

TRUTH AND PROPAGANDA
IDS 6937/4930
Florida International University
Department of Philosophy
Summer-A 2010
T/R (6:30-8:45 p.m.), GC 271b

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Office: DM 344a
Office Hours: T/R 1-2

Course Description

In this class we shall examine the nature, history, use, and morality of propaganda, and other forms of persuasive manipulation. Propaganda often has a visual component, so we will make extensive use of the Wolfsonian's collection of posters, drawings, books, ephemera and other objects. Two class visits to the Wolfsonian have been scheduled, though students can also arrange times to examine the collection individually.

We will examine propaganda as it was used, and evolved, during the ideological struggles and Great Power conflicts of the 20th Century. We will compare and contrast traditional and familiar uses of propaganda, in war, and by totalitarian states, to present-day methods arising from the strategies of advertisers, marketers, public relations firms, mass media, and governments to manage issues, manipulate citizens, and create bias. Ethical implications of various forms of persuasion, from the explicit hate propaganda of Fascist dictatorships, to media manipulation for the sake of commerce, art, and public relations will be considered.

Questions to be investigated include: What is propaganda? How can it be identified? What ethical issues does it raise? What is the relationship between war and propaganda? How does propaganda in democracies differ from in dictatorships? How does propaganda today differ from propaganda in the early 20th century? How do ideas and ideologies get transmitted? What makes propaganda effective? What is the function of propaganda in the internet age? What forms of propaganda can be identify from our daily lives?

By taking this course students should develop a sophisticated awareness of propaganda, and its problematical, but important, role in the world today.

Required Texts

1. Jowett, G.S. & V. O'Donnell. (2006). *Readings in Propaganda and Persuasion: New and Classic Essays*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

2. Marlin, R. (2002). *Propaganda & the Ethics of Persuasion*. Broadview.

(Some additional readings to be provided by the instructor on Blackboard or through Google.)

Optional text available by special request only: Bill Schroeder and M.R. Steele (2002). *In Der Fuehrer's Face*. Schroeder.

Grading and Requirements

(1) Object study:	10%	May 19
(2) Intro. to term paper	5%	May 26
(3) Take home test:	20%	June 9
(4) Scavenger hunt:	15%	June 14
(5) Term Paper:	30%	June 21
(6) Attendance and participation:	20%	

(1) Object study: Do a short report on a propagandistic object from the Wolfsonian.

(2) Write a one-page introduction to your term paper in which you (a) identify your topic, (b) state your thesis, (c) explain how the paper will be organized, and (d) provide 5-10 secondary sources (not already among the assigned readings).

(4) Use a propaganda analysis to identify objects in the Wolfsonian's collection.

(5) Write an 8-10 page paper (graduate students 16-20 pages) about a contemporary propaganda campaign that you have researched, where you (a) compare and contrast it to propaganda from the past; (b) use the readings to illuminate the nature of the campaign; (c) discuss the historical and social context (what is the setting and what distinctive cultural forces are in play?); (d) identify and explain any "big ideas" integral to the campaign (e.g. God, Globalization, Terrorism, etc...) while also revealing what hidden assumptions are made, and what ideologies are motivating the campaign; (e) explain who is behind the campaign, what they want, and who their allies are; (f) explain what the propagandistic message is and describe how is it conveyed; does it have rational or emotional? How truthful or deceptive is it? (g) is it transmitted successfully? What are the strong and weak points of the techniques? Is it having the intended effect? Who is the target audience?

Topic Schedule

Week 1

May 10: Introduction to the course

May 12: Orientation visit to Wolfsonian

Readings: (a) Marlin, Ch.1, (b) Jowett & O'Donnell (JO), Intro., (c) Ellul (JO, Ch.1), (d) George Orwell "politics and the English Language" (online)

Assignment: Object Study, due May 19

Week 2

May 17: (Frank Luca): British atrocity propaganda in WWI

Readings: (a) Marlin Ch.2, (b) Bennett & O'Rourke (JO, Ch. 2)

May 19: (Ray Scattone): Greenwashing & "The sunny side of the atom"

Readings: (a) Marlin Ch.3, & (c) Goldman, Hillgartner (on Blackboard)

Week 3

May 24: Catch up on Historical readings

Readings: (a) Taylor, (b) Welch & (c) Burke (JO, chs. 5, 6, 7)

May 26:

Readings: (a) Marlin Ch.3, (c) Thum & Thum (JO, Ch.3)

Assignment: Introduction to paper due (5%)

Week 4

May 31: Ethical theory,

Readings: (a) Marlin, Ch.4, (b) Sorenson (JO, ch.4)

June 2: Psych. Warfare

Readings: (a) Linebarger (JO, ch.9), (b) Jowett (JO, ch.10)

Assignment: Take home test assigned

Week 5

June 7: Advertising & PR

Readings: (a) Marlin, Ch.5, (b) Naomi Klein - “The Tyranny of Brands” The New Statesmen [online], (c) Thomas Frank– “Markets R Us” The New Statesmen [online]

June 9: (Jon Mogul, New Deal) & 2nd visit to Wolfsonian

Readings: (a) Culbert (JO, Ch.8), (b) Jay Black “Semantics and the Ethics of Propaganda” (PDF on Blackboard).

Assignment: (a) Take home test due (20%) (b) Scavenger hunt report assigned

Week 6

June 14: (Paul Warren, Free Speech, more ethics)

Readings: (a) Marlin, Ch.6, (b) Marcuse “Repressive tolerance,” (online)

Assignment: Scavenger hunt report due

June 16: The Propaganda Model

Readings: (a) Cromwell, “The propaganda model: An overview,” (b) Herman “The Propaganda model: A retrospective,” (c) Klaehn “A critical review and assessment...” (All online at Chomsky info).

Week 7: The Question of Controls & Democracy and the Internet

June 21:

Readings: (a) Marlin, ch.8, (b) Snow JO, ch.12, (c) Chomsky, “Language, Politics and Propaganda” (online) (d) Skim Marlin ch.7

Assignment: PAPERS DUE in class, June 21!

June 23: Wrap up

Readings: (a) O’Donnell, JO ch. 11, (b) Kaplan, JO ch.13, (c) Cavin, JO, ch.14

Grading Scheme

A	90 – 100
A-	80 - 89
B+	77 - 79
B	73 - 76
B-	70 - 72
C+	67 - 69

C	63 - 66
C-	60 - 62
D+	57 - 59
D	53 - 56
D-	50 - 52
F	< 50