# LDST 300: Theories and Models of Leadership

# SPRING 2025

"It is theory which decides what can be observed"
–Einstein, 1926

"There is nothing so practical as a good theory"
-Lewin, 1945

| | |
|---|---|
| **SECTION 03:** | Wed/Fri 10:30-11:45am |
| **LOCATION:** | Jepson 102 |
| **CLASS WEBSITE:** | https://blackboard.richmond.edu |
| | |
| **INSTRUCTOR**: | Dr. Chris von Rueden |
| **EMAIL:** | cvonrued@richmond.edu |
| **OFFICE:** | Jepson Hall 235 |
| **OFFICE HOURS:** | Wed/Fri 9:00-10:30am or by appointment at a different time |

**ZOOM:**    https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84575502410?pwd=K2E3N2NnZGxVaHpOaU9TVnArbStlQT09
4wLYKJ (password)

---

**Course Description:**

This course builds on **LDST 102**, which approaches leadership from the perspective of the social sciences (e.g. psychology, economics, anthropology, political science). Relative to non-science, science stresses data collection for generating knowledge, but scientists also rely on theory to guide them in collecting and interpreting data. Knowledge progresses by creating, refining, and/or discarding theories, based on available data. We will review many of the theories developed in the past 50 years in the scientific study of leadership, evaluating them in terms of their scientific merit. To do so, we will read studies of leadership from many different settings, including non-human societies, small groups in the laboratory, small-scale societies, nation-state politics, sports, medicine, and business.

This course also builds on **LDST 249** (or other qualifying data analysis courses). Over the semester, students will fuse their study of leadership theory with their methods training to investigate leadership in an organization on campus. Several class periods will be devoted to study design and data analysis review.

This course also satisfies the general education **Social Inquiry** requirement, via the following learning outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of theories and/or patterns of human behavior appropriate to the discipline.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate methods to analyze human behavior.
3. Students will assess the limitations of the theories, explanations, and methods they study.

**Course Format:**

Class time will consist of a mix of lecture and discussion. Lecture and discussion will build off assigned **readings, which must be completed BEFORE the day they are listed** (see Reading Assignments below). Readings are available on Blackboard or in links provided. The readings for this course consist primarily of empirical social science articles (see Reading Assignments below). All of the readings will be available online or through BlackBoard.

**BEFORE most class periods, you must also complete a quiz (on Blackboard)** on the readings assigned for that class day. During class, I strongly encourage you to comment, ask a question, or provoke discussion at any time. Recent lecture slides will become available on Blackboard as a powerpoint file. I ask that you not leave during class-time unless you are in physical discomfort. **Use the bathrooms before you arrive to class.**

---

**How you will be graded:**

1. **Discussion** (15% of grade)

   Your discussion grade will depend on you attending class, attending class on time, frequently participating in discussions, not leaving to use the bathroom during class, attending Jepson Forum talks (unless you notify me of an outstanding commitment; see Class Schedule and Assignments section of the syllabus), presenting on readings when scheduled to do so, and presenting on your final project. **You may miss 3 classes (for any reason, including illness) without a penalty.**

Students will present on readings according to their presentation number (see bolded numbers following most readings in the Class Schedule and Assignments section). Sign up for your presentation number here (be sure to first select the appropriate class section tab): https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aAl7TIEIyCB2TRNCReI_qMJJM8eAXYYYuTK5HW wGaMI/edit?usp=sharing

The presenter **whose number is listed first** should:
- identify and describe the theory (theories) in the reading
- describe the study design and data analysis (if the reading has an empirical component); I will help you interpret any statistical results
- prepare one question to ask class members, that asks for clarification on some aspect of the theory, study design, or data analysis

The presenter **whose number is listed second** should:
- briefly discuss the conclusions of the article
- connect to theories we've discussed previously
- prepare one question to ask class members, that connects the reading to current issues or events

Presentations should last **no more than 10 minutes,** including your leading of discussion surrounding your prepared question. Also, use online presentation software (**paste your presentation link to the presentation sign-up google doc before the start of class, and make sure you make the link publicly available**). You can contact me before you are due to present if you want guidance, but don't feel like you need to be an expert. I will not grade the accuracy of the presentations, but the effort you put into them and how well you address the presentation requirements will factor into your discussion grade.

