It is a fundamental mistake to see the enemy as a set of targets. The enemy in war is a group of people. Some of them will have to be killed. Others will have to be captured or driven into hiding. The overwhelming majority, however, have to be persuaded.


Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed. He who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes or decisions possible or impossible to execute.

(Abraham Lincoln)

One cannot wage war under present conditions without the support of public opinion, which is tremendously molded by the press and other forms of propaganda.

(General Douglas MacArthur)

The real target in war is the mind of the enemy commander, not the bodies of his troops.

(Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart, Thoughts on War, 1944)

“Some of the best weapons do not shoot.”

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course explores the diverse relationships between, on the one hand, symbols and messages (both verbal and non-verbal) and, on the other hand, political ideologies and movements, collective identities, power, conflict, and security. It has been recognized since at least World War I that conflicts are primarily “wars of ideas,” not just contests of arms. According to Vladimir Tismaneanu, a Harvard scholar of political transition, “individuals need something more than bread and water: human beings need to make sense of their very existence, to find a cause worth living for [and, one may add, fighting for], to construct a set of values that allow one to make distinctions between good and evil” (x). Such symbolic sense-making is fundamental to the creation and survival of human communities and to the construction of collective identities, including those of nations, groups, and movements (including social movements, criminal organizations, prison gangs, insurgencies, congregations, and others). Political struggle today is to a large extent struggle over meaning, struggle over symbols and conducted with and through symbols (words, images, material symbols, symbolic events). International conflicts increasingly involve asymmetrical confrontations with diverse networks of actors in loose, horizontal coalitions coalescing around shared narratives and symbols, often based on a common ideological (political or religious) identity or simply on the idea of struggle itself as a unifying, motivating, and organizing mechanism. As many scholars have noted, “[o]ne of the key implications of the Information Age for global politics is the dramatically increased significance of the broadcasting or projection of information, through a variety of means, as an instrument of power” (Malone, Jeff and Armistead, Leigh. “Speaking Out of Both Sides of Your Mouth: Approaches to Perception Management in Washington, D.C. and Canberra.” In Macdonald, Scot. Propaganda and Information Warfare in the Twenty-First Century. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. 139-151.)

The course introduces students to the basic concepts underlying analysis of a wide variety of symbolic artifacts, including political and propaganda texts (posters, flyers, photography, film, video, digital communications, and so on), and other verbal and non-verbal forms of strategic and tactical messaging and symbolic action in persuasion, motivation, recruitment, identity and attitude formation, and influencing action. The major topics will help you understand the complex relationships between symbolic activities, conflict, and security:

- Foundations of Rhetoric
- Rhetorical Leadership: Rhetoric as Motivation, Mobilization, and Persuasion
- Ideology, Propaganda, and Rhetoric in Nazism and Communism
- Rhetoric and Conflict: Propaganda and Psychological Warfare
- Understanding Terrorism and/as Rhetoric
- Understanding the Power of Images
- Understanding the Power of Narrative
- Understanding the Power of Symbols in Politics, Conflict, and Construction of Collective Identities
- Strategic Communication and Perception Management in the 21st Century
This course is very much an effort at collective inquiry. I do not have all the answers. What I offer is a set of concepts, models, and historical cases that we can apply to new data. While much is known about the mechanisms of, for instance, Nazi or Communist propaganda, we are just learning about the dynamics of radical Islamist propaganda, the recruitment strategies of various extremist or criminal groups, or how to deal with the challenges of global strategic communication in the age of digital media. As part of our inquiry into these mechanisms and into the contemporary “wars of ideas,” we will examine texts, events, videos, and other symbolic material, some of which will be supplied or discovered by the students and shared in class. We will also bring the collective wisdom and the diverse expertise present in the class to their examination and analysis.

This is an interdisciplinary course for graduate students. The purpose of this class is to produce leaders from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds who can effectively and efficiently identify, design, and mobilize the appropriate community resources to prevent, deter, preempt, defend against, and respond to criminal acts, terrorist attacks, other acts of war or natural disasters as they impact homeland security on the local, regional, national and international levels.

