

Propaganda and Society

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1. Course Description:

This course explores mass persuasion and propaganda in a developmental context with an emphasis on understanding approaches and techniques. It traces the emergence of strategic persuasive communication and propaganda from its origins to the present day. The basic principles, philosophy, and techniques of mass persuasion in different periods are considered, with an emphasis on contemporary contexts. Students will learn to identify different propaganda techniques and will gain the tools to evaluate and debunk propaganda campaigns. A developmental approach is used in order to allow the opportunity to see aspects of continuity and change in approaches. A combination of classic and contemporary texts in the area of propaganda and disinformation will be studied. Various approaches to propaganda will be examined across a variety of media, with an emphasis in the second half of the course on emerging computational and participatory propaganda.

2. Learning Outcomes

Specialist knowledge:

Students will be able to:

- Comprehend the philosophical, historical and functional underpinnings of propaganda;
- Trace the history of mass persuasion from ancient civilization to today's global technological society;
- Identify and discuss criteria that are indicative of a media propaganda campaign;
- Explain how and why particular major media of communication have been used for mass persuasion in different societies at different times;
- Identify and explain contemporary methods of computational propaganda and disinformation

Specialist skills:

Students will be able to:

- Recognize and critically evaluate propaganda campaigns;
- Analyze and explain the role of audience analysis and goals and objectives in the development of persuasion materials;
- Examine applications of persuasion in the "emerging technologies" and explain their possible effects on the present and future users of these technologies;
- Conduct basic independent research on propaganda;
- Become knowledgeable with some key academic literature on propaganda and persuasion.

3. Required Readings:

Core readings listed in the schedule will be located in the course space on e-learning/Moodle in the corresponding week of class. Most of the readings are taken from these titles:

- a) Jowett G. & O'Donnell V. (2018). *Propaganda and persuasion (7th ed.)*. Sage Publications.
- b) Cull N. J. Culbert D. H. & Welch D. (2003). *Propaganda and mass persuasion : a historical encyclopedia 1500 to the present*. ABC-CLIO.
- c) Baines P. O'Shaughnessy N. J. & Snow N. (2020). *The sage handbook of propaganda*. SAGE Publications.

d) Bennett W. L. Livingston S. & Cambridge University Press. (2021). *The disinformation age: Politics technology and disruptive communication*. Cambridge University Press.

4. Schedule

#	AGENDA	READING
1	Introduction to Propaganda and Persuasion	Encyclopedia of Prop (Cull, Culbert, Welch), Propaganda Through Ages (Jowett & O'Donnell)
2	Mass Society and Mass Propaganda	Advertising The Ubiquitous Propaganda (Jowett & O'Donnell)
3	How Propaganda and Persuasion Work	Propaganda and Persuasion Examined (Jowett & O'Donnell)
4	Propaganda and Psychological Warfare 1900-1950	7 Devices (Sproule) + Atrocities, Investigations & Propaganda (Lawson)
5	Propaganda and Psychological Warfare 1950-2000	Information-Age Conflict in the Post-Cold War Era (Taylor)
6	MIDTERM EXAM	
7	How to Analyze Contemporary Propaganda Campaigns	How to Analyze Propaganda (Jowett & O'Donnell), Disinformation related to Covid 19 (various)
8	Computational Propaganda: Form and Format	Computational Propaganda and the Rise of the Fake Audience (Delwiche)
9	Participatory Propaganda and the Role of the Audience	The Audience is the Amplifier: Participatory Propaganda (Wanless, Berk)
10	Disinformation: Methods and Objectives	From Disinfo. to Fake News: Forwards into the Past (O'Shaughnessy)
11	Propaganda and the Decline of Institutional Authority	Info Wars and the Decline of Institutional Authority (Bennet, Livingston)
12	Field Trip!	N/A
13	FINAL EXAM	

5. Course Requirements and Grading

The course will be graded on the basis of:

Criteria	Value
Engagement	15%
Propaganda Analysis	40%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	25%

Engagement: Engagement is similar to participation, but it means more than just active involvement in class activities (although that is a basic tenet). Being engaged means demonstrating the following knowledge and skills: (a) being accountable and taking responsibility; (b) leadership; (c) integrity and honesty; (d) being engaged with the topic and the class; (e) striving for excellence in all endeavors. Specifically, it means things like following up without being told to follow up; doing what you are supposed to do when you are supposed to do it and as well as you can do it; arriving on time and ready to “work;” keeping the faculty member aware of any situations that might impinge upon your performance; and fostering a relationship of mutual respect.

Propaganda Analysis: In the second half of the course, students will conduct an independent analysis of a propaganda campaign based on tools they will learn in the course for analyzing propaganda campaigns. The result will be a 2,500 word paper, and a 15 minute presentation of the findings of the study.

Exams: Two examinations will be taken, one during week seven of the course and a final exam covering all course content during the final examination period. Test format may combine a mixture of short answer, true/false, matching, sort answer, and one or two essay questions covering *all* readings, lecture, hand-out and class discussion content.

6. Grade Scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A	93-100	Outstanding work
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Good work
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course

7. Policies

UPCES Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy

The UPCES program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristic, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

UPCES Diversity Policy

UPCES fully embraces diversity and strives to create a safe and welcoming environment for students from all backgrounds. Prague is a wonderfully diverse community and UPCES is no different. All students should feel at home while studying abroad and UPCES will do its utmost to make sure that becomes a reality. Although unique challenges may arise, we believe that students from all walks of life will encounter wonderful opportunities for enrichment as they explore a new culture while studying abroad.