

COMM 303: MEDIA, POLITICS, & PROPAGANDA

Fall 2020

Tuesday/Thursday 1:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR:

Julia DeCook, PhD

E-MAIL:

jdecook@luc.edu

HOW TO ADDRESS ME:

Dr. DeCook or Professor DeCook

OFFICE:

Lewis Towers, Room 902

PRONOUNS:

she/her/hers

OFFICE HOURS:

Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
(or by appointment)

The word propaganda tends to conjure up images of World War II, the Soviet Union, or even North Korea and other communist countries. When we think of propaganda, we tend to not think of it as a modern and current thing but something that existed in the past. But the truth is, propaganda is all around us. It's not just a relic or something that doesn't exist in the present, and is being shown to us thousands of times a day. This might come as a shock, but the average American citizen is probably the most propagandized person on the planet.

Propaganda is effective when people don't realize that that's what they are seeing, listening, or experiencing. Advertising, news, and even movies are all a part of the propaganda machine that not only helps to shape public opinion and defines our realities and perceptions of the world. Propaganda utilizes a number of persuasion techniques, harnesses the power of ideology, and exists in multiple formats across every single kind of media. In fact, the propaganda industry is what shaped and defined modern public relations. Thus, despite our resistance to it, advertising is a form of propaganda. And in our current digital environment, we effectively are unable to escape propaganda.

If you were to see propaganda, how certain are you that you would be able to identify it as such? This course is going to explore the role that media plays in the spread and creation of propaganda, how politics are involved, the persuasive tactics that propaganda uses, and ultimately help students to identify and critically analyze propaganda.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

This course will enable students to understand the relationship between media and politics as well as be able to identify strategies used in propaganda, disinformation and misinformation campaigns, and the impact of technology on its history and evolution.

Students will be able to articulate the media's impact on the circulation of propaganda as well as be able to identify disinformation/misinformation and understand its significance in the political process.

REQUIRED MATERIALS/BOOKS

There are two (2) required texts for this course. Additional readings for the course will be posted on the Sakai page throughout the semester and students may need their Loyola UVID and password to access additional readings through Loyola libraries.

Titles of topics and additional readings will be listed in the course schedule and students will be expected to complete readings before class in order to fully participate in class discussion and activities.

Students are expected to have access to their own reading materials, laptops or desktop computers, notebooks, pens/pencils to take notes in class and to participate in class activities and to complete class assignments. If this is not possible for whatever reason, please let me know and we will find solutions or alternatives.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

For this class, you will need access to a reliable desktop computer, laptop computer, or tablet to be able to do the discussions, readings, viewings, and other assignments. You will need access to some kind of Word processor, like Microsoft Word, Apple Pages, or Google Docs to work on your assignments. To accomplish this, you will also need a reliable Internet connection.

You will also need to access Sakai regularly to keep up to date with the course materials. Remember that the course schedule outlines all of the required readings, and Sakai will be where readings that are *not* the required books will be.

REQUIRED BOOKS (available on Amazon or online as an eBook, etc.)

Propaganda and Persuasion (7th edition)

Authors: Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell

ISBN: 9781506371344

Propaganda

Author: Edward Bernays

ISBN: 9780970312594

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There is a total possible of 100 points that students will receive in this course. The grading scale is:

GRADE	POINTS
A	94+
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	84 to 86
B-	80 to 83
C+	77 to 79
C	74 to 76
C-	70 to 73
D+	67 to 69
D	64 to 66
F	63 and below

Below is a table that breaks down the percentage points of each assignment. Brief descriptions of the assignments are below the table.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
Syllabus Quiz	5 points
Professionalism	10 points
Discussion	25 points
Midterm Project	20 points
Final Project	40 points
TOTAL	100 points

Syllabus Quiz (5 points)

Students will be required to pass a syllabus quiz consisting of five (5) questions about the course.

Professionalism (10 points)

I expect students to be kind, patient, and understanding with one another. I expect you all to be courteous and polite in any course correspondence (email and otherwise) with me or other students. If you make an appointment with me for a meeting, I expect you to respect my time and to be on time – if something comes up, please email me or message me on Slack and let me know.

A part of your professionalism score comes from completing the readings and viewings every week, participating in discussion, and turning your assignments in on time. If any of this at any point is not possible, **communicate with me** and we will work something out.

Discussion (25 points)

I expect you all to attend class regularly, complete the readings on time, and to participate in class discussions. This course will consist of mostly online discussion on Slack (graded) with an optional Zoom discussion on **Tuesdays** during class time. You must participate in the Slack discussions in order to receive credit.

I have divided you all into groups for the Slack discussion portion of the class. You will interact with your group members every week for discussion, and every Tuesday by class time I expect you all to post your initial reactions/reflections to the reading/viewing for that week. Since discussion only works if students interact with one another, you will need to respond to your fellow students by Thursday at 5 p.m.

If a student is combative, rude, or otherwise disrespectful to other students during discussion or towards me, I will take off points from your professionalism score.

