

# Leadership and International Relations Perspectives

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

As the name implies, this course is designed to identify, challenge and inform students' perspectives on the world and themselves. We begin by looking at the historical and philosophical background to leadership, and then explore the notion of Followership in a unit that is predicated on the idea that to be an effective leader, one must understand traits of an effective follower. After learning these basics in the field, students are asked to look inward and to begin to identify their own personality traits. Of course, this also helps students to better understand others' traits and thus learn about group dynamics.

Alongside this leadership content, we delve into international relations. This unit begins with the mechanics of United States Foreign Policy and an historical look at trends and tendencies. It is designed to answer the question "Why does the U.S. get involved in other nations' affairs?" and does so primarily through the use of case studies. The beginnings of interventionism are shown through U.S. relations with Latin America in the late 19th- and early 20th centuries. Modern relations with the Middle East and Africa demonstrate how causes, methods and goals of intervention have changed from the 20th to the present day.

The course also offers introductions to the other cornerstones of our Center. Communications (our Sophomore cornerstone) is taught and practiced via quarterly Current Events Zen Presentations and at least two collaborative video projects. An Ethics (Junior cornerstone) mini-unit assures that students understand the Center's expectations and offers foresight to ethical behavior as an important part of leadership. Although Service is covered in the Center's LEAP system, students are offered opportunities to participate in service with grade incentives from this class as well. Moreover, all students will participate in the Freshman Class Video project which will create orientation materials for next year's freshmen. This class project is a culminating experience and is graded not only upon quality of Perspectives class content, but also use of skills in group dynamics, communication, and ethics.

### Mr. Jeff Doyle

Mr. Doyle grew up in Chesterfield and attended Crestwood, Providence and Manchester High School. As an undergrad at VCU he studied history, culture and politics in the developing world as well as US foreign policy. After some graduate work at UNC-Chapel Hill, he returned to VCU to earn a Master of Teaching degree, and began his teaching career at Manchester Middle in 1994. Now in his 15th year at James River, he has been with the Leadership Center since its creation. Although a World History teacher most of his career, he currently enjoys teaching Sociology and is blending some of that content into his Perspectives class, particularly in relation to his units on Leadership and Ethics.