

SYLLABUS
COM 416 Propaganda
SPRING 2018

Instructor

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Instructor Office Hours

Mondays 12 – 1 p.m. online and by appointment

Catalog Copy

This course examines the history, theory and practice of propaganda. Prerequisite: COM 383 and junior standing or permission of instructor.

Digital Platforms for Learning

This fully-online course does not use Sakai and instead relies on the pedagogical practice of open network learning. Our public course home is www.propaganda2018.com where you can access assignments and access and participate in or view our weekly synchronous video meeting. Our [private community learning platform is located at Pathwright](#). You will receive an email invitation to join this private group. Our Twitter hashtag for this course is #COM416.

WHY TAKE THIS COURSE?

Rationale

Today, the rise of propaganda is inescapable. We see it everywhere, in the context of our political life, in the workplace, consumer culture, entertainment and leisure. With the rise of co-called “fake news,” propaganda goes hand-in-hand with political partisanship and disinformation.

Propaganda is part of our cultural reality because it’s effective in shaping public opinion. In the post-9/11 world, propaganda was used skillfully by the U.S. government in promoting a “war on terror” which led to an expansion of war from Iraq to Afghanistan. Since then, Al Qaeda and other extremist groups use martyrdom videos and other sophisticated appeal to recruit supporters, as terrorism has itself become a form of propaganda. Now, all over the world, we are seeing a rise in autocratic leaders who use propaganda to shape and mold public opinion.

President Trump’s use of Twitter is designed to communicate directly with his followers bypassing traditional mass media. The rise of social media, which enables the easy sharing and viral spread of ideas is combining with increased distrust of mainstream media to create what some have called a “post-truth society,” where debate is framed largely by appeals to emotion that ignore, dismiss or trivialize facts and information. Activists, politicians, businessmen and public relations specialists make repeated assertions by using “talking points” – simplistic and emotionally laden phrases – thus avoiding or bypassing the truly democratic practice of reasoned dialogue and discussion. Some critics believe that the result has been increased polarization and apathy, which can be exploited by those in power.

But propaganda can also serve beneficial purposes. The U.S. government spends \$1 billion annually on public relations activities, including public service campaigns against texting while driving. Through beneficial propaganda, the working poor gain knowledge of aid programs and college students learn how to apply for student loans. To sell products, services, ideas, or to make changes that improve society, it is essential to have the practical skills of being a propagandist in a digital age. But with the skills of learning how to create propaganda comes the social responsibility needed to use its power wisely.

Critical thinking about propaganda and understanding propaganda’s intent are crucial responsibilities of citizenship in the 21st century. Entering into a discussion about contemporary propaganda invites us to think about the power of communication and our ethical and social responsibilities as authors and audiences. It raises questions about the use and potential impact of new media and technologies. In this course, we consider the past, present and future of propaganda in order to understand the complex role it plays in our lives.

Real World Connections

This course is designed to prepare you for any of a number of careers and professions that involve real-world skills of problem-identification, research, analysis, synthesis, and creativity. As independent learners, you will have the opportunity to customize your learning experience depending on your own interests and professional goals.

- **Creatives** will imagine and implement ways to express ideas through creative multimedia products, using print, visual, sound and digital media,
- **Organizers** will exercise the skills of time, task and project management, developing leadership and collaboration skills.
- **Researchers** will identify and understand the needs of the target audience and gather information through research and synthesis of key ideas.
- **Activists** will gain a deeper understanding how propaganda’s power can be used responsibly to spread knowledge and make social change and develop practical skills that attract and hold the attention of the target audience to help increase awareness and knowledge.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

These learning outcomes are expected for every participant. You will:

1. Gain knowledge about propaganda and understand the historical lineage of the concept
2. Learn to recognize the many forms of propaganda in everyday life
3. Strengthen skills of interpretation and critical analysis, considering how context shapes how messages are understood and acted upon by audiences
4. Reflect on diverse interpretations of media messages in ways that promote understanding of and respect for other perspectives
5. Strengthen research and collaboration skills through activities that require the synthesis of divergent ideas, information and concepts.
6. Advance media production skills including interviewing, writing, and oral performance skills that require creativity and the use of digital platforms for creating media.
7. Gain project management skills by working independently and collaboratively, focusing the scope of an inquiry, establishing goals, and executing a project under tight deadline pressure.
8. Gain skills in using social media for learning, collaboration, communication and advocacy.
9. Reflect on how changing media and technologies reshape information, education and society.
10. Gain sensitivity to the ethical responsibilities of being a communicator in the digital age.

