

Political Science 4081: Propaganda and Politics

Fall 2019

Tu/Th 12:30PM – 1:45 PM

CHSS 232

CRN: 82115

Credit Hours 3

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Office Hours: M/W 1:00pm-3:00pm or by appointment

Course Description

This class will students to the varied ways propaganda is produced and why it is used. We will cover its role in reinforcing state legitimacy, and whether it works. Additionally, we will cover how propaganda is used to influence political outcomes in the areas of protest, terrorism, and radical ideologies. At the end of this course, students will be able to identify propaganda when they see it, evaluate sources for propaganda, and take the steps needed separate propaganda from truth.

Rather than conducting this class as a regular small lecture, this course will be seminar style. This means that class time will be devoted to discussion more than taking notes from a lecture. This means that having the reading done before the week's class is especially important.

Learning Objectives

Course expectations can always be vague. Since you will use these scores at the end of the semester to evaluate this course, looking at the learning objectives from the IDEA evaluations will give you a better picture of what this class will be like. The most important skills you will learn follow:

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)
2. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
3. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions).

I will go over these in more detail during the introductory portions of the course.

Blackboard

All communication for this course will be conducted via the course's Blackboard site and University email. Any supplementary material, assignments, or changes to the course structure will be made available on this site. Each student should ensure that they have access to these materials and are able to receive emails through their student account. Please note that I cannot accept or respond to student emails that come from a non-university address.

I usually respond to emails within 24 hours of receipt, earlier if they are sent during typical business hours (9am-5/6pm). Please do not send a second email until the 24 hour waiting period is up. If there is an emergency, please take care of that first. I am always happy to work around personal emergencies when it comes to the completion of coursework.

Attendance

Past the 12 day deadline required by the university, I will not be taking regular attendance. It is the duty of the student to come to class, and those who do perform better. Because the class is discussion based, and will be conducted like a seminar, it will be easy for me to tell who is not there.

Course Material

There is no assigned text for this course. Instead, readings will be provided via pdf on the course Blackboard page. Each week, on the "Course Readings" page, students will find a folder corresponding to that week's topic.

Normally, it will contain one article or book selection focusing on that week's topic and one literature review provided as an example of the kind of social science writing that you will be able to produce when the course concludes. ***It is necessary that you complete these readings before the first class of the week, as we will use them over the course of discussion.***

Assignments

Assignment	Points	Weight
Case Study I: Descriptive	0-5	20%
Case Study II: Analytical	0-5	20%
Case Study III: Analytical	0-5	20%
Final Concept Exam	% Correct	20%
Participation	0-5	20%

Participation

Because this is a seminar style course that is focused on a wide range of topics in a newer area of research, it is important that students both keep up with the week's reading

and participate in class discussions. This kind of learning is both more active (meaning nobody gets bored hearing me drone on in lecture), and more effective. The instructor will act as a moderator and guide for the discussion.

Final Concept Exam

The final exam will cover all of the general concepts, theories, and primary findings of the propaganda research that we will discuss over the course of the semester. This is designed to make sure students are all on the same page regarding the important ideas discussed during class. It will consist of 50 multiple choice questions, worth two points each. There *will* be a review session held in class before the exam and a review sheet created by the instructor and students.

Case Studies

Case studies will give students the chance to choose a propaganda campaign, or event shrouded in propaganda, and apply course material to it. Each case will be between 3-5 pages (rubrics and outlines will be distributed later in the semester). The first will ask students to practice describing the components and characteristics of an event of their choice while the second and third will ask students to analyze other cases.

Blackboard Journal

While I can promise a safe and inclusive classroom environment, I understand that not everyone is comfortable or confident speaking in class. Students will have access to an individual, private (except for the instructor), journal on Blackboard where they can post their questions, comments, or supplement something they said in class. While this will not count as a complete replacement for participating in class, it is there for students who wish to add anything between classes, did not feel confident enough to, or get a chance to speak during class itself. This is not a required assignment, just an option.