Midterm Project (20 points)

The midterm project is meant for the students to begin thinking of what their final project will be. The final project will be a *group project* and students will choose their groups early on in the semester. For the midterm, an annotated bibliography of sources, a detailed project proposal, and a project plan for the final project will be required.

Think of the topic, the form of the final project (options in the final project description below.), and build an annotated bibliography, proposal, plan, and timeline from there. All materials must be turned in to the instructor on Sakai by October 17, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.

The breakdown of points for the Midterm Project will be:

Annotated Bibliography: 5 points

Project Proposal and/or a Project Pitch (if you're designing the campaign): 10 points

Project Plan/Timeline: 5 points

Only *one student* should submit all of the materials for the Midterm Project to the instructor on Sakai, but include *all of the names of their group members* on them.

Final Project (40 points)

Students will complete a group project with their chosen group as the final requirement for this course. Working on a final project with a group will help students to think about

an issue or topic that they are interested in in a group setting, which will also encourage collaboration. The project can be one of the following:

1. Design a digital propaganda campaign for a policy, cultural belief, politician, corporation, etc. This can take shape in Instagram posts, YouTube video, a TikTok video, or whatever else you can think of. If you choose to go this route, you will need to not only provide what you create (i.e., the images/videos/posts) but also will need to write up a few pages justifying your choices, your choice in appeals/persuasive attempts, and how you came up with your ideas for the content itself.
2. Write a group research essay analyzing a piece of propaganda of your group's choice using what we have learned this semester – for example, you can write an essay examining how Marvel movies are thinly veiled U.S. Military propaganda or Amazon's advertising campaign trying to convince viewers that it's a safe company. You can even choose to go more historical and analyze older pieces of propaganda, but choosing something more recent may be more helpful.

More information for the final project will be given as the semester goes on and I will be open to suggestions from students if they have ideas that extend beyond the options presented here.

Additionally, students will be required to fill out individual *group member evaluations* for each of their group members. These ratings will be considered when final individual grades are being calculated.

These evaluations must be emailed to the instructor of the course on December 10, the same day the final version of your group project is due.

The deadline for the final project will be December 10, 2020, at 11:55 p.m. Only *one student* should submit all of the materials for the Midterm Project to the instructor on Sakai, but include all of the names of their group members on them.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communicating with your group members will be crucial in having a successful final project. Please make sure that all of you share materials, contact information, and meet regularly in order to have a successful final project. Use Slack, email, or even text messaging to coordinate times to meet and you are welcome to use Slack private messages for communicating with me. I will also have access to all of your group channels, so you can also @ me in them to ask a question from the group.

LATE WORK POLICY

You will be expected to turn in and complete all assignments on their assigned due dates at the proper time. Late work will only be accepted in certain situations, including but not limited to illness or family emergencies. If an assignment is turned in without prior approval from the instructor, it will receive a zero.

E-MAIL/SAKAI POLICY

I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on weekends. If you have not received any feedback during this period, please feel free to reach out to me again to ensure your communication was received. The same rule applies to direct messages you may send me on Slack.

I expect students to use appropriate, professional, and considerate language when communicating with me and other students via email. If you are nervous or uncertain about how to go about this, check out this presentation on email etiquette: [E-mail Etiquette for Students](#).

Students are responsible for checking Sakai, Slack, and their LUC email accounts regularly to stay up-to-date on announcements.

If you don't check your LUC email account, you should forward it to an account that you do check. You may also forward your LUC mail to a non-LUC account. Students are responsible for any information distributed via email and/or Sakai.

SENSITIVE CONTENT

During this course, students may be exposed to topics that may be triggering or traumatic. If at any point during the semester you feel uncomfortable participating in a class activity or topic due to this, please let me know and we will try to find an alternative topic for you during that week.

LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

Under the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, all personnel of institutions of higher education are classified as "mandated reporters" who must report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) if the reporter has reasonable cause to believe that a minor under 18 years of age known to the reporter in

his or her official or professional capacity may be abused (physically or sexually) or neglected.

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of Loyola University Chicago community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the [LUC Health Center](#).

ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Center to the instructor.

The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty. Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;
- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts.

Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is an act of personal and professional courtesy, as well as intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://luc.edu/english/writing>.

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for

credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course.

All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication. The office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances.

The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans. Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations. (The School of Communication policy is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy of the College of Arts & Sciences.)