REQUIRED BOOKS

- Bernays, Edward (1928). [Propaganda](#). Brooklyn: Ig Publishing.
- Holiday, Ryan (2013). [Trust Me, I'm Lying](#). New York Penguin.
- Luckert, S. & Bachrach, S. (2009). [State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda](#). Washington DC: USHMM.

Additional required readings are listed on the syllabus. All additional required readings are available online.

COURSE DESIGN

Educational Philosophy

This fully-online asynchronous course is based on the assumption that (1) learners are engaged and self-directed, able to make strategic choices in order to maximize all available learning opportunities. Another key assumption of this class is that (2) people learn best by making and doing things. A final assumption of this course is that (3) reflection is an essential literacy component that can be activated through social interaction in a challenging and supportive community where there are high levels of

respect and trust. For the best learning environment possible, we will depend on every student to respect and apply these fundamental design principles.

Format of the Course

This is an online learning experience so you'll have an intense experience that will require self-direction and independent learning.

- *Online Learning Community.* You will complete reading and viewing activities each week as a means to gain knowledge and strengthen your analysis skills. You will have some choice in what and how you learn best. We will use a combination of video chat, threaded discussion, and other online tools to build and sustain a learning community. You can choose to participate in a 1-hour synchronous video meeting at a regularly scheduled time at a time that's best for most class members. If you are unable to attend the synchronous class, you can watch the recorded video and post comments and questions to receive class participation credit.
- *Creating media is a powerful form of learning.* The instructor will provide, in writing, specific description of the LEAP assignments with expectations and criteria to be used for evaluation. Assignment materials for each of the assignments listed below will be available under "Assignments" on the course website. After completing each assignment, you will receive written feedback through email.
- *Reflection Matters.* Learning works best when learners engage in self-assessment and reflection. You will be expected to notice what you are learning this semester and make connections between what you're learning and your own life and experiences in the real world.

Open Network Learning Environment

The design for this course based on the pedagogy of open network learning. Learners participate in a variety of online creative and collaborative endeavors, using a variety of digital tools and technologies on the open Internet. *The theory behind open network learning is that the activities you complete and the skills you learn directly transfer to your career and life after college.* We use a mix of public and private digital platforms in this course. In an open networked learning environment, some of your completed coursework is visible and public, and you share your learning with the world.

A Note about Technology Competencies

Everyone is on the journey of a lifetime: we are all learning to learn new technology tools, as cell phones, tablets, laptops become an essential part of leisure, work and citizenship. But we all don't begin this course with the same kinds or levels of skill. Many of the apps and digital tools we explore may be new to you. Others will be quite familiar. Some examples include: Pathwright, Anchor, YouTube, Flipgrid, Video ANT, Puppet, Screencast-O-Matic, Padlet and Google Docs. You will be need to know how to search library databases to gather historical examples of propaganda and scholarly writing and research on topics of interest. You can learn from others and teach others by supporting your peers by being a helper, coach, mentor, colleague, collaborator, and critic. Each of these roles promotes learning.

Time/Location

Our course hashtag for Twitter, YouTube and Facebook is #COM416. This is a fully-online class, which has an optional synchronous 1-hour video class meeting each week.