Grading Scale

- A: 4-5
- B: 3-4
- C: 2-3
- D: 1-2
- F: 0-1

I understand that a six point scale for grading is a bit unconventional. However, because so much of this class is devoted to writing, a different grading scale is needed. There is no benefit to using 100 point scales when it comes to writing, since it is either broadly good, or needs work, or shows improvement, or does not. (As you will see in class, this is an example of issues that crop up trying to measure things in the social sciences). Additionally, this scale cuts down on students needing to worry about every little point—getting an 88 vs an 85 on a paper for example. **All** rubrics used for assignments will follow this scale.

Classroom Conduct

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cell phones must be turned off before class begins.

Students may use laptops/tablets to take notes, as long as they do not distract other students. If this happens, students with computers may be asked to sit towards the back of the room.

Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy. The instructor reserves the right to ask students to cease disruptive behavior that is not listed here.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Please be aware that plagiarized work and any form of academic dishonesty will result in an “F” on the assignment. SHSU [Academic Policy Statement 810213](#) outlines the definition of academic honesty and the related disciplinary procedures.

You should also familiarize yourself of [Academic Policy Statement 900823](#), which outlines the procedures for students to file an academic grievance should you wish to appeal your grade for reasons other than academic dishonesty. Please read over these policies. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/~slo_www/

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form

notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf>

Students with Disabilities Policy

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>

Visitors in the Classroom

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Copyright on Lecture and Course Materials

Copyright 2019 (Christopher Patane) as to this syllabus and all lectures. During this course, students are prohibited from selling notes or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the instructor teaching this course.

Mental Health

Sometimes the study of Political Science involves dealing with difficult material. In some cases

these may reflect or reference your own personal, family, or group experiences. Other times, life events may interfere with your ability to succeed in class. We do not want neglect our own health or well-being. If you need support, the Counseling Center can be reached at 936-294-1720. The [website](#) also contains self-help resources, and those services available in the Huntsville community.

As with all other parts of the course, students are welcome and encouraged to come talk to me to voice their concerns, seek support, or discuss accommodation for coursework after a crisis.

Class Outline

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Changes will be announced in class and on the course Blackboard site. It is the responsibility of the student to take note of any changes.

Week 1: August 22

Course Introduction

Topics: What do you mean I have to talk? My God that's a lot of reading! And other things to not be afraid of.

Week 2: August 27 & 29

Defining Propaganda

Topics: What is propaganda? Why can't we agree on what it is? Is propaganda ok if the "good guys" do it?

Week 3: September 3 & 5

A Brief History of Propaganda

Topics: Making sure we all have some common examples.

Week 4: September 10 & 12

Does Propaganda Work? I

Topics: Why can't people tell its propaganda? If they could, would they care?

Week 5: September 17 & 19

Does Propaganda Work? II

Topics: Does propaganda actually work? Why didn't the internet fix all this?

Week 6: September 24-26

State Propaganda I: A Communications Perspective

Topics: Theories of propaganda. How it affects individuals.

Week 7: October 1 & 3

No Class, Social Practice of Human Rights Conference

Week 8: October 8-10

State Propaganda II: A Political Science Perspective

Topics: How propaganda affects politics. Legitimation. Lying about democracy.

Week 9: October 15-17

Non-State Propaganda: Fake News

Topics: Why it exists. How it works. How it spreads. How it affects politics.

Week 10: October 22 & 24

Non-State Propaganda: Radicalization and De-Radicalization

Topics: When propaganda is extreme, does it make people extreme? How do we counter it?

Week 11: October 29 & 31

Non-State Propaganda: Terrorism

Topics: How do terrorists use propaganda? Is it different from states?

Week 12: November 5 & 7

Propaganda and Data

Topics: When are statistics lies? How can we tell? What do we do about it?

Week 13: November 12 & 14

Uncovering and Refuting Propaganda

Topics: How do we counteract propaganda? Does that even work? How do we tell the truth safely?

Week 14: November 19 & 21

Some Exceptions and Other Cool Things

Topics: What if propaganda backfires? Preference falsification. Adapting propaganda for the modern world.

Week 15: November 26 & 28

No Class, Thanksgiving Break

Week 16: December 3 & 5

The Weird Stuff: Conspiracy Theories and Cults

Topics: Why do people fall for super weird ideas? How do they get out?

Final Exam Review

Week 17: December 10 & 12

Finals Week

Final Concept Exam, Tuesday December 10 from 1:00pm-3:00pm
Case Study 3 due Thursday, December 12 at 11:59pm