2. **Quizzes** (20% of grade)

By the start of most class periods you will take a short quiz (on Blackboard) on the readings assigned for that class day (see Class Schedule and Assignments). Quizzes are open-book and can be completed with the assistance of other students currently in the class. Quizzes become available online at the end of the previous class. The quizzes will consist of multiple choice or short answer questions. You have 30 minutes to take each quiz, and you must complete each quiz in one sitting. You are not able to attempt the same quiz more than once. At the end of the semester, you may drop your 2 lowest quiz grades. **Missed quizzes (for any reason) count towards the 2 you may drop**.

3. **Midterm Exam** (20% of grade)

The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions having you compare and contrast material we've read and discussed.

4. **Final Paper** (25% of grade)

Over the semester, you will work in **groups of two to three** to complete an assessment of a student organization on campus. In consultation with me, you will choose an organization (e.g. academic club, music group, sorority, athletic team, cultural organization, etc.), which you will observe over the course of **two or more meetings** and whose members you will interview. As a class, we will discuss methods of observing and interviewing people. We will also discuss the process of getting consent for your research from the organization you study.

Based on your observations and interviews and guided by theory we've discussed in class, you will write a paper with your group members that draws conclusions about leader-follower relationships within the organization. More specifically, **the paper should include**:

1. description of how leadership operates (whether officially or unofficially) within your organization
2. analysis of the traits and/or behaviors of leaders, which depend on the theory you're testing and the specific predictions you derive from that theory
3. leadership recommendations for the organization, given its goals and the situations in which group members interact

The paper **must cite two or more readings from class and at least one reading not from the class reading** list. Wikipedia and non-scholarly websites are not valid bibliographic sources for papers written in this class.

The paper should include a minimum of 10 pages (double spaced, 12-point font) and **structured into seven sections**:

1. Title page, in which you list your names and the title of your paper
2. Abstract, in which you mention in no more than 6 sentences the organization you studied, the theory motivating your research, your predictions, your methods, and your conclusions.
3. Introduction, in which you introduce the leadership theory (theories) motivating your research, describe the organization you are studying, and present your prediction(s).
4. Methods, in which you describe how you observed your organization and interviewed its members, and how you analyzed your data.
5. Results, in which you describe what you found (**should include graphs, descriptive statistics, and results of at least one inferential statistical test**).
6. Discussion, in which you evaluate your prediction(s) in light of your findings, tie your findings back to theory, and provide recommendations for the organization you studied

7. References, in which you list your cited articles (in-text citations and the reference list should be in APA format: https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide

The paper will be **graded based on the following criteria**:

- followed instructions for the paper sections (listed above)
- appropriate research methods and statistical test(s)
- logical and well-organized defense of the prediction(s)
- accurate use of theory from class
- careful interpretation of your results

Two additional assignments will accompany your final paper: a peer review of your fellow group members, and informal presentations on your research to the class. The latter are ungraded, but low effort will negatively impact your Discussion grade. Further details about the final paper will be provided throughout the semester, but key dates to remember are:

- Mar 5: in-class discussion of group projects
- Mar. 26 (by 10:30am on Blackboard): organization selection due; human subjects training due
- Apr. 4 (by 10:30am on Blackboard): prediction(s) due
- Apr. 23, 25: in-class presentations
- Apr. 27 (by 5pm on Blackboard): final paper due

5. **Final Exam** (20% of grade)

The final exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions having you compare and contrast material we've read and discussed. The final exam is cumulative but will emphasize the latter half of the course.

---

**Notes:**

1. **COVID-19/Flu**: If you have any symptoms that may indicate COVID-19 or flu (e.g. cough, aches, unusual fatigue) do not come to class that day and get tested for COVID-19. I will help you make up the material you missed.

2. **Generative AI**: The Honor Code prohibits the use of any unauthorized assistance on assignments. For this course, the use of generative artificial intelligence tools (such as but not limited to ChatGPT, Bard, DALL-E, AlphaCode, Stable Diffusion, Synthesia, Cohere Generate) is considered unauthorized assistance, and using them in connection with any assignment that you submit to me **will be an Honor Code violation**. This includes the use of generative AI for any stage of the assignment from conception to completion.