Website

All resources are available at the course website: <http://propaganda2018.com>

ASSIGNMENTS

LEAP Projects (400 pts)

In this class, we create media as a means to demonstrate what we're learning from reading, viewing and discussion. Four LEAP activities are designed to support the development of your digital media production skills and help you express the knowledge you are gaining through reading and discussion. The short LEAP projects contribute to the development of your personal and professional identity as an emerging expert on the topic of propaganda. Some LEAPs will be collaborative. You will have choices as you experiment with representing your learning through various media forms, genres and formats to develop your technology competencies, using different types of tools to accomplish your goals. Each of the following assignments will include specific and detailed guidelines that communicate expectations for the work you are to produce. A rubric with criteria for evaluation will be provided for each assignment.

LEAP #1. Propaganda in My Life

LEAP #2. Critical Analysis of Propaganda

LEAP #3. Collaborate: Compare and Contrast Propaganda in the Past and Present

LEAP #4 Create Propaganda

Examinations (200 pts)

We encounter some powerful ideas from a variety of authors each week. Four times during the semester, you will have a 48-hour window to complete an open-book open note examination that checks your active comprehension of the class readings.

Class Participation (400 pts)

Most of the learning in this class occurs by doing the work yourself. This is not a “sit and get” course where you listen and learn. You will learn by completing weekly reading, viewing and other assignments that require interaction with your peers. You are free to choose the activities that are most meaningful to you. However, it is expected that you devote approximately 6 – 9 hours to this course each week in completing learning activities. *Please block out time on your academic calendar to complete the weekly learning tasks worth approximately 30 points.* Points will be used to measure your completion of these activities. Earn an A in class participation by completing 400 or more points. Earn a B in class participation by completing 356 – 399 points. Earn a C in class participation by completing 320 – 355 points. Earn a D in class participation by completing 280 – 319 points. Students who do not complete weekly activities will fail the course. You will be able to monitor your progress towards your goal on Pathwright.

COURSE POLICIES

What's Public and Private

In an open-network learning environment, you are expected to maintain a public identity as a learner, as the course aims to develop competencies that directly apply to your emerging personal and professional identity. For the work you create in this course, you may choose to use existing digital tool accounts you already own or create new accounts using a pseudonym. The class participation work you complete on the Pathwright is private and graded as completed or not completed; however, the instructor may comment on your work if it is exemplary or unsatisfactory. Class members give and receive public feedback on Twitter; instructor feedback and grading is privately provided via email.

NOTE: *Weekly assignments must be completed on time.* There are no make-up opportunities for missed class participation activities, LEAPS or quizzes. Please do not ask for an exception. Because media businesses rely on strict adherence to deadlines, this course employs a deadline standard similar to most print and TV newsrooms. All deadlines are on midnight of the due date and work submitted later than 12 pm midnight on the due date will not count for course credit.

Accommodation for Disabilities and Special Needs

Any students who have a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation. Contact Disability Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities at 330 Memorial Union, [401-874-2098](tel:401-874-2098), <http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/>

Social Responsibility, Copyright and Fair Use

Students are expected to act with integrity as digital learners. Human creativity depends upon the ability to summarize, use, and rework the creative contributions of others as part of our own learning experience. It is expected that you will carefully select images and multimedia to illustrate, contextualize and comment on ideas. [Learn more about how to evaluate when your use of copyrighted materials is lawful.](#) You will be expected to make use of remix creativity in this course as you produce original writing and creative work. It is expected that you are the author of all the writing you submit. For blog posts, students should use a mix of hyperlinks and a Works Cited list, using the American Psychological Association (APA) citation format for identifying all materials used. Penalties for plagiarism may range from a reduced grade on an assignment to failing the course.

COM 416 Propaganda
 Professor Renee Hobbs
 Spring 2018
 Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to modification with fair notice.

