

CST 460-02: Propaganda

Sample Syllabus

3 s.h. credit

M, 5:30-8:20

Instructor: Dr. Roy Schwartzman (Dr. Roy)

Office: 109 Ferguson Building

Office Hours: TBA

and by appointment

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Course Purpose

This course explores the symbolic means of engineering consent through manipulative messages. The content focuses equally on the theories of symbolic manipulation and on the examination of actual propaganda campaigns. Our purpose is threefold:

Recognize: Identify the tools and characteristics of manipulative communication.

Respond: Articulate how propaganda plays upon and reinforces social systems of power and deprivation.

Rectify: To cultivate active awareness and means of responding to manipulative communication.

Probably the best way to summarize our course is that we learn about a wide array of strategies and tactics that can control public opinion. Essentially, we get to look inside the propagandist's book of tricks so we can avoid and constructively respond to the manipulative messages that surround us.

The Communication Studies Department mission is: "We research, teach, and practice communication to cultivate the ethical voices of people that speak in critical, constructive, and transformative ways to identities, relationships, and communities." This course contributes to the departmental mission in several ways.

Critical voices: We become more aware of the context, subtext, and pretext of messages.

Constructive voices: We creatively respond to manipulative communication.

Transformative voices: We introduce ways to extend the range of communication to promote collective interests.

All these voices are ethically informed by developing an awareness of how propaganda establishes, sustains, obscures, and alters

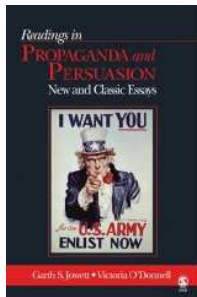
- who we think we are (identities),
- how we evaluate and compare others to ourselves (relationships),
- the policies and practices of human interaction (communities).

Course Objectives

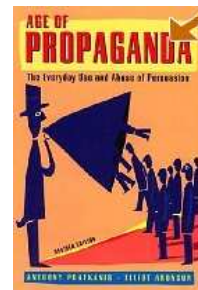
Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the conditions that foster the creation and use of propaganda;
- Recognize propaganda and distinguish it from other forms of communication;
- Identify the ethical ramifications of manipulative communication;
- Analyze and respond constructively to manipulative communication;
- Devise creative alternatives to communication that fuels hatred and fear;
- Develop skill in using symbolic resources to resist and counteract misleading or coercive messages.

Required Textbooks



- Jowett, G. S., & O'Donnell, V. (2005). *Readings in propaganda and persuasion: New and classic essays*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pratkanis, A., & Arronson, E. (2000). *Age of propaganda: The everyday use and abuse of persuasion* (Rev. ed.). New York: W. H. Freeman. ISBN: 0716731088



Dr. Roy's Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities

Article 1. You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect as an individual. You are expected to show concern and respect for others, including your fellow students and the professor.

Article 2. You are entitled to fair and impartial evaluation of your performance. *You* will never be evaluated, but your performance will be.

Article 3. You have the right to ask the reasons for any grade, assignment, or activity and to receive a straightforward response. Questions about individual grades and other personal issues will be addressed privately. Grades always are determined in relation to assignment standards and guidelines.

Article 4. You have the right (indeed, the obligation) to ask reasonable, relevant questions, whether in class or outside of class. You also have the right to have them answered (or to be advised where to find the answer).

Article 5. You have the responsibility to attend class regularly, arrive and depart on time, and to be courteous to others.

Article 6. You have the responsibility to be prepared for class. This responsibility involves doing the required reading, research, and other tasks that are expected. You are responsible for being attentive, alert, and focused on this class (not engaging in activities unrelated to the class).

Article 7. You have the responsibility to do your own work and to complete it on time.

Article 8. You have the responsibility to take pride in your work by preparing carefully and to the best of your ability.

Article 9. The professor is bound by these same rights and responsibilities.

