

SYLLABUS
COM 416 Propaganda
SPRING 2019

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 relies upper-level elective course relies on the pedagogical practice of open network learning. Our public course home is www.propaganda2019.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 an effective form of propaganda 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, college students learn how to apply for student loans and people are encouraged to engage in safe sex practices. To sell products, services, ideas, or to make changes that improve society, using the toolkit of the propagandist can help you be effective 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 both 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 access and gather information through research and synthesis of key ideas.
- **Activists** will learn to apply principles of effective propaganda 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.

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 a fully-online learning experience so you'll have an intense experience that will require self-direction, independent and collaborative learning.

- *Online Learning Community.* People learn best in teams, not as loners. 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. You'll participate in video chat, threaded discussion, Twitter and use other online tools as a member of 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 must 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 and how you are learning this semester and make connections between learning and life 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, as 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, YouTube, Flipgrid, Video ANT, Screencast-O-Matic, Padlet and Google Docs. You will be need to know how to search library databases and research topics of special interest to you. You can learn from others and teach others in this class 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://propaganda2019.com>

ASSIGNMENTS

LEAP Projects (450 pts)

In this class, we create media as a means to demonstrate what we're learning from reading, viewing and discussion. 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 in how you represent your learning through various media forms, genres and formats. Each of the following assignments will include specific and detailed guidelines that communicate expectations for the work you are to produce, including a rubric with criteria for evaluation.

LEAP #1. Critical Analysis of Propaganda (150 pts)

LEAP #2. Collaborative Inquiry on Propaganda (150 pts)

LEAP #3 Reflect on Contemporary Propaganda (150 pts)

Midterm and Final Examination (300 pts)

We encounter some powerful ideas from a variety of authors each week. An online midterm and final examine offers you a 48-hour window to complete an open-book open note examination that checks your active comprehension of the class readings and the connections between the course and your life.

Class Participation (250 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 written and oral interaction with your peers. You are free to choose the activities that are most meaningful to you.

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 20 points each week.*

Points will be used to measure your completion of class participation activities. Earn an A in class participation by completing 250 or more points. Earn a B in class participation by completing 200 - 250 points. Earn a C in class participation by completing 150 – 200 points. Earn a D in class participation by completing 149 points. Students who do not participate in any online 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 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 publicly comment on your work if it is exemplary. All other instructor feedback and grading is provided individually to you via email.

NOTE: *Weekly assignments must be completed on time.* There are no make-up opportunities for missed class participation activities or other assignments. 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 2019
Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to modification with fair notice.

| DATE | READING | DELIVERABLE |
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| First Meeting: Friday, January 25, 12 - 1 pm. Introduction to the Course | | |
| 1. Defining Propaganda <i>Why do people disagree about the definition of propaganda?</i> | | |
| February 1 | Media Education Lab (2017). What is Propaganda? and Lesson Plans . Mind Over Media. Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda. Providence: Media Education Lab. Welch, D. (2003). Propaganda, definitions of. In N. J. Cull, D. H. Culbert, D. Welch, <i>Propaganda and mass persuasion: a historical encyclopedia, 1500 to the present</i> . Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO. Curnalia, R. (2005). A retrospective on early studies of propaganda and suggestions for reviving the paradigm. <i>Review of Communication</i> , 5(4), 237-257. | Class Participation 20 points |
| 2. Origins of Propaganda <i>What caused propaganda to advance at the beginning of the 20th century? Why is it still meaningful today?</i> | | |
| February 8 | Bernays, Edward (1928). Propaganda . Brooklyn: Ig Publishing. FILM: <i>Look Who's Back</i> (2015). Director: David Wnendt. | Class Participation 20 points |
| 3. Resilience in the Face of Propaganda <i>What media literacy concepts help people critically analyze propaganda?</i> | | |
| February 15 | Sproule, J. (2001). Authorship and origins of the seven propaganda devices: A research note. <i>Rhetoric & Public Affairs</i> , 4(1), 135-143. Hobbs, R. & McGee, S. (2014). Teaching about | Class Participation 20 points |