DATE	READING	DELIVERABLE
First Meeting: Wednesday, January 24, 4 pm. 1. Introduction to the Course		
2. Defining Propaganda <i>What makes propaganda so “mischievous” to define?</i>		
Jan 29	<p>Jack, Caroline (2017). Lexicon of Lies: Terms for Problematic Information. New York: Data and Society.</p> <p>Media Education Lab (2016). Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda. Interactive media. Providence: Media Education Lab.</p> <p>Hobbs, R. (2016). What is Propaganda and Where to Find It. Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda. Providence: Media Education Lab.</p>	Pathwright activities
3. Origins of Propaganda <i>What caused propaganda to develop at the beginning of the 20th century?</i>		
Feb 5	<p>Bernays, Edward (1928). <i>Propaganda</i>. Brooklyn: Ig Publishing.</p> <p>Luckert, S. & Bachrach, S. (2009). State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda. Washington DC: USHMM. Read the Introduction, pp. 1 – 13.</p> <p>Hobbs, R. & McGee, S. (2014). Teaching about propaganda: An examination of the historical roots of media literacy. <i>Journal of Media Literacy Education</i> 6(2), 56 – 67.</p>	Pathwright Activities Quiz #1

4. Propaganda and Social Media <i>What specific features of social media make it a powerful tool for propaganda?</i>		
Feb 12	<p>FILM: Look Who’s Back (2015). Director: David Wnendt.</p> <p>Holiday, Ryan (2012). <i>Trust Me, I’m Lying</i>. Part I. New York: Pearson.</p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p> <p>DUE: LEAP 1. Essay: Propaganda in My Life</p>
5. Unexpected Consequences of Promotion and Marketing Propaganda <i>What are some unexpected consequences of propaganda?</i>		
Feb 19	<p>Jowett, Garth and O’Donnell, Victoria (2012). Chapter 6. How to Analyze Propaganda. Propaganda and Persuasion. 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.</p> <p>Holiday, Ryan (2012). <i>Trust Me, I’m Lying</i>. Part II. (pp. 123 – 237) New York: Pearson.</p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p>
6. Public Interest Propaganda <i>What are the beneficial functions of propaganda for individuals and society?</i>		
Feb 26	<p>Joffe, Helene (2008). The Power of Visual Material: Persuasion, Emotion and Identification. <i>Diogenes</i> 217: 84 – 93.</p> <p>FILM: From One Second to the Next. (2013). Director: Werner Herzog. AT&T. Film.</p> <p>Crouch, Ian (2013, October 21). Why AT&T is Talking about Texting and Driving. <i>The New Yorker</i>.</p> <p>Do Something (2016). Do Something. Interactive.</p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p> <p>Quiz #2</p>
7. Blurring of Art, Journalism and Activism <i>How does propaganda exploit the need for stories that matter?</i>		
March 5	<p>Hobbs, R. (2016). Powerful Propaganda: KONY 2012. Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda.</p> <p>Hobbs, R. (2013). The blurring of art, journalism and advocacy: Confronting 21st century propaganda in a world of online journalism. <i>I/S: A Journal of</i></p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p> <p>DUE: LEAP 2: Screencast: Critically Analyze an Example of</p>

	<p><i>Law and Policy for the Information Society</i> 8(3), 625 – 638.</p> <p>Boulton, Chris (2015). In defense of “slactivism” : How Kony 2012 got the whole world to watch (pp. 321 – 332). In D. Coombs and S. Colliser (Eds), <i>Debates for the Digital Age</i>. ABC: Clio.</p> <p>Bopp, Cassandra (2012). The Implications of Viral Media and Advocacy: Kony 2012. Senior capstone thesis project, Bryant University.</p> <p>Brooking, Emerson & Singer, P.W. (2016, November). War Goes Viral: How Social Media is Being Weaponized. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</p> <p>FILM: Kony 2012. Director: Jason Russell.</p>	Contemporary Propaganda
<i>SPRING BREAK – WEEK OF MARCH 12 - 18</i>		
8. Propaganda for Votes and Power		
<i>How does propaganda help people get elected?</i>		
March 19	<p>United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The State of Deception. Interactive media.</p> <p>Luckert, S. & Bachbach, S. (2009). <i>State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda</i>. Chapter 2 (pp. 13 – 62)</p>	Pathwright Activities
9. Power and Persuasion in the Racial State		
<i>How is propaganda used to cultivate a sense of “us” versus “them”?</i>		
March 26	<p>Luckert, S. & Bachbach, S. (2009). <i>State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda</i>. Chapter 3 (pp. 63 - 100).</p> <p>FILM: Forbidden Films. (2015). Director: Felix Moeller.</p> <p>Brody, Richard. (2015, January 22). The Virtues of Screening “Forbidden” Films. <i>The New Yorker</i>.</p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p> <p>Quiz #3</p>