3. **Plagiarism/Cheating/Honor System**: Per the Honor System, you pledge with each assignment you submit that you "have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance". 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), or is otherwise not the original work of the student for the specific assignment (without explicit permission). For this course, unauthorized assistance **also includes use of AI at any stage of an assignment, or consultation of tests or quizzes provided by students from past classes**.
   https://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/pdfs/statutes.pdf

4. **Electronic Devices**: laptop computers and phones are in general **not allowed** during classtime (excepting a disability accommodation requiring use of a laptop computer to take notes). You may use a tablet if it is kept flat on your desk/table, for purposes of notetaking or to refer to notes when presenting. On some occasions I may ask everyone to bring a laptop or tablet to class, if we have an activity planned that requires their use.

5. **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

6. **Religious Accommodation**: Students should notify me within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.
   registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html

7. **Disability Accommodation**: Students who are approved for academic accommodations must: 1) Submit their Disability Accommodation Notice (DAN) to me via the Disability Services Student Portal (sl.richmond.edu/be), and 2) Talk with me to create an accommodation implementation plan within the first two weeks of classes.

---

## Campus Resources:

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.

**Weinstein Learning Center** (https://wlc.richmond.edu/):
- **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.

**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, skills-building classes, therapy groups, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

**Disability Services:** (disability.richmond.edu): Students who are experiencing a barrier to access due to a disability and/or temporary condition are encouraged to apply for accommodations. Disability Services can be reached at disability@richmond.edu or 804-662-5001.

---

## Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

### PART 1: WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Jan 15          **Introductions**

Jan 17          **Defining Leadership**
- *Reading*: Rothman, J. (2016, Feb. 29). Shut up and sit down: why the leadership industry rules. *The New Yorker*. http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/02/29/our-dangerous-leadership-obsession

Jan 22          **Evolution of Leadership**
- *Reading*: King, A., et al. (2009). The origins and evolution of leadership. *Current Biology*, 19, R911-R916. **1, 2**

- *Quiz*

Jan 22     **Attend JEPSON LEADERSHIP FORUM** (7pm, Modlin Center)

Jan 24     **Leadership Theory**
- *Reading*: Forsyth, D.R. (2016). The nature and function of theories in the study of leadership. Working paper, Jepson School of Leadership Studies.
- *Quiz*
- *Handout #1 (to do in class)*

## PART 2: DOES LEADERSHIP MATTER?

Jan 29     **In-class game (bring laptop)**

Jan 31     **Leadership in Laboratory Experiments**
- *Reading*: Harrell, A. & Simpson, B. (2016). The dynamics of prosocial leadership: power and influence in collective action groups. *Social Forces*, 94, 1283-1308. **3, 4**
- *Quiz*

Feb 5     **Leadership in the Real World**
- *Reading*: Jervis, R. (2013). Do leaders matter and how would we know? *Security Studies*, 22, 153-179. **5, 6**
- *Reading*: Harris School of Public Policy (Feb. 24, 2021). Leaders in sports, business, and politics get credit— and blame. How much do they really deserve? *UChicago News*. https://news.uchicago.edu/story/leaders-sports-business-and-politics-get-credit-and-blame-how-much-do-they-really-deserve
- *Quiz*

## PART 3: LEADER TRAITS

Feb 7     **Heritability**
- *Reading*: Florczak, C., et al. (2024). Dynamics in the heritability of leadership role occupancy: Evidence from a three-wave twin sample. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 35, 101838. **7, 8**
- *Quiz*

Feb 11     **Attend JEPSON LEADERSHIP FORUM** (7pm, Queally Center)

Feb 12     **Physical Appearance**
- *Reading*: Antonakis, J. & Eubanks, D. (2017). Looking leadership in the face. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 26, 270-275. **9, 10**

- *Quiz*

**Feb 14**  **Personality**
- *Reading*: Anderson, C. et al. (2020). People with disagreeable personalities (selfish, combative, and manipulative) do not have an advantage in pursuing power at work. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 117, 22780-22786. **11, 12**
- *Reading*: Edelson, M. et al. (2018). Computational and neurobiological foundations of leadership decisions. *Science*, 361, eaat0036 (**read summary page only**).
- *Quiz*

**Feb 19**  **Gender**
- *Reading*: Eckel, C. et al. (2020). The gender leadership gap: insights from experiments. In A. Chaudhuri (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Experimental Economics* (pp. 137-162). ElgarOnline. **13, 14**
- *Quiz*

<div align="center">**PART 4: LEADER BEHAVIOR**</div>

**Feb 21**  **Non-Verbal Behavior**
- *Reading*: Cheng, J. et al. (2023). Eye gaze and visual attention as a window into leadership and followership: A review of empirical insights and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 34, 101654. **15, 16**
- *Quiz*

