Fall 2012

Propaganda, Politics, and Media

Weapons of Mass Communication
POL-GA.1732.003 - Tuesdays 2–3:50 PM

*Weapons of Mass Communication* (Tue 2 – 3:50PM) explores the importance of media and culture in the design and delivery of mass communications intended to influence public opinion and produce a specific political outcome in both private - and public - situations.

It looks at how ‘old’ media, ‘new’ media, and the ‘news’ media intersect – and how this has created a new opportunity for combining classic propaganda techniques with contemporary campaign strategies in order to communicate an effective political message.

*Selected readings, screenings, and guest lectures.*

*Weapons of Mass Communication*

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Syllabus & General Requirements:

**Attend All Classes**
(Only one excused absence, will be permitted)

**Read and View all Books and Movies** on reading list during the course of the semester

**Read: NYT Regularly** (be prepared to discuss at least the stories contained in Tuesday’s paper – Subscribe on line to the Politics Section daily email)

**Watch: Television** Network News, Fox News, MSNBC, and Al Jezeera (now on cable in NY on TWC Ch 92 / Fios Ch 466) regularly. HBO’s ‘Newsroom’ is often good too.

**Political/media Blog and Comments** weekly. Explanation in class.

“**Tell Me Something I Don’t Already Know.**‘Bring something new to share with the class’ - (One - 10 to 12 minute presentation each week – sign up for date)

**Mid-Term**
Connect the paper – or review - to class readings and/or lectures.

**Final Project**
Group projects (2 to 3 people per group)
- Design a campaign – Do research – Present a Campaign Plan - Select a Candidate or Issue or Both – Develop Messages – Write Ads – Write/Produce examples of media designed to effectively communicate issues and ideas – using appropriate mediums for appropriate messages.
The subject of your project - and participants in your group – needs to be approved in advance by me (by October 30th 2012). See Appendix for examples of ideas.

**OR:**
Submit an Individual Academic Study paper (10 – 12 Pages), the subject of which also needs to be approved in advance by me.
Grading:

Your grade will be earned as a compilation of the following:

- Preparation for, and Participation in class 50%
- Blogs, Presentations & Mid-Term Papers 50%
- Final Projects and Other Contributions 50%

(Whoever said it had to add up to 100%? :)

Notes:

The Guest Lecturers* listed are mostly confirmed, but not yet scheduled. Due to their changing schedules, some may not be able to appear – or – need to be rescheduled - to conform to changes in their own schedules.

Please make every attempt possible (excused absences will not be given for those dates) to attend their talks. Should the date of their appearance change, I will notify you as soon as I know.

* If you bring books authored by our guest lecturers, I'm sure they would be happy to autograph them for you.

Appendix:
Some examples of possible Issues or Candidate Campaigns for Final Project
- Immigration Reform
- Anti – Tea Party Campaign
- ‘Occupy’ Campaign
- Flat Tax Campaign
- Oil and Natural Gas Industry / Clean Coal
- Independent (3rd) Party Candidate Campaign
- Imaginary Campaign (i.e. Chuck Hagel, Al Sharpton, etc.)
- European, Arab, African, or Latin American Candidates - or Government, Corporate or NGO Issues
Session I    September 4, 2012
Review Syllabus
Talk about objectives
Introductions
   Who are you?
   What do you think this class is going to be about?
   What do you expect to get out of this class?
Discussion about Media and Message

In Class Screening:
   [Primary]

Session II    September 11, 2012
Presentation 1 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)

Reading assignment
   Please read the following before arriving in class:

   Bernay’s ‘Propaganda’
   www.whale.to/b/bernays.pdf

   Walter Ong: The Tradition of Western Literacy
   “Orality, Literacy, and Media” (Chapter 9)
   www.arts.rpi.edu/~century/eao11/OngOralityLiteracy.pdf

In Class Discussion:
   Messages and Media (“In the beginning there was the word”)
   Propaganda, Politicians, and the Origin (Framing) of Ideas

In Class Screening:
   Bernays http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0OrT-8gXMs

Session III    September 18, 2012
Presentation 2 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)