<p>10. Propaganda for War and Murder <i>How is propaganda used to deepen a sense of nationalism and patriotism in ways that justify war against enemies?</i></p>		
<p>April 2</p>	<p>Luckert, S. & Bachrach, S. (2009). <i>State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda</i>. Chapter 4 (pp. 101 - 140).</p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p> <p>DUE: LEAP 3: Research Paper: Compare and Contrast Propaganda of the Past and Present</p>
<p>11. Fake News, Demagoguery and the Alt-Right <i>Why are conspiracy theories and fake news on the rise?</i></p>		
<p>April 9</p>	<p>Alcott, Hunt & Gentzkow, L (2016). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. <i>Journal of Economics Perspectives</i> 31(2), 211 – 236.</p> <p>Lehmann, Nicholas (2016, November 30). Solving the Problem of Fake News. <i>The New Yorker</i>.</p> <p>Heller, Nathan (2016, November 18). The Failure of Facebook Democracy. <i>The New Yorker</i>.</p> <p>Minnute, Lorraine. (2012). New Challenges in the Study of Right-Wing Propaganda: Priming the Populist Backlash to “Hope and Change.” <i>New Political Science</i> 34(4), 506 – 526.</p> <p>Wallace-Wells, Benjamin (2016, May 5). Is the Alt-Right for Real? <i>The New Yorker</i>.</p> <p>Anti-Defamation League (2016). Alt-Right: A Primer about the New White Supremacy.</p> <p>Stack, Liam (2017, October 13). He Calls Hillary Clinton a Demon: Who is Alex Jones? <i>New York Times</i>.</p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p>

<p>12. Terrorism as Propaganda <i>What makes terrorism as a form of propaganda so effective?</i></p>		
<p>April 16</p>	<p>Lieberman, Ariel (2016). Terrorism, the Internet and Propaganda: A Deadly Combination. <i>Journal of National Security Law and Policy</i> 9: 95 – 124.</p> <p>Winter, Charlie and Bach-Lombard Jordan (2016, February 13). Why ISIS Propaganda Works. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</p> <p>Winter, Charlie (2016, March 23). ISIS is Using the Media Against Itself. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</p> <p>Cottee, Simon (2015, December 24). The Challenge of Jihadi Cool. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</p> <p>Waddell, Kaveh (2016, June 22) A Tool to Delete Beheading Videos Before They Even Appear Online. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p> <p>Quiz #4</p>
<p>13. Global Propaganda <i>What are the unique forms of propaganda in Turkey, China and Russia?</i></p>		
<p>April 23</p>	<p>Erkara, Busra (2017, March 10). Propaganda in Istanbul. <i>New York Times</i>.</p> <p>Xuecun. Murong (2013, December 20). The New Face of Chinese Propaganda. <i>New York Times</i>.</p> <p>Hernandez, Javier. (2016, December 31). Propaganda with a Millennial Twist Pops Up in China. <i>New York Times</i>.</p> <p>Chen, Adrian (2016, December 1). The Propaganda about Russian Propaganda. <i>The New Yorker</i>.</p> <p>Delman, Edward (2015, April 22). When is a TV Channel a Foreign Agent? <i>The Atlantic</i>.</p> <p>Pomerantsev, Peter (2014, September 9). Russia and the Menace of Unreality. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</p>	<p>Pathwright Activities</p>

14. Synthesis*How will you continue learning about propaganda?*

April 30

Synthesis: Last Day of Class

DUE: Leap 4
Create Propaganda