



PROPAGANDA

Syllabus



CMST 3168: Propaganda

Instructor

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Office: 224 Coates Hall

Office Hours: Wednesday: 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm: we can meet on campus, via Skype, on the phone, at the library – just let me know what works for you!

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Course Description

“Propaganda,” or similar discourses of persuasion, have shaped human consciousness since people gathered into tribal units. When larger city states arose during the classical period, leaders sought to control the populace through means including coinage, official versions of history and discourses of authority that combined incentives and threats. In modern times, it can be argued that propaganda has become the glue that bonds nation-states together, while the modes and techniques of propaganda support a global consumerist economy. While the term “propaganda” may have negative connotations, we must pause to consider its role and function in our culture. This class will explore the function and nature of propaganda in the last 100 years. We will explore its dynamics as well as address ethical issues associated with its use. Your work will include: (1) examining the history of propaganda, from the early twentieth century to today; (2) building critical perspective and nomenclature by engaging influential theories of propaganda; (3) applying and adapting these theories to examples from a variety of social contexts and time periods.

Learning Objectives

During this course, you will:

- Engage the modern history of propaganda, including early definitions, state-sponsored practices, and corporate strategies
- Analyze how propaganda shapes group consciousness, by applying key theories to significant examples
- Trace key ethical questions involving propaganda as they relate to historical and contemporary practices
- Explore the relationships between media and propaganda, including foundational theories and evolving practices in social media
- Articulate a syncretic definition of propaganda to reflectively adapt beyond the course

By the end of the course, you should be “hyper-aware” of propaganda and recognize its influence and techniques across the societal landscape.

A Web-Based Course



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As this is a web-based course on the Moodle platform. You are responsible for completing the readings, participating in discussions and other activities electronically, and completing assignments by the due dates set. We will use discussion boards to take the place of traditional classroom discussion, so it is up to all of us to keep the discussions both lively and respectful. Let's make our course a model of civil discourse!

You must have access to the web every day. You should be able to access the course materials, the LSU Library and your LSU e-mail. Even if you are traveling, stay in touch.

This course takes place on Moodle. Course discussions, class announcements, exams, assignments and class activities all take place in this electronic space.

If you have technical difficulties, please contact student IT services for assistance. Contact information is provided in the course site.

This is a writing intensive course, due its electronic nature, content and assignments. Be prepared to read and write extensively, and to devote at least 2 to 3 hours a day to these activities.

We have due dates! Web-based courses provide a degree of freedom as to when to complete your work, and that is wonderful; however, note that the assignments for the course have due dates that must be met. This is a key part of your responsibility as a student.

Back up your work. Things can get lost in cyberspace, and you need to be able to recover your work. Keep your work organized on your hard drive and consider a cloud service or another means to make a fuller backup of all your files, in case your trusty laptop fails.

Use the proper format. When you submit, you must submit it in the proper format. Your professor receives many files and wants to recognize each assignment right away. Assignment file names should be like this: cmst3168_assignmentname_yourlastname.

Policies

Plagiarism: Do not inappropriately represent the work of others as your own. See the LSU Student Handbook. <https://grok.lsu.edu/article.aspx?articleid=17072>

Disability Access: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that may impact your work in this course, and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter or notice, please advise the instructor of the provisions of those accommodations.

<http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/orientation/students-with-disabilities/>



Commitment to Your Success

I am committed to making your experience at LSU enriching. It is my hope that this class will be enjoyable, and that you will take the insights that you accumulate and apply them in your future endeavors. Do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail or cell phone to arrange for a personal meeting via phone, Skype or on campus. We all want you to be successful in this course! – Dr. Grey

Reading and Viewings

Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*. New York: IG, 1928.

https://www.voltairenet.org/IMG/pdf/Bernays_Propaganda_in_english_.pdf

Adam Curtis, *Century of the Self* (film). British Broadcasting Corporation, 2002.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ3RzGoQC4s>

Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Transformation of Men's Attitudes*. New York: Random House, 1973.