Reading assignment
   Please read the following before arriving in class:

   Marshall McLuhan: Understanding Media
   Part I (pp 1-32)
   http://beforebefore.net/80f/s11/media/mcluhan.pdf
Edmond Carpenter (Became What He Beheld), Explorations in Communication 9/8/09
www.media-studies.ca/articles/carpentr.htm

Thomas Paine: Common Sense
Thomas Paine 1737 -1809

Now Playing: Night of the Living Tech, Steve Lohr, NYT 8/22/10

(Post ‘reflection’ on any or all of the reading material - and comment on other people’s ‘reflections’ before arriving in class – see ‘general requirements’)

In Class Discussion:
Media as the Environment
 Guttenberg & Unintended Consequences

In Class Screening:
Chrysler (½ time in America) spot
NY Presbyterian Hospital (little girl) spot
GE Appliance Park/Cancer Patients/Jet Engine) Spots

Session IV    September 25, 2012
Presentation 3 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)

Reading Assignment
Please read the following **before** arriving in class:

Machiavelli’s ‘The Prince’
http://www.online-literature.com/machiavelli/prince/

*Know Thine Enemy*, Noam Cohen, NYT 8/23/09

*Is Eloquence Overrated*, Peter Applebome, NYT 1/13/08

*The Rise of Popularism* Thomas Friedman NYT

Screening Assignment:
Please watch the following movies **before** arriving in class

*The Candidate*

In Class Discussion:
The Role of the Candidate
Intellectual & Emotional Content
(Discussion of Topics for Mid-Term Paper)

Guest Lecturer (and Q&A) Session: Candidate TBD

Session V  October 2, 2012
Presentation 4 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)

Reading Assignment:
Please read the following before arriving in class:

**The New Media Monopoly**, Ben H. Bagdikian, Chapter 2: The Big Five

**The Framing Wars**, Matt Bai, NYT Magazine 7/17/05

**Spinning the War, Lessons in Propaganda**, Michael I. Niman, ArtVoice 4/3/03

Screening Assignment:
Please watch the following movie before arriving in class
**War Room**

In Class Discussion:
Framing the message (and following the money)

Session VI  October 9, 2012
Presentation 5 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)

Reading Assignment:
Please read the following before arriving in class:

@Bobst: Call #: HM.881.P38 2001

**Polls Predicted a Bloomberg Blowout**, Sam Roberts, NYT 11/14/09
Five Thirty Eight: Why Obama may be Stronger than his Approval Ratings Nate Silver NYT 7/13/12

http://fivethirtyeightblogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/12/why-obama-may-be-stronger-than-his-approval-ratings/?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha24_20120713

Online Data Helping Campaigns: Tanzina Vega NYT 2/20/12

Political Scientist are Lousy Forecasters: Jacqueline Stevens NYT 6/24/12

In Class Discussion:
Polling doesn’t tell you who will win. Polling tells you how to win.

Guest Lecturer (and Q&A) Session: Nancy Belden and/or John Russenello (or Michael Rowan)

Session VII  October 16, 2012
Presentation 6 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)
Reading Assignment
Please read the following before arriving in class:

The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception, Horkheimer & Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments Stanford University Press
The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception Theodor ...

The Influencing Machine, Brooke Gladstone on the Media
Brooke Gladstone, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011

Additional Reading
Look and then Look Again Bill Marsh NYT 8/23/09
Hamas Shifts from Rockets to Culture War Ethan Bronner NYT 7/24/09
On TV, An Afghan Unit Challenges Tradition Rod Nordland NYT 11/21/10
Iranian Opposition Leader Announces Robert Worth NYT
US Turns to Radio Thom Shanker NYT
The Lede: How the Kony Video Went Viral J. David Goodman & Jennifer Preston NYT 3/9/12

In Class Discussion:
Dancing with Wolves (“Truth - You can’t handle the truth”)
Spinning “THE MEDIA”

Guest Lecturer (and Q&A) Session: Brooke Gladstone
Session VIII  October 23, 2011
Reading Assignment
Please read the following before arriving in class:

Joe McGinniss The Selling of the President, 1968

@Bobst: Call #: JF799.P.6395 2004

Please watch the following movies before arriving in class (in this order)

Cocolero
Our Brand is Crises

In class discussion:
Elections are about the Future
Emotions and Intellect

Session IX  October 30, 2012
Presentation 7 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)
Reading Assignment
Please read the following before arriving in class:


Social Media as Social Index, Jon Gertner, NYT Magazine 12/19/10
http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/12/19/magazine/ideas2010.html-Social_Media_as_Social_Index

In Singapore, Political Campaigning Goes Viral, Seth Mydans, NYT 5/6/11
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/06/world/asia/06iht-singapore06.html

Push Comes to Shove "Technology helps ignite change", Scott Shane, NYT 1/30/11
**On Al Jazeera, a Revolution Televised**, Robert F. Worth, NYT 01/29/11

**Movement Began with Outrage**, Jennifer Preston, NYT 2/6/11
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/world/middleeast/06face.html?pagewanted=all

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**Additional Reading**

- [Occupy Movement Regroups](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/12/us/occupy-wall-street.html) by Erik Eckholm, NYT 2/12/12
- [Campaign Stops: Share the Marbles](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/20/us/occupy-wall-street.html) by Jonathan Haidt, NYT 2/20/12
- [The Port Huron Statement at 50](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/04/weekinreview/04port.html) by Sam Roberts, NYT 3/4/12
- [New Politics Ahoy](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/01/opinion/01ahoy.html) by Steve Kettmann, NYT 5/1/12
- [Direct Democracy, 2.0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/opinion/06direct.html) by Nicholas Kulish, NYT 5/6/12

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**In Class Discussion:**

“At the crossroads of the future stand a thousand guardians of the past”

‘Occupy Wall Street; Occupy Media’ - Media Activism

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**Guest Lecturer** (and Q&A) Session: Joe Trippi or Bill Zimmerman

**Session X**  November 6, 2011 ELECTION DAY

Presentation 8 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)

Reading Assignment

Please read the following *before* arriving in class:

- **The Tipping Point** by Malcom Gladwell, Boston: Little, Brown, 2000
  Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 (Pages 3 – 89)
  http://fliiby.com/file/264259/ubylzdm6i.html

- **When the Internet Thinks it Knows You**, Eli Pariser, NYT 5/22/11
  http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/23/opinion/23pariser.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=When%20the%20Internet%20Thinks%20it%20Knows%20You&st=cse

- **Are you Following a Bot**, Andy Isaacson, The Atlantic 5/11
  http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/05/are-you-following-a-bot/8448/

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**Session XI**  November 13, 2012

Presentation 9 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)

Reading Assignment

Please read the following *before* arriving in class:


**Changing Concepts of Democracy**, Michael Schudson, MIT communications forum 3/6/09

**Small Media Big Revolution - (Details and Review) Blurb**
http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/S/sreberny-mohammadi_small.html

**Frost Free**, McKenzie Funk, Outside Magazine 8/09

@Bobst: Call #: HQ799.2.P6 C58 2008
http://www.gpia.info/files/u930/Bennett__Lance-
_Changing_Citizenship_in_the_Digital_Age.pdf

**Additional Reading**

“Programming Communication Networks: The demise of Public Trust and the Crises of Political Legitimacy

New Millennium Learners Francese Pedro OECD-CERI 5/06
Ol’ Mark Pincus Had A Farm Vanessa Grigoriadis Vanity Fair 6/2011

In Class Discussion:
  - Election Outcomes
  - Strategy, Tactics, and Running the Show

**Guest Lecturer** (and Q&A) Session: Mike Murphy

**Session XII** November 20, 2012
Presentation 10 (Tell me Something I don’t Know)
Reading Assignment
Please read the following **before** arriving in class:

**In Film and Life, the Story is King (“Scene Stealer”),** Michael Cieply, NYT 2/27/11

**Make Way for the Radical Center**, Thomas L. Friedman, NYT 7-24-11

In Class Discussion: Past, present, and future use of media in campaigns.
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