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| | <p>propaganda: An examination of the historical roots of media literacy. <i>Journal of Media Literacy Education</i> 6(2), 56 – 67.</p> <p>Jowett, Garth and O’Donnell, Victoria (2012). Chapter 6. How to Analyze Propaganda. Propaganda and Persuasion. 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.</p> <p>USHMM (2014). Diagram Propaganda Today. The State of Deception. Washington, DC.</p> | |
| <p>4. Fake News, Disinformation and Conspiracy Theories <i>What new forms of propaganda are developing as a result of the rise of social media?</i></p> | | |
| February 22 | <p>Jack, Caroline (2017). Lexicon of Lies: Terms for Problematic Information. New York: Data and Society.</p> <p>Wardle, C. & Derakshan, H. (2018). Thinking about "Information Disorder": Formats of Misinformation, Disinformation and Mal-Information. UNESCO.</p> <p>Lehmann, Nicholas (2016, November 30). Solving the Problem of Fake News. <i>The New Yorker</i>.</p> <p>Yablokov, I. (2015). Conspiracy theories as a Russian public diplomacy tool: The case of Russia Today (RT). <i>Politics</i>, 35(3-4), 301-315.</p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> <p>LEAP #1 DUE 150 points</p> |
| <p>5. Sponsored Content <i>How are changing business models affecting the rise of propaganda?</i></p> | | |
| March 1 | <p>Holiday, R. (2012). <i>Trust Me, I’m Lying, Part I</i>.</p> <p>Nielsen, R. K., & Graves, L. (2017). ‘News You Don’t Believe’: Audience Perspectives on Fake News. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.</p> <p>Boerman, S. C., & van Reijmersdal, E. A. (2016). Informing consumers about “hidden” advertising: A literature review of the effects of disclosing sponsored content. In P.De Pelsmacker (Ed), <i>Advertising in new formats and media: Current research and implications for marketers</i> (pp. 115-146). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.</p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> |

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| 6. News as Propaganda | | |
| <i>What journalistic and institutional norms may serve as a form of propaganda?</i> | | |
| March 8 | <p>VIDEO: Excerpt from Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media. Director: Peter Wintonick and Mark Achbar</p> <p>VIDEO: Noam Chomsky: The Five Filters of the Mass Media Machine. Director: Al Jazeera English, 2017</p> <p>Fuchs, C. (2018). Propaganda 2.0: Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda Model in the age of the Internet, big data and social media. In J. Pedro-Carañana (Ed.), <i>The propaganda model: Filtering perception and awareness</i> (pp. 71–92). London: University of Westminster Press.</p> <p>Schauster, E., Ferrucci, P., Neill, M., Wojdyski, B., & Golan, G. (2016). Native Advertising Is the New Journalism: How Deception Affects Social Responsibility. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, 60(12), 1408-1424.</p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> <p>MIDTERM EXAM 150 points</p> |
| <i>SPRING BREAK – WEEK OF MARCH 10 – 15</i> | | |
| 7. Virality and the Spread of Propaganda | | |
| <i>What features of propaganda may help it to spread widely?</i> | | |
| March 22 | <p>Hobbs, R. (2016). Powerful Propaganda: KONY 2012. Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda. Providence: Media Education Lab.</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 Law and Policy for the Information Society</i> 8(3), 625 – 638.</p> <p>FILM: Kony 2012. Director: Jason Russell.</p> <p>Hempel, J. (2017, October 18). The problem with #metoo and viral outrage. <i>Wired</i>. https://www.wired.com/story/the-problem-with-me-</p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> |

