

# GREAT TEXTS IN LEADERSHIP

Great Texts 3350-01  
Fall 2005  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 p.m.  
Memorial 120

Dr. Scott H. Moore, Instructor

In this course we will be *reading Greats* with an eye toward better understanding leadership. This most promising new venue for leadership education is in reality one of the very oldest. The reading, study, and discussion of the “great texts” of literature, philosophy, and politics offers a substantial and insightful alternative to the cliché-ridden, short-term utilitarianism of so much contemporary leadership education. Some of the texts we will be reading would have been understood as essential reading for generations of great leaders. Though sometimes overlooked as obscure, irrelevant, or difficult to understand, these great texts (or “Greats”) are anything but; they are exciting, provocative, insightful, and contain a wealth of resources for leadership education. The benefits accrued from a leadership education based in Greats are manifold; you will benefit both from the *content learned* and from the *manner of study* required.

In terms of content, you will be confronted with classic models of decision-making, with concrete historical examples of good and bad leadership, with sustained reflection and argumentation on legitimate and illegitimate means and ends of action, with the prevalence of self-deception, naiveté, and overconfidence, and with an astute understanding of the role of habit and character formation. Since the great authors frequently disagree about the most important “matters that matter,” you must also confront difficult choices between (apparently) equally compelling but contradictory options. This is the world within which real leaders find themselves.

In terms of the manner of study for this course, you will be required to read complex, demanding works. This will require perseverance, a willingness to master concepts and look up references which you may not have previously mastered. The very reading and study of these texts equips us with essential leadership skills in logic, rhetoric, analysis, interpretation, and imagination. This course will also be discussion-based, and you must, consequently, come to class prepared to argue for your point of view against competing perspectives.

It is also my belief that effective education for leadership through reading Greats models the very best education in general by overcoming the traditional academic barriers between “liberal” and “professional” education. Great leaders have great minds formed in the crucible of what Matthew Arnold called “the best that has been thought and said.” There are few better resources for effective leadership education than the focused examination of Greats.

In a famous letter to Francesco Vettori (December 10, 1513), Niccolò Machiavelli casually mentions that he has just finished writing *The Prince*, and he explains how he has learned about leadership. He writes, “When evening is come . . . I enter the ancient courts of ancient men, where, received by them lovingly, I feed on the food that alone is mine and that I was born for. There I am not ashamed to speak with them and to ask them the reason for their actions; and they in their humanity reply to me. And for the space of four hours I feel no boredom, I forget every pain, I do not fear poverty, death does not frighten me. I deliver myself entirely to them.”

Did Machiavelli learn his lessons correctly? One of our tasks this semester will be to answer that question. On any account, we too will converse with the ancients in an attempt to “learn the reasons for their actions.” Such knowledge not only has the salutary effect of enabling us not to fear poverty, pain, or death, but also of instructing us in the ways of some of the greatest of minds, the most able of leaders, and the most enchanting of fictional characters. We will see their strengths and their weaknesses. We will learn from their mistakes. We will learn how to cultivate their virtues and avoid their vices.

I believe that reading and discussing these texts can become one of the most fruitful and exciting endeavors of your undergraduate career. It will certainly make us better human beings and, thus, more able leaders. I look forward to getting to know you and discussing these all-important “matters that matter.” Peace and Godspeed.

#### **OFFICE INFORMATION**

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Office hours: M-W 3:30-5:00 and by appointment

#### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Penguin, 0-14-044949-3
- Plutarch, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Penguin, 0140440844
- Cicero, *On Obligations*, Oxford, 0-19-283968-3
- Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Penguin, 0-14-071478-2
- Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part II*, Penguin, 0-14-071457-X
- Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Penguin, 0-14-071473-1
- Jane Austen, *Emma*, Oxford, 0192802372
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chicago, 0-226-50044-6
- Flannery O'Connor, *A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories*, Harvest Books, 0156364654

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 2 exams (a mid-term and a final examination). Each exam will count 20% of the total grade and will be administered orally. You will schedule an appointment with the professor over a designated two-day period of time.
- 2 brief essays (6-8 pages) on a leadership topic which emerges from the texts we are reading. The first essay must utilize Aristotle, Plutarch, or Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. The second essay is open (though it must utilize a different author from your first essay). Essays will be read orally to the professor over designated two-day periods. Bring two copies of the essay to your appointment. Each essay will also count 20% of the total grade.
- Quizzes. There will be daily quizzes over the reading material. Quizzes will not be interpretative but will include language, character, setting, and plot identification. (10% of grade)
  - *Word list substitution*: On any given day in which we have a quiz, you can submit—to substitute for the quiz—a list of ten difficult words or terms (or phrases from other languages) which you have discovered in the reading. To get full credit, the words must be sufficiently difficult to merit inquiry, should be referenced in the text, and defined. You can earn one point per term (or phrase) up to a maximum of 10 points for the quiz.
- Participation grade (10% of grade). The participation grade is designed to enhance the students' averages. Take advantage of this opportunity.

## TEST POLICY

The exams will be based on the readings, any handouts, the lectures, class discussions, and materials made available on the web. They will require you to think and communicate well. Make-up exams will be given only in the case of three kinds of emergencies: illness, family emergency, and authorized University business.

If you contact me before the exam with an explanation, there will be no grade reduction. If you miss the exam without contacting me beforehand, there will be a reduction of one letter-grade, followed by five points off for every day you fail to contact me. Missing a test is serious business. The best thing you can do if you have to miss one will be to contact me as soon as possible.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENTS** (subject to revision)

All readings and assignments are to be completed in advance of the class session.

Aug	22	Introduction to the course and to Aristotle
	24	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I
	29	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book II
	31	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book III
Sept	05	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book VI
	07	Psalm 23 (with guest lecturer Prof. Blaine McCormick)
	12	Plutarch, "Coriolanus" [handout]
	14	Shakespeare, <i>Coriolanus</i> (Acts 1-3)
	19	Shakespeare, <i>Coriolanus</i> (Acts 4-5)
	21	Plutarch, "Sulla"
	<b>22-23</b>	<b><i>Essay #1 due (schedule appointment)</i></b>
	26	Plutarch, "Caesar"
	28	Plutarch, "Cicero"
Oct	03	Cicero, <i>On Obligations</i> , Book I
	05	Cicero, <i>On Obligations</i> , Book II
	10	Cicero, <i>On Obligations</i> , Book III
	12	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , pp. 3-38
	<b>13-14</b>	<b><i>Oral Mid-term Exam (by appointment)</i></b>
	17	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , pp. 38-71
	19	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , pp. 71-105
	24	Shakespeare, <i>MacBeth</i> (Acts 1-2)

- 26 Shakespeare, *MacBeth* (Acts 3-4)
- 31 Shakespeare, *MacBeth* (Act 5)
- Nov 02 Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part II*, Background and Act I
- 07 Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part II* (Acts 2-3)
- 09 Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part II* (Acts 4-5)
- 14 Austen, *Emma* (Vol. I, pp. 5-119)
- 16 Austen, *Emma* (Vol. II, pp. 121-245)
- 17-18 Essay #2 due (schedule appointment)**
- 21 Austen, *Emma* (Vol. III, pp. 247-381)
- 23 *No class—Thanksgiving Break*
- 28 O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find"
- 30 O'Connor, "The Life You Save May Be Your Own"
- Dec 05 Conclusion to course and review

**Final Examination: Monday-Tuesday, December 12-13 (by appointment)**