

**Syllabus, MC 505, Seminar in Propaganda**  
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Fall, 2006. Meeting Tuesdays, 6:30-9:20 pm  
Dunham Hall 1015



**Course Description:** A seminar in which students will discover the true definition of propaganda, explore varieties of propaganda, analyze, discuss and present research on propaganda in various forms of media.

**Required Textbooks:** *Propaganda: the Formation of Men's Attitudes*, by Jacques Ellul; *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed., by Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell; *Propaganda*, by Edward Bernays. (This is a new ed. of the original 1928 book with a forward by Mark Crispin Miller).  
*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (aka. the APA Stylebook), 5th edition.

**Bibliography:** A handout.

**Educational Objectives:** After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Understand the philosophical, historical and functional underpinnings of propaganda;
- B. Become familiar with some of the academic literature on propaganda and persuasion;
- C. Become familiar with the various definitions and forms of propaganda;
- D. Recognize and critically evaluate propaganda campaigns;
- E. Discuss and ask probing questions about propaganda;
- E. Conduct basic research on propaganda phenomena;
- F. Write and effectively deliver an academic "convention paper" on a propaganda phenomenon to the class.

**Course Activities:**

**Bibliographic Reports:** Choose a book from the bibliography provided and provide both a 3-4 page written report and a ten-minute, oral, in-class presentation including:

- A. The book's focus and parameters;
- B. Chapter-by-chapter overview;
- C. Special qualities of the book as relates to this course;
- D. A qualitative assessment: clarity, depth of focus, documentation, etc., as could be used by students in this course to study propaganda.

This report should be in the form of advice to your classmates regarding the importance and usefulness of your chosen book to your and their research in propaganda.

**(All reports and papers in this course must conform to APA style. See above)**

**Film /Video/Website Reports:** Choose a film or a video or a website that you can get your hands on (you must present a few explanatory short clips/overheads in class) and do an analysis focusing on the persuasive intent, the means the filmmaker, video or web producer used, and the presumed effect of his/her production. Provide both a detailed written report (3-4 pages) and an oral, in-class presentation including:

- A. How is the proposition presented? Is it stated clearly or implied?
- B. How effectively is the proposition supported through documentation (real or fictional) and use of logical appeal?
- C. What other kinds of appeals are being employed? Give examples of each.
- D. What cinematic methods (methods that can be utilized in only film or video) and techniques are being employed to persuade? If it's a website, explain what other digital/textual tools are used?
- E. Describe the implicit or explicit call to action.
- F. Your overall assessment of the likely effectiveness of this message as propaganda.

You will also be evaluated on the usefulness of your use of A/V aids in your presentation. You will have PowerPoint (bring your presentation on a pocket jump drive (aka., "thumb drive" rather than count on e-mail), a digital overhead projector, the Internet, plus videocassette and DVD players at your disposal. Use them.

**Propaganda Case Study:** Choose a propaganda phenomenon (*an instance in which propaganda successfully worked its effect on a population*). These phenomena could be as diverse as Goebbels' work in propagandizing the German population during World War II, an incredibly successful advertising campaign, a election advertising campaign in which a long-shot candidate defeated an entrenched incumbent, or a wildly successful national advocacy campaign, such as saying "no" to drugs. Remember the effect of that spot that showed an egg in a frying pan ("This is your brain on drugs...") Besides using the criteria (as appropriate for the medium) as found above in the Film/Video/Website Reports, research multiple sources of historical evidence about this particular phenomenon.

As previously, you will be evaluated on the use of A/V aids in your presentation.

**Final Project:** There are two portions of this final project: Your final project's written report is meant to be a paper that you might later present at an academic conference or convention. And I hope you do send in a proposal to the appropriate academic association and present it! There could even be funding from CAS and the Graduate School available to subsidize your trip. Your paper must be between 15 and 20 double-spaced pages long, fully documented, etc., using APA style. You should find a propaganda issue or some variety of propaganda you discover during the course, review the literature to see what's already been written on the topic, then identify a research question and write about it. Use whatever methodology and research tools you wish: qualitative or

quantitative; a history, a content analysis, survey research, interviewing, a focus group, etc.). You may not do a case study: You've already done one. Just be sure to scale this project down to something that you can complete in such a short time. No incompletes allowed for biting off more than you can chew right before the end of the semester!

