



The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

MIT 3225F – Propaganda in Print and Visual Culture -- Fall 2018

Instructor Information

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Course Information

Lectures: Mondays 1:30pm - 4:30 FNB-2240

Prerequisites

None.

Course Syllabus

For millennia, propaganda has been in the service of empires, the religious elite, artists, poets, politicians, and has expanded to include corporate interests and the digital “public sphere.” The content of the messages may change, as well as the medium by which it is delivered, but the tactics have remained largely the same since the ancient Greeks with a view of using persuasion to effect change if not also the use of manipulation for the purposes of shifting public opinion and for social engineering. This course aims to ground students in the historical development in the methods of how propaganda and persuasion have been utilized in print and visual culture, spanning Greco-Roman art and rhetoric to contemporary use of diverse media, and how new techniques were developed alongside new forms of media technology. As an interdisciplinary course, students will be exposed to how propaganda has been in the service of the written word, architecture, visual art, and other media. This course will also ground students in an appreciation of the aesthetics of propaganda with attendant lectures on artistic movements. There will be occasional film screenings as well as plenty of visual examples for propaganda analysis. There will be comic books. There will be Nazis. There will be fake news. There will be Donald Trump.

By the end of this course, students should be capable of not only identifying the presence of propaganda, but also in explaining what methods have been employed. This course will presents the stark choice of using this knowledge to be critically informed or to be practitioners of propagandistic techniques. *Note: this course is very history-oriented.*

Learning Outcomes

Students taking this course may expect the following learning outcomes:

- * The ability to discern between propaganda and rhetoric
- * The ability to identify when a piece of media is propaganda, and how it is propagandistic

* Comprehension of propagandistic techniques throughout history and across several media forms

Required Readings

This course is lecture-based. That being said, optional and supplementary readings, video links, etc., shall be provided for your interest.

Recommended Readings

There are several texts on propaganda as well as resources on the web such as various university centres devoted to the study of propaganda (one example would be the University of Kent). Students are encouraged to visit these sites to obtain further resources that will assist them in completing their research paper. In addition to books, there are virtually thousands of articles available online and equally thousands of movies and documentaries that either deal with the subject of propaganda, or qualify as propaganda themselves.

In addition, students may prosper in tying concepts to contemporary matters by making every effort to consume a larger than usual volume of news media from several sources. This is entirely optional, but students may wish to compare same or similar news stories as they appear on various corporate or publicly-funded media including but not limited to CBC, BBC, FOX, MSNBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, Breitbart, Infowars, et al. *As students of propaganda, you should be consuming news on a daily basis directly from the news media sources themselves.*

Recent news articles will be added to our forum. Although you are not required to read them, it is strongly recommended that you do, and possibly engage in discussion.

The course will proceed chronologically, and occasionally thematically (these do not always neatly coincide). The tentative itinerary is as follows:

L	Topics	Theme
1	Introduction; overview, key terms / definitions, methodologies, propaganda types, influence and persuasion.	Introduction to the powers of persuasion
Power in the Ancient and Medieval World		
2	Rome, visual propaganda (architectural splendour, portraiture, heraldry, public executions, military parades, etc), early Christianity (Bible compilation, Paul, cathedrals)	Visual and Intimidation Propaganda
3	Norman propaganda, spread of Christianity, Middle ages, Crusades	Atrocity Propaganda I
Reason and Literacy		
4	Tudor propaganda, Renaissance and Humanism, John Milton / censorship, Cromwell, printing press, Rousseau, French Revolution.	Propaganda in Print
5	Napoleonic Era, rise of newspapers (press and control), 19th century imperialism, Bismarck, balance of power, US Civil War propaganda.	Mileage from Myths
6	British propaganda, Black/White propaganda, Atrocity propaganda, Zimmerman	Black/White Propaganda, Atrocity Propaganda II
Modern World		
7	Soviet Revolution, cinema, interwar years, Edward Bernays (SCREENING: Adam Curtis <i>Century of the Self</i> pt 1)	Agit-prop, the Id, crowd control

L	Topics	Theme
8	WWII, Goebbels, comic books / Disney (SCREENING: selection from <i>Triumph of the Will</i>)	Total Propaganda, Mileage from myths (II)
9	Post-war years, Mao, Cold War, suburbia uber alles, Vietnam War (SCREENING: kitschy 1950s educational films)	Armed Propaganda, Screen Propaganda
	Power in the Digital World	
10	Reagan, punk, Gulf Wars I & II, CNN-effect	1950s redux, Neoconservatism, 24-hour news cycle
11	Culture Jamming, Greenwashing, propaganda on the web, CIMS and astro-turfing; propaganda in Canada, eh? Pipeline propaganda.	Counter-Propaganda, Ironic ironies, message dissemination tactics in the Canadian context
12	Digital propaganda, are we any smarter? What's next? Trolls, bots, and astroturfing	Digi-prop, apathy to propaganda? Dataleaking and Snowden: Patriotism or Treason?; Five-eyes, paid trolls, Twitter.

Class discussion is very much encouraged, and although there is a great deal of lecture material to cover in the context of this course (including about 6 hours of video), we will try to generate good discussion in class.