**Feb 26**  **Transformational Leadership / Charisma**
- *Reading*: Bass, B. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18, 19-31. **17, 18**
- *Reading*: Antonakis, J. et al. (June 2012). Learning charisma. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2012/06/learning-charisma-2
- *Quiz*

**Feb 28**  **Procedural Fairness**
- *Reading*: Boggild, T. & Petersen, M.B. (2015). The evolved functions of procedural fairness: an adaptation for politics. In T. Shackelford & R. Hansen (Eds.) *The Evolution of Morality* (pp. 247-276). Switzerland: Springer. **2, 1**
- *Quiz*

**Mar 4**  **Attend JEPSON LEADERSHIP FORUM** (7pm, Queally Center)

Mar 5        **Group Project Introduction / Review for Midterm Exam**

Mar 7        **MIDTERM EXAM (in the classroom, on Blackboard)**

Mar 12       **NO CLASS**

Mar 14       **NO CLASS**

<div align="center">

**PART 5: DOING SOCIAL SCIENCE**

</div>

Mar 19       **Gathering Data**
- *Reading*: Simon, C. (Oct. 5, 2014). Berkson's Paradox: are handsome men really jerks? *Mathemathinking*: http://corysimon.github.io/articles/berksons-paradox-are-handsome-men-really-jerks/
- *Quiz*
- *Handout #2* (to do in class; add your observation assignment data to the googlesheet **by 8pm on Mar 20**)

Mar 21       **Analyzing Data**
- *Reading*: Bergstrom, C. & West, J. (2020). The susceptibility of science. In *Calling Bullshit* (pp. 206-241). Random House.
- *Quiz*
- *Handout #3* (to do in class)

<div align="center">

**PART 6: SITUATIONAL FACTORS**

</div>

Mar 26       **Situations that Favor Empowering Leaders**
- *Reading*: Sims, H. et al. (2009). When should a leader be directive or empowering? How to develop your own situational theory of leadership. *Business Horizons*, 52, 149-158. **4, 3**
- *Quiz*
- *Group Project*: organization selection due; human subjects training due (submit on Blackboard)

Mar 28       **Situations that Favor Populist Leaders**
- *Reading*: Gelfand, M. & Lorente, R. (2022). Threat, tightness, and the evolutionary appeal of populist leaders. In *The Psychology of Populism*. **6, 5**
- *Quiz*

Apr 2        **Situations that Favor Leader Corruption**

- *Reading*: Maner, J. & Mead, N. (2010). The essential tension between leadership and power: when leaders sacrifice group goals for the sake of self-interest. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99, 482-497. **8, 7**
- *Quiz*

### PART 7: SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL NORMS

Apr 4    **Social Identity Theory**
- *Reading*: Mols, F., et al. (2023). The social identity approach to political leadership. In L. Huddie et al. (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (pp. 804-842). New York: Oxford University Press. **10, 9**
- *Quiz*
- *Group Project*:  prediction(s) due (on Blackboard)

Apr 9    **Gender Norms**
- *Reading*: Eagly, A. (2020). Once more: the rise of female leaders. *APA Research Brief*. https://www.apa.org/topics/women-girls/female-leaders **12, 11**
- *Quiz*

Apr 11    **Individualist vs. Collectivist Norms**
- *Reading*: Lu, J. et al. (2020). Why East Asians but not South Asians are underrepresented in leadership positions in the United States. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 117, 4590-4600. **14, 13**
- *Quiz*

### PART 8: GLOBAL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Apr 16    **Climate Change**
- *Reading*: Kinzig, A. et al. (2013). Social norms and global environmental challenges: the complex interaction of behaviors, values, and policy. *BioScience* 63, 164-175. **16, 15**
- *Quiz*

Apr 18    **Democratic Backsliding**
- *Reading*: Nyhan & Titiunik (2024). Public opinion alone won't save democracy. *Science,* 386, 268-270. **18, 17**
- *Reading*: Rau, E. & Stokes, S. (2025). Income inequality and the erosion of democracy in the twenty-first century. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 122, e2422543121. **18, 17**

- *Quiz*

Apr 23       **Project Presentations**

Apr 25       **Project Presentations and Review for FINAL EXAM**

Apr 27       **FINAL PAPER due** (by 5pm, on Blackboard)

Apr 29       **FINAL EXAM** (9am-12pm, in classroom, on Blackboard)