The in-class presentation of your paper is not a time to put us all to sleep by reading 15-20 pages to us: there's too much of that at academic conventions as it is. Instead, it's your chance to rehearse the delivery of your first extemporaneously-presented academic convention paper. Outline your paper first, then present to the class a shortened version of your paper, complete with overhead graphics/PowerPoint, video clips if appropriate, etc. Make it a 15-20-minute lecture, if you will, on your topic. And make it a good lecture: As before, you receive points for presentation and A/V aids as well as content.

**How to write an academic paper:** How does it differ from an undergraduate term paper? The main difference is that an academic paper usually breaks new ground on a subject, while an undergraduate term paper is usually just a review on what research/scholarship has already been done. Some of you have completed MC 500 and/or 501, and are therefore experienced in this, but for the rest of you, a short discussion of the major parts of an academic paper/journal article might be necessary.

The first part is the introduction. Like a good newspaper lead and supporting paragraphs, it explains what the article is about and what you hope to accomplish. Clearly define the limits of your study and be clear about it. (Hint for the future: an attractive, attention-getting title may influence a journal editor to take a closer look at your manuscript.)

Next, a review of the literature. This must include references to the key research that has been done on your topic before you. That's how other scholars who evaluate your work for publication know that you've done your homework. Usually, reviewers dismiss proposed journal articles and competitive papers if the authors miss pertinent literature in their review. Many of these sources are, of course, cited in the text and listed in your bibliography. If your work relies on someone's theory, you need to discuss that theory, and explain how it will be used in your inquiry. For example, one of my students was doing a mythic analysis, so in his review he presented published theories ("the literature") on myth-making. Then he explained why these theories were relevant to his topic, and how his topic will contribute to new knowledge in this area.

You should also refer often to the propaganda theories that you have read about in your textbooks for the course, and also cite those that I discuss for the first weeks of the semester. That's how I know you learned from the assigned reading. 'Much better than giving a test, don't you think?

After the review of the literature, you move on to the body of your paper, applying these theories to your investigation.

Finally, discuss your conclusions. As klunky as it sounds, in your paper, you should follow the age-old academic pattern: say what you're going to do, do it, and at the end, state what you've done). Conclusions most often include your recommendations for future research in this area. Be careful in your conclusions to not over-state what you think you accomplished. In other words, don't over-generalize to any larger entity, based on what you discovered in a small sample you may have surveyed. You may discover a trend, an indication that may prompt further research. But you're not going to uncover the theory of relativity in a MC 505 final paper.

I hope this is helpful. If you're still scratching your heads, open up any copy of the two major MassComm. journals, the *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* or *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*. Most journal articles you'll find there are excellent models for the structure and scope of your paper.

Incidentally, if you go over to the library, the indexes of these two journals are great places to search for corroborative literature -- and to keep from re-inventing the wheel.

**Also please note that *each report and paper for this course must be on a completely different topic*. For example, you may not structure your final paper as a more detailed version of your case study or your film/video/website analysis, etc. This, presumably, is your first serious exploration of propaganda, and it should be far-ranging. It's certainly OK to research and study something in the same subject area in all three assignments (eg., political campaign propaganda or environmental propaganda), but the specific topics you choose within the same subject area must be different for each assignment.**

**Grading:** You receive points for each project, plus points for attendance. And yes, of course, excellent writing is expected and poor writing is penalized. Also, if you're new to SIUE, you may want to go online and check out the SIUE website regarding policies about plagiarism, etc. (see below). The amount of points for each project and the grading scale are as follows:

<b>Bibliographic Report and presentation</b>	<b>50 points</b>
<b>Film /Video/Website Analysis Report and presentation</b>	<b>75 points</b>
<b>Case Study Report and presentation</b>	<b>75 points</b>
<b>Final Presentation</b>	<b>25 points</b>
<b>Final Paper</b>	<b>100 points</b>
<b>Perfect Attendance</b>	<b>50 points</b>
<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>25 points</b>

TOTAL      400 points

(Note on attendance: 15 points are deducted from your 50 attendance points for each unexcused absence)

Final Course Grading Scale

360 - 400 points	A
328 - 359 points	B
280 - 327 points	C
less than 327 points	D or F, depending on the circumstances. This shouldn't be an issue in a graduate course.