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – start of Unit 1 August 27 & August 29	Introduction of <i>Propaganda</i> by Bernays Viewing: Why do women shave their legs? NO SLACK DISCUSSION THIS WEEK, PLEASE ATTEND ZOOM CLASS ON TUESDAY (if you can) SYLLABUS QUIZ DUE AUGUST 28 AT 11:55 P.M.
Week 2 September 3 & September 5	Chapter 1 of <i>Propaganda and Persuasion</i> Additional reading: The Rise of the Like Economy Viewing: You're being manipulated and don't even know it How biased are our algorithms?
Week 3 September 8 & September 10	Chapter 2 of <i>Propaganda and Persuasion</i> Chapter II and III of <i>Propaganda</i> by Bernays Viewing: How Hitler conquered Germany: The Nazi propaganda machine exploited ordinary Germans by encouraging them to be co-producers of a false reality.
Week 4 September 15 & September 17	Chapter 3 of <i>Propaganda and Persuasion</i> Chapter IV and V of <i>Propaganda</i> by Bernays Viewings: Coca-Cola America Is Beautiful Google Home – Loretta Thank you Amazon Heroes

[You Can't Stop Us](#)

[The dangerous ways ads see women](#)

[Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse](#)

Week 5 – Start of Unit 2
September 24 & September 26

Chapter 4 of *Propaganda and Persuasion*

[The Myth of the Liberal Media: The Propaganda Model of News](#) (on Kanopy)

Week 6
September 29 & October 1

Chapter 5 of *Propaganda and Persuasion*

Additional readings:

[Is Digital Age Propaganda Fundamentally Different From That Of Past Eras?](#)

[The Bots That Are Changing Politics](#)

[What Facebook Did to American Democracy](#)

Week 7
October 6 & October 8

Chapter 6 of *Propaganda and Persuasion*

Chapter VI of *Propaganda* by Bernays

Additional reading:

Hall – By the whites of their eyes (Sakai)

Viewing:

[President Trump walks across Lafayette Park to St. John's Church](#)

[Why obvious lies make great propaganda](#)

Discussion Assignment for this week:

Analyze a piece of propaganda of your choice – this can be an advertisement, a film, a song, a meme, etc. If you're struggling, let me know and we'll pick something out together.

Week 8 - Start of Unit 3
October 13 & October 15

Chapter 7 of *Propaganda and Persuasion*,
Case study 1

Chapter VII of *Propaganda* by Bernays

Viewing:

[The real story behind this war poster](#)

[Women's Suffrage: Visual Propaganda](#)

Discussion assignment for this week:

Find an advertisement, film, song, or any kind of media object of your choosing that is targeted towards women/spreads certain ideas and beliefs about women and analyze it using the techniques we've learned. For example, this [Nike ad](#) and [this one](#) and [this one](#).

More importantly, I want you all to think about how women are targeted by propaganda and how female empowerment has been co-opted by capitalism.

Week 9
October 20 & October 22

Chapter 7 of *Propaganda and Persuasion*,
case study 2

Chapter VIII of *Propaganda* by Bernays

Viewing:

[A Burning Question: Propaganda and the Denial of Climate Change](#) (on Kanopy)

Discussion assignment for this week:

Find a piece of anti-science propaganda (anti-vaccine, climate change, "COVID is a hoax", etc.) and analyze it using the techniques we've learned.

Week 10
October 27 and October 29

Chapter 7 of *Propaganda and Persuasion*,
case study 3

Chapter IX of *Propaganda* by Bernays

Additional reading:

	<p>Viewing: Health and wellness: Don't take Instagram's word for it</p> <p>Myths you learned in health class</p> <p>Netflix documentary series "(Un)well," Episode on Essential Oils (episode 1)</p> <p>Discussion assignment for this week: Find a pharmaceutical, health/wellness, or fitness advertisement (or other types of media content) and analyze it using the propaganda techniques we've learned. This can include posts from "wellness influencers" on Instagram or TikTok</p>
<p>Week 11 November 3 and November 5</p>	<p>Chapter 7 of <i>Propaganda and Persuasion</i>, case study 4</p> <p>Chapter X of <i>Propaganda</i> by Bernays</p> <p>No discussion this week (November 3, Election Day)</p> <p>Extra credit: Share a picture of you in the "General" Slack channel with your "I Voted" sticker</p>
<p>Week 12 – Unit 4 November 10 and November 12</p>	<p>Chapter X and XI of <i>Propaganda</i> by Bernays</p> <p>Chapter 8 of <i>Propaganda and Persuasion</i></p> <p>Additional readings: The Making of the Fox News White House</p> <p>Viewing/Listening: Inside a Russian Troll Farm</p> <p>'They would have let Hitler buy ads': Sacha Baron Cohen's scathing attack on Facebook</p>
<p>Week 13 November 17 and November 19</p>	<p>Stanley – Language as a Mechanism of Control</p>

Additional readings:

[Memos are taking the alt-right's message of hate mainstream](#)

[We Analyzed How the "Great Replacement" and Far Right Ideas Spread Online. The Trends Reveal Deep Concerns](#)

Bonus to understand capitalist propaganda:

[Workism is making Americans Miserable](#)

Week 14
November 24 and November 26

NO CLASS THIS WEEK – HAPPY
THANKSGIVING ☺

Thanksgiving Break is November 23 to
November 29

I will hold office hours on Monday, November
23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Week 15
December 1 and December 3

Share your final group project in the
“general” channel on Slack and let your
classmates see what your group
created/wrote! Post by December 1, respond
by December 4.

Week 16
Finals Week

Submit all final group project materials to the
Sakai assignment folder by **December 10 at
11:55 p.m.**