Leadership, Excellence, and Virtue in World History

A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good. Therefore it is necessary for a prince, who wishes to maintain himself, to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge and not use it, according to the necessity of the case.

Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince

Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Lord Acton

The Course
We like to think that leaders achieve greatness not just because they are effective in attaining their goals, but because they observe high moral standards in the pursuit of those goals: that virtue is an essential component of successful leadership. Yet national leaders have often been faced with situations in which attaining their goals seemed to require actions that conflicted with their own moral values. This has particularly been the case in the area of foreign policy, where there the whole tradition of raison d’état argues that states in the pursuit of their interests should not be bound by the normal moral codes governing the behavior of individuals. Are virtue and success contradictory rather than complementary concepts in the conduct of statecraft? Can a leader attain morally virtuous ends through means which are morally dubious? To explore this issue, we will examine the actions of a number of major political leaders, utilizing interpretations from recent films. When the semester is over, you should be able to

1. Understand historical, cultural, and personal elements of leadership;
2. Demonstrate understanding of leadership in personal contexts;
3. Explain historical, cultural, and practical elements of virtue;
4. Demonstrate understanding of virtuous personal behavior.

For Purchase
Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince
Also available for free online at http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1232 if you want to save some money...

On Moodle
You’ll find the reading assignments other than Machiavelli on Moodle, which you access at http://moodle.mcm.edu. They are:


**In Class**

You will view seven films in class and be expected to compare their treatment of the subject matter with the written material on Moodle.

**Resources**

If you have difficulty keeping track of the characters and plot lines of the various films being shown in the course, there are plenty of sources of information on them on the Internet. A convenient starting point is [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com).

**Grade**

There will be **three noncomprehensive tests** in this course and one **3-4-page typed, double-spaced paper**. The tests will include both objective and essay sections on the material covered since the previous test. The paper will ask you to assess the interplay of leadership and virtue in a selected historical situation and thus will require some outside research. Topics will be distributed later in the semester. Your grade in this course will be computed as follows: 25% on each of three semester tests, and 25% on the paper. Note that late papers will **lose one percentage point per day** that they are late, up to a maximum of ten points.

The final grade will follow standard grading format, *i.e.*, 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 0-59 = F. Within those parameters, plus and minus grades will be given: A+: 93-100, A: 90-92, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, etc. There will be no A+ grades and no plus or minus grades for an F. Borderline cases (*e.g.*, 89.6 or 79.8) will be decided on the basis of improvement in the course, class participation, and regularity of attendance.

**Plagiarism**

Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, passing off the work of someone else as your own, will result in a zero grade on the assignment concerned, a failing grade in the course, and a referral to the Dean of Students for further disciplinary action.

**Attendance**

Excessive unexcused absences may lead you to be administratively dropped from this class. The McMurry *Catalog* defines “excessive” for Tuesday-Thursday classes (like this) as three or more. Of course, even an authorized absence does not excuse you from responsibility for whatever material was covered on the day of your absence. If you miss one of the films, you’ll be expected to view what you missed on your own. Some of them are available through the Abilene Library Consortium and others are viewable from Internet sources like YouTube or Hulu.

**Students with Disabilities**

McMurry University abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which stipulates that no otherwise qualified student shall be denied the benefits of an education “solely by reason of a handicap.” If you have a documented disability that may impact your performance in this class and for which you may be requesting accommodation, you must be registered with and provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office, located in the south wing of President Residence Hall. Arrangements will be made for students needing special accommodations.

**Cell Phones, Computers, and Other Non-class-related Activities**

Expect to be held accountable to the basic rules of considerate behavior as described in the McMurry University *Council Fire*. Cell phones should be turned off during class. Your computer should also be turned off during class, unless you are running it in tablet mode (face down) to take notes.

**Contact**

My contact information will be found on the upper right corner of the syllabus. If you lose your syllabus, you can download another from my webpage. If I need to send you any official communications, FERPA privacy regulations stipulate that I use your McMurry account, not any other mail account that you might have. If you never check your McMurry email, now might be a good time to change your habits.
**Proposed Class and Reading Schedule**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 27, 29</td>
<td>Are Leadership and Virtue Compatible?</td>
<td>Machiavelli, all</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 3, 5, 10</td>
<td>A Female Ruler in a Man’s World: Elizabeth I</td>
<td>Mattingly, 1-28</td>
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<td>Sept. 12, 17, 19</td>
<td>Defending the Realm: Winston Churchill</td>
<td>Payne, 196-224; <em>The Two Winstons</em></td>
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<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td><strong>FIRST TEST</strong></td>
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<td>Sept. 26; Oct. 1, 3</td>
<td>American Icon: Abraham Lincoln</td>
<td>Hofstadter, 92-134; <em>Lincoln</em></td>
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<td>Oct. 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24</td>
<td><em>Realpolitik</em>: Bismarck, Hitler, and the Germans</td>
<td>Steinberg, 465-480; Bullock, 372-410; <em>Judgment at Nuremberg</em></td>
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<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td><strong>SECOND TEST</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 31; Nov. 5, 7</td>
<td>Revolutionary Violence: Algeria</td>
<td>Boot, 364-377; <em>The Battle of Algiers</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 12, 14, 19, 21</td>
<td>Revolutionary Nonviolence: Gandhi</td>
<td>Hitchins, 136-142; <em>Gandhi</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 26; Dec. 3, 5</td>
<td>Leadership Manqué: Pu Yi</td>
<td>Spence, 216-226; <em>The Last Emperor</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 27-29</td>
<td>[Thanksgiving]</td>
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<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>PAPER DUE</td>
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<td>Dec. 10</td>
<td><strong>THIRD TEST</strong> (8:00-10:00)</td>
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