**Tentative Schedule**

(Depending on how many are enrolled and how long some presentations take, some lectures/demos will be presented, as noted.)

Aug. 22.	Intro to course, its requirements, and "getting to know you."
	Intro. to Propaganda.
Aug. 29	Intro. to propaganda, continued
Sept. 5	Intro. to propaganda, continued, including screenings of <i>The Compact Propaganda Film</i> , <i>Secrets of Effective Radio Advertising</i> and, if there's time, the 2006 <i>Superbowl</i> commercials.
Sept.12	Intro. to propaganda, continued, and screening of Bill Moyers' <i>World War II and the Propaganda Battle</i> .
Sept. 19	<b>Brief reports on topics chosen for final research projects.</b> View Lyndon Johnson's campaign propaganda: <a href="http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/timeline/years/1964b.html">http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/timeline/years/1964b.html</a> (200-word abstract of your final project is due.) If there's time, screen Frank Capra's <i>Prelude to War</i> from the <i>Why We Fight</i> series.
Sept. 26	<b>Bibliographic Reports due and presented.</b>
Oct. 3	WWII propaganda.
Oct. 10	WWII propaganda, cont'd. Screening of <i>Packaging America's Wars</i> and <i>Lines in the Sand</i> .
Oct. 17	<b>Film /Video/Website Analysis Reports due, presented.</b>
Oct. 24	<b>Conclude Film/Video/Website Analysis Reports</b> (Propaganda posters slide show, if there's time)
Oct. 31	<b>Case Study Reports due and presented.</b>
Nov. 7	<b>Conclude Case Study Reports.</b> If there's time, screen and discuss wartime propaganda cartoons.
Nov. 14	Screen and discuss Zoltan Korda's <i>Sahara</i> (1943).
Nov. 21	<i>No class. Thanksgiving break</i>
Nov. 28	Spin as propaganda.

Dec. 5           **Final projects due and presented. (*all final project papers due next week*)**  
Dec. 15           **Conclude Final project presentations. (*papers due tonight*)**

## **SIUE Academic Policies**

Relevant policies regarding the following may be found on the University's web site:

<http://www.siue.edu/POLICIES/3c1.html> Student conduct code  
<http://www.siue.edu/POLICIES/3c2.html> Student academic code  
<http://www.siue.edu/POLICIES/3c3.html>. Student grievance policy

These sites explain student responsibilities and rights and describe SIUE's disciplinary procedures for misconduct (including instances of plagiarism). As described in these documents, students have responsibility for maintaining an environment which encourages free inquiry and expression and respecting the rights and responsibilities of faculty and staff members -- and vice-versa.

**Students are expected to follow course or class guidelines as set forth in syllabi and as announced by their instructors. Students who fail to follow classroom instructions may be involuntarily withdrawn from the course. The student grievance policy describes the procedure to be followed if a student files a grievance against an instructor.**

## **Dept. of Mass Communications Conduct Code**

(April 7, 2004)

Individuals enrolled in this course are expected to conduct themselves in a civil and respectful manner, both toward their instructor and fellow students. In accordance with SIUE's Student Conduct Code ([www.siue.edu/POLICIES/3c1.html](http://www.siue.edu/POLICIES/3c1.html)), acts of misconduct for which students are subject to discipline include, but are not limited to, intentional interference with or disruption of class as well as behavior or conduct which poses a threat to the mental, emotional, or physical well being of self or others. Non-compliance, interference or resistance to this code is considered actionable when a student fails to comply with a reasonable verbal or written instruction or direction given by a University employee (e.g. instructor, teaching assistant or staff member). In such cases of violation, it is the University employee's right and responsibility to remove the student from class (via the Campus Police, if necessary) and seek out the appropriate sanctions (e.g. suspension, separation, probation, enrollment restrictions, or expulsion from the University) pursuant to the conduct code policy.