Evaluation

25% - Small Essay (500-1000 words) Due: **October 1**

25% - Precis/Proposal of Final Paper (500 words excluding bibliography) Due: **Nov 5**

40% - Final Research Paper Due: **Nov 26**

10% - Participation. Due: Perpetually!

*** *All assignments are due by 11:55pm on the date listed if submitting online.**

***Note:** Assignment details and digital syllabus available on Sakai

In-Class Policies

PED Policy

Apart from the ease and facility of taking notes during class, students are required to use their digital devices (most notably laptops and tablets) for course purposes ONLY. Texting, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and any other use of these devices that is not course-related is highly distract-

ing and disrespectful to me and your classmates. If students feel absolutely compelled to use their devices for other purposes, they may be asked to leave and also may forfeit their participation mark for the course. The lecture is 3 hours in duration, but there is a break halfway through which can serve as an opportune time to check email, Facebook, stock market fluctuations, etc.

Communication/Consultation

I make every effort to be as flexible as possible in accommodating student requests for consultation. My office hours are posted at the top of this syllabus. During peak times (generally prior to when an assignment comes due), it may be more difficult to see me during my office hours. You may wish to “beat the rush”, which means beginning your assignments earlier and coming to me with issues as they arise. If your issue can be handled via email, then this might be preferable to in-person consultation. *Office hours are drop-in on a first come first serve basis. There is no advance booking. Please do not request to meet - just drop by.*

My policy concerning email is that I endeavour to respond within 24 hours, and at reasonable times. That means you should not expect a reply to your email delivered at 2 am or on weekends until the usual working week and daylight hours. That means 9 to 5, Monday to Friday. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please resend. NB: If I need to get in contact with you about an urgent matter, please do make a habit of keeping sufficient space on your account so the email does not bounce.

** Emails should not contain questions easily answered by either the syllabus or assignment documents.*

** If you are absent from class, please do not ask “what we missed.”*

** I do not post or provide proprietary teaching materials such as lecture notes or slides.*

** I will read working thesis statements or discuss research questions, but please do not ask me to read entire drafts of assignments out of fairness for my time, and those students who cannot benefit from such feedback.*

Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments will receive a zero. If extenuating circumstances prevent the timely submission of an assignment or paper, documentation is required (see Academic Accommodation below). All assignments must be submitted by the end of class on the due date; otherwise, students will be responsible for submitting their work to the FIMS office so that it can be verified with a date stamp. IMPORTANT: Please do not send or show me medical notes - I value your privacy and do not have the specific authorization to vet medical notes.

Electronic Submission

Unless extenuating circumstances prevents you from being present to hand in your assignment, I will not accept assignments over email; however, I am amenable to receiving submissions in traditional paper format or via the online Sakai portal. I prefer PDF submission, if possible.

Work Submission and Feedback

Apart from extenuating circumstances, I generally have a one or two week turnaround policy, which means I will have your work graded with feedback ready online. Pending my workload, you may receive feedback much sooner.

Notes from the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Information and Media Studies

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Academic Accommodation

Medical Accommodation

For Western University policy on accommodation for medical illness, see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Student Medical Certificate (SMC): http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or **assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

For **work worth less than 10% of the final grade**, the instructor will consider requests for academic accommodation on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or by appointment in office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may, however, decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can

be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.), or emergency situations. Documentation is required. If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor. If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire or some other exceptional crises, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Bereavement

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation.

For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation.

Students seeking additional bereavement leave for religious or other reasons should contact their Academic Counsellors, and provide valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

Further specific information is given in the Western Academic Calendar.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Other support services on campus:

Office of the Registrar: www.registrar.uwo.ca

Student Development Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca

Psychological Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych

Services for Students with Disabilities: www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

Accessibility Information: www.accessibility.uwo.ca/

Writing Support Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing

Learning Skills Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning

Indigenous Services: indigenous.uwo.ca/

International and Exchange Student Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int

Career Centre at Western: www.success.uwo.ca/careers/

FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS recently changed its class average policies, which specify the range between which the average marks for courses at particular levels (1000, 2000, 3000) must fall. Previously, these policies applied to all courses. **Now they apply only to required MIT courses.**

The MIT program now has the following class average policy:

- All 1000-level MIT required courses (i.e., 1020E; 1025F/G; 1050A/B) will have a class average of between 67 and 72%.
- All 2000-level MIT required courses (i.e. 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) will have a class average of between 70 and 75%.
- All 3000-level MIT required courses (i.e. 3000, 3100) will have a class average of between 72 and 77%.
- 4000-level MIT courses and courses with fewer than 20 enrolled students will be exempt from this grading policy.
- **Elective courses have no class average requirement.**

FIMS remains committed to rigorous academic standards, and to grading practices that give high marks only for high quality work. To this end, FIMS undergraduate instructors mark according to the Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range, using the full range of marks available. Please consult these Guidelines to see the standards work is expected to meet. http://www.fims.uwo.ca/acad_programs/undergrad/mit_mpi/courses/grading/averages.htm

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.