 2005, pp. 705-722 (PDF on Blackboard)

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.

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.

disability.richmond.edu/

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 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.

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://inclusion.richmond.edu/>

ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Hope N. Walton, Director Academic Skills

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

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 Mancastropa \(rmancast@richmond.edu\)](mailto:rmancast@richmond.edu) and [Hope Walton \(hw Walton@richmond.edu\)](mailto:hw Walton@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](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.

Speech Center (speech.richmond.edu or 287-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations. Remote practice sessions can be arranged; we look forward to meeting your public speaking needs.

Writing Center (writing.richmond.edu 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.