<https://ratical.org/ratville/AoS/Propaganda-JE-Vintage1973.pdf>

Madden, John. *Miss Sloane* (film), 2016. Starring Jessica Chastain.

Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. New

York: Bantam, 1967. <https://archive.org/details/pdfy-vNiFct6b-L5ucJEa>

Reitman, Jason, *Thank You for Smoking* (film), 2005. Starring Aaron Eckhardt.

Jason Stanley, *How Propaganda Works*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2015.

Additional web resources, with links provided in course materials

Assignments

Your work in this course falls into four categories:

1. Six Discussion Posts and Responses. You will engage course readings and viewings, post your answer to discussion questions and respond to the work of at least two classmates (per post).
2. Three Analysis Papers. You will relate theories of propaganda to appropriate examples. In turn, these papers will address war propaganda, political propaganda and corporate or



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consumerist propaganda. Each paper will use the “three-piece suite” approach in which you discuss three examples.

3. Two Videos. You will produce and post two videos: an introduction video near the beginning of the course and a conclusion video at the end. The videos will engage your evolving definitions of propaganda
4. A Final Exam. You will choose between the films *Thank You for Smoking* and *Miss Sloane* and consider the film as a commentary on propaganda.

Prompts, submission guidelines and rubrics for these assignments are found in the Guidelines, Rubrics and Tools document for the course.

Grading Scale

Assignment Category	Number of Graded Items	Point Value per Item	Total Points
Discussions	6	50	300
Analysis Papers	3	150	450
Video Introduction	1	50	50
Video Conclusion	1	50	50
Final Exam	1	150	150
Total Course Points:			1000

Final Grade Breakdown

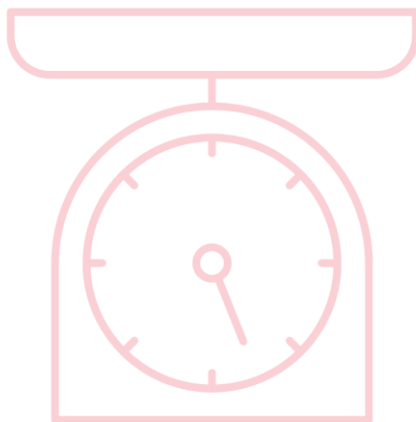
901-1000 = A

801-900 = B

701-800 = C

600-700 = D

000-599 = F





Course Schedule

Fall 2018

Module 1: The Beginnings of Modern Propaganda Aug. 20 – Sept. 7

Course Materials on the History of Propaganda

Bernays, *Propaganda*

Curtis, *Century of the Self*

Assignments: Introduction Video (Aug. 27), Discussion One (Sept. 7)

Module 2: War Propaganda Sept. 10 – Oct. 3

Course Materials on War Propaganda

Ellul, *Propaganda* (Part One)

Web Archives and Materials on War Propaganda: WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam

Assignments: Discussion Two (Sept. 17), Analysis Paper One (Oct. 3)

Module 3: Political Propaganda Oct. 8 – Oct. 23

Course Materials on Political Propaganda

Ellul, *Propaganda* (Part Two)

Web Archives and Materials on Political Propaganda: United States and Abroad

Assignments: Discussion Three (Oct. 15), Analysis Paper Two (Oct. 23)

Module 4: Propaganda and Media Oct. 24 – Nov. 5

Course Materials on Propaganda and Media

McLuhan and Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*

Assignments: Discussion Four (Nov. 5)

Module 5: Corporate and Consumerist Propaganda Nov. 6 – Nov. 21

Course Materials on Corporate and Consumerist Propaganda

Articles on Greenwashing and Pinkwashing (tbd)

Assignments: Discussion Five (Nov. 15), Analysis Paper Three (Nov. 21)

Module 6: Emerging Propaganda Nov. 26 – Dec. 5

Course Materials on Political Propaganda

Stanley, *How Propaganda Works*

Web Examples of Emerging Propaganda

Assignments: Discussion Six (Nov. 30), Final Exam (Dec. 3), Conclusion Video (Dec. 5)