Instructional Methods

I will strive within the bounds of legality and morality to engage you intellectually and to provide a safe, stimulating environment for creative thought. Class sessions will be highly interactive, with students as well as the professor responsible for generating and sustaining lively interactions. We will concentrate on the applications and implications of theories as well as the theories themselves. My role is that of a Socratic gadfly: to prod you toward going beyond uncritical assumptions and to extend your cognitive capabilities. Prepare to operate beyond your intellectual “comfort zone” by being ready for new ideas. That means you should arrive at every class meeting equipped to ask/answer questions and offer original insights relevant to the course material. A typical class consists of the following components:

- Discussion of propaganda strategies and their connection with communication theories
- Application of communication principles to historical and current examples
- Active response to propaganda

A *vital* component of our course is the electronic collection of resources housed on the Blackboard course site. You are expected to:

- **Check our course site regularly by logging in to <https://blackboard.uncg.edu>**
ALL course documents are housed on that site—no paper copies of the syllabus, assignment guidelines, or other documents will be distributed. Exams and quizzes will be administered via Blackboard.
- **Maintain a properly functioning, current UNCG e-mail address.** E-mail is the only way I can communicate regularly and efficiently to you beyond class. Make sure your e-mail address is listed correctly in Blackboard, since all class-wide e-mails will be sent through the Blackboard system. Blackboard defaults to your UNCG student e-mail (eSpartan) account. I strongly recommend you keep that account as your Blackboard e-mail setting and **check your UNCG e-mail at least once each day.** (Various other e-mail systems—notably Hotmail—have a record of incompatibility with Blackboard. Don’t take that risk!) Remember—CHECK YOUR E-MAIL!

Assignments and Grading Scale

Weighting of Assignments

Propaganda Patrol	100 points
Case Studies Scrapbook	100 points
Propaganda Analysis	200 points
Counter-Propaganda Campaign	250 points
Mid-Term Exam	150 points
Final Exam	150 points
<u>Daily Grades</u>	<u>50 points</u>
Total	1000 points

Course Grading Scale

A+ = 971+	A = 931-970	A- = 900-930
B+ = 871-899	B = 831-870	B- = 800-830
C+ = 771-799	C = 731-770	C- = 700-730
D+ = 671-699	D = 631-670	D- = 600-630
F = < 600		

Grades are based on points earned, not percentages. (Blackboard displays both, so pay attention to the points.) Grades are posted in the Blackboard gradebook as soon as they are tabulated for each assignment. Late work is penalized at least letter grade per day late (weekends and holidays included). Remember that grades are the result, not the objective, of your efforts.

Brief Description of Assignments (see <Assignments> content item on Blackboard for complete guidelines)

- **Propaganda Patrol**

Keep a regular blog that tracks examples of propaganda, identifying their tactics.

- **Mid-Term and Final Exams**

All short answer/essay, administered on Blackboard to conserve class time. Questions will be taken from study guides circulated in advance. Extra credit opportunities will be available.

- **Daily Grades**

A potpourri of practice performances, sample analyses, etc. The Daily Grades serve as a reward for attending consistently. No makeups of Daily Grade activities will be allowed—you must be present to win. Extra credit opportunities will be available.

- **Propaganda Analysis**

You analyze a unified body of propaganda. What techniques does the campaign employ? Why does it use these techniques instead of others? What audiences does the campaign target and why? How effectively does it adapt to the target audience? Which media are used and why? This is a minimum five (5) page research paper. We will exchange and ideas in class so you can work gradually and systematically toward the finished paper.

- **Counter-Propaganda Campaign**

Based on what you discovered in your Propaganda Analysis paper, in this assignment you explain specific strategies and tactics to prevent, counteract, and rectify negative propaganda directed against the target population. This is a minimum eight (8) page research paper. We will exchange ideas in class so you can work gradually and systematically toward the finished paper.

- **Case Studies Scrapbook**

You collect current examples of the propaganda tactics discussed in class and in the text. These examples must illustrate the use of specific concepts covered in the course.

Special Accommodations

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Disability Services located at 215 Elliott University Center (<http://www.uncg.edu/ods>; 334-5440). Accommodations will be made only for students who have documented special needs through the Office of Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services can refer you to appropriate diagnostic testing as well as document existing needs. To assure your needs are met, please register with Disability Services as early as possible.

