

## **Reflection of Growth as a Leader in Year One**

Through our educational lectures and readings in SPA-361 and my work as a member of the Religion and Politics Issue Group, I developed and grew significantly as an individual, a student, and as a leader. I was particularly influenced by the work we studied under the guidance of Professors Paul Manuel, Calvin Haney, and Ayana Wilson. As a leader, I have become progressively more comfortable as one that is more quiet and distant than boisterous and overpowering. That being said, I have learned how to effectively influence and lead in a group setting in a way that is comfortable for both me and those who are in the team with me. I am certain that the hard and soft skills of leadership that I have garnered through our work this semester will continue to inform the way in which I lead in the future. Moreover, I will be able to leverage my experiences working with my contemporaries in the Religion and Politics Issue Group long into the future as I continue to lead within teams of other leaders simply as a member of the group rather than a designated leader amongst others. Perhaps the greatest lesson I learned over the course of the semester, however, is that you do not need an official title or position of superiority to act as a leader to others or to lead within a group. Having been a member of a group where all of the members are designated leaders, I learned the importance of knowing when to speak and knowing when to act. I also learned that listening and showing through action is of even greater importance than offering directives and delegating responsibilities to others.

At the risk of being cliché, I find it pertinent and explanatory of my growth as a leader to include a quotation from an ancient Chinese proverb which perfectly sums up the leadership style which I hope to emulate and have grown to better understand through the concrete and experiential learning that I completed as part of this course. “Not the cry, but the flight of a wild duck, leads the flock to fly and follow.”