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| | too-and-viral-outrage/ | |
| 8. Network Propaganda | | |
| <i>How is propaganda amplified by partisan media outlets?</i> | | |
| March 29 | <p>Benkler, Y., Faris, R. Roberts, H. & Zuckerman, E. (2017, March 3). Study: Breitbart-led right wing media ecosystem altered broader media agenda. <i>Columbia Journalism Review.</i></p> <p>Pyo, Y. (2019). Review of Network Propaganda. <i>International Journal of Communication</i> 13, 462 – 464.</p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> <p>LEAP #2 DUE 150 points</p> |
| 9. Manufacturing Consensus: Computational Propaganda | | |
| <i>What role do bots and trolls play in the dissemination of propaganda?</i> | | |
| April 5 | <p>Gessen, M. (2018, December 18). Why the Russian influence campaign is so hard to understand. <i>The New Yorker.</i></p> <p>Thompson, N. & Lapowsky, I. (2018, December 17). How Russian trolls used meme warfare to divide America. <i>Wired.</i></p> <p>Gorwa, R. & Guilbeault, D. (2017). Tinder nightmares: The promise and peril of political bots. <i>Wired UK.</i></p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> |
| 10. Terrorism as Propaganda | | |
| <i>Why is terrorism called 'propaganda of the deed'?</i> | | |
| April 12 | <p>Berger, J.M. (2015, January 27). The Evolution of Terrorist Propaganda: The Paris Attack and Social Media. Brookings Institution.</p> <p>Winter, Charlie and Bach-Lombard Jordan (2016, February 13). Why ISIS Propaganda Works. <i>The Atlantic.</i></p> <p>Brooking, Emerson & Singer, P.W. (2016, November). War Goes Viral: How Social Media is Being Weaponized. <i>The Atlantic.</i></p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> |

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| 11. Entertainment Propaganda <i>How is propaganda embedded in video games and Hollywood movies?</i> | | |
| April 19 | <p>Ata, I. (2019) The anti-Palestinian propaganda you don't know you're consuming. The Nib.</p> <p>Secker, T. & Alford, M. (2017, July 4). Documents expose how Hollywood promotes war on behalf of the Pentagon, CIA and NSA. Medium.</p> <p>Arnaiz, S., Malalad, G. & Tomagan, J. (2018). Gamifying propaganda. Business World Online.</p> <p>Schulzke, M. (2013). Rethinking military gaming: America's Army and its critics. <i>Games and Culture</i>, 8(2), 59–76.</p> <p>Miron Lakomy (2017): Let's play a video game: Jihadi propaganda in the world of electronic entertainment. <i>Studies in Conflict & Terrorism</i>.</p> <p>Elder, Katherine A. (2018). Propaganda for kids: Comparing IS-produced propaganda to depictions of propaganda in The Hunger Games and Harry Potter film series. <i>International Journal of Communication (Online)</i>, 909.</p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> <p>LEAP #3 DUE 150 points</p> |
| 12. Public Interest Propaganda <i>What are the beneficial functions of propaganda for individuals and society?</i> | | |
| April 26 | <p>Elliott, S. (2013, February 13). Selling products by selling shared values. <i>New York Times</i>.</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>Class Participation 20 points</p> |
| 13. Remedies? Censorship, Counterpropaganda and Media Literacy Education <i>What strategies are appropriate for limiting the damage that propaganda may cause?</i> | | |
| May 3 | <p>Bjola, C. (2018). The ethics of countering digital propaganda. <i>Ethics & International Affairs</i>, 32(3),</p> | <p>Class Participation 20 points</p> |

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| | <p>305-315.</p> <p>Abu-Fadil, M. (2018). Combatting misinformation and disinformation through Media and Information Literacy. UNESCO.</p> <p>Haigh, M., Haigh. T & Kozak, N. (2018) Stopping fake news. <i>Journalism Studies</i>, 19(14), 2062-2087.</p> <p>Schmitt, J., Rieger, D., Rutkowski, O., Ernst, J. (2018). Counter-messages as prevention or promotion of extremism?! The potential role of YouTube: recommendation algorithms. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 68(4), 780–801.</p> <p>Hoberman, J. (2015). Forbidden Films exhumes Nazi poison from the movie vaults. <i>New York Times</i>.</p> <p>OPTIONAL FILM: Forbidden Films. Director: Felix Moeller.</p> | |
| TBD | | FINAL EXAM 150 points |