Attendance

We can learn from each other as much as from a book or a professor. It is, therefore, important to attend and participate. Because this class meets only once per week, attendance at *every* class meeting is expected. For each absence (which is equivalent to missing a full week of classes), 30 points will be deducted from your final course grade. A tardy (late arrival or early departure) is equivalent to half an absence; tardies of more than half a class period count as a full absence. Sleeping, engaging in activities unrelated to class (such as working on assignments for other classes), and offensive or disruptive behavior (including text messaging or your cell phone ringing in class) counts as an unexcused absence. If special circumstances require an exception, please meet with me as soon as possible so we can arrange proper accommodations.

There are four legitimate excuses for absences: personal illness (hangovers and hangnails don't count), mandatory religious obligations, personal emergencies (real catastrophes), and official university-sponsored activities (e.g., intercollegiate athletics, academic conferences, etc.) that are scheduled in advance. For an absence to be excused, it must be appropriately documented. You are ALWAYS responsible for material covered, assigned, or performed whether you are in class or not on any particular day. This responsibility includes orientation to course policies. If you add the class late, please meet with me as soon as possible to catch up on what you missed. Daily assignments cannot be made up if they are missed. You assume the responsibility to notify your instructor in advance of an absence or, if that is not possible, within one (1) class period after the absence. Excuses offered weeks or months after the fact are not considered favorably and likely will not be acceptable.

Academic Honesty

It is the responsibility of everyone in the UNCG community to understand and uphold the university's Academic Honor policy. All students should become familiar with the Honor policy by reading the appropriate sections of the current *UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin* and the *UNCG Policies for Students*. You will sign or (in the case of electronic work) assent to a statement of academic integrity for all major work submitted in this course. Violation of the Honor Policy will result in full and appropriate penalty.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. All students must do their own work to maximize their learning experience. To submit a paper, oral presentation, electronic assignment, or any item that is in part or in whole the work of another unaccredited person is plagiarism. Students found guilty of plagiarism will be penalized to the fullest appropriate extent of university regulations and be reported under the guidelines on academic dishonesty found in the current *Undergraduate Bulletin*.

To avoid plagiarism, those who use words or ideas (including spoken, printed, electronically retrieved, or recorded sources) from another person's work must document the source.

To document a direct quotation in APA style, writers must:

1. include quotation marks around the material or indent it within the text to indicate their use of the source;
2. provide parenthetical notation indicating the date (required), page number (if available); and
3. include the name of the author (if available) or the title (if no author is given) either in the introduction to the quotation or within the parenthetical citation.

To document a direct quotation in an oral presentation, speakers must:

1. say the word "quote" to verbally replace written quotation marks; and
2. include the name of the author (if available) or the title (if no author is given) either immediately before or after the quotation; and
3. outline oral presentations consistent with the above rules for written material.

Instead of quoting writers or speakers, you may paraphrase the facts and ideas of others by fully digesting the concepts, then stating them in your own words and sentence structure; but you must still credit the sources as in the above notes.

Style Statement

This course requires usage of the APA (American Psychological Association) style as described in the 5th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for all materials submitted for academic credit. Use of another style may result in a reduced grade. APA citation guidelines may be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

How to Win

Students often ask me how to do well in courses. To answer this question, I have compiled a composite list of the characteristics the best students exhibit. Rather than seeking to satisfy minimal requirements (i.e., meeting standards), winning means exceeding standards. Winning performance involves:

- demonstrating curiosity about intellectual issues by raising thoughtful, relevant questions,
- evidence of careful and thorough preparation (e.g., attention to detail, planning and editing, rigorous practice),

- voluntarily making tasks more challenging by focusing on improving performance rather than meeting minimal requirements,
- seeking feedback on ideas from colleagues and offering your insights and abilities to them,
- active class participation by guiding discussion toward issues you find interesting or problematic,
- focusing on how future performance can be improved rather than on how past performance can be excused,
- approaching tasks and discussions from original or inventive perspectives.