Homeland security encompasses a grouping of diverse missions and functions that are performed by a wide variety of organizations on the local, state, federal and international levels. Consequently, there are many definitions of homeland security. For the purposes of this course, homeland security is defined as:

"The prevention, deterrence and preemption of, and defense against, external and internal threats and aggression targeted at U.S. (or another sovereign state's) territory, sovereignty, population, and infrastructure, as well as the management of the consequences of such threats and aggression and other domestic emergencies."

Familiarity with the way symbols, words, and all kinds of communications (including visual and digital) work to generate or ameliorate conflict, to construct collective identities for political actors, to promulgate ideologies and recruit supporters for ideas and actions, or to predict and prevent actions are an important aspect of the preparation of professionals in all areas of national security.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

In this course, you will learn how to

- Analyze rhetorical artifacts in terms of the fundamental elements of persuasion: rhetorical situation, ethos, pathos, logos, stasis, argumentative strategies, and others.
- Recognize key aspects of verbal and visual communications characteristic of specific political ideologies: Nazism, Communism, Islamism, and varieties of domestic extremism
- Distinguish different genres of security- and conflict-related communications (propaganda, psychological warfare, and strategic communications) and analyze them in terms of their core ideology, strategic objective and tactical purpose, focus of appeal,
target audience, design elements, clusters of key terms, strategic oppositions, medium of delivery, and so on.

- Understand and analyze the symbolic mechanisms the attend human action, underlie motivation, and shape human actors’ understanding of their worlds (for instance, how narratives shape various actors’ understanding of their world, steer them toward specific goals, and motivate specific actions)
- Understand the role of symbols in human action, conflict, and in the construction of collective identities.

TEXTS

Ornatowski, Cezar. *HSec 690 Ideology, Discourse, and Conflict*. Course materials available from CalCopy on College Avenue.

ASSIGNMENTS

The major assignments in the class include two short (10 minute) class presentations and a final paper. The final paper may be an analysis of any of the following: a propaganda artifact (text, narrative, video, film, symbol, act, performance, and so on), campaign, or some other form of messaging or communication characteristic of an ideology, movement, group, or action; or of any case that explores the relationship between symbolism, rhetoric, communication, and security. The final paper should be 10+ pages.

CLASS POLICIES

Special Circumstances Policy

Please let me know of any special circumstances regarding your ability to attend class or complete assignments by their due dates (e.g., work schedule, conflict with other classes, etc.). Note that you must notify me before, not after, these assignments are due and that I will require proof of said difficulty. Failure to do so will result in an F or no-credit for the assignment. In the case of disability and/or learning disorder, please notify me directly before or after class or during office hours so that I can provide the proper academic accommodations per your specific Authorization for Accommodations Form.

Non-attribution Policy

This class, as a part of its curriculum, presents the student with a wide range of highly qualified and informative classmates, guest speakers, and professors. In order for these classmates, guest speakers, and professors to feel free to speak candidly, they are assured that what is said in lecture will not be repeated publicly outside the classroom, regardless of classification. To repeat what has been said in lecture to others outside the H Sec 602 environment risks calling fellow students, guest speakers, and professors to account publicly for his or her opinions and
comments. This in turn could have the effect of stifling your classmates, guest speakers and professors, causing them to speak in a guarded manner. Ultimately the quality of education provided in the seminar would suffer. Hence, what your fellow students, guest speakers, and professors say during their lectures is not for attribution. It is acceptable to say "someone in my class" made a particular statement, but the individual's name must not be divulged. Individuals who violate the non-attribution policy are subject to adverse administrative and disciplinary action per University policy.

GRADES

Your grade in the course will be based on the quality of your written work (final paper), preparation (class presentations), and on your class participation.

FINAL PAPER

Please write a paper (10 pages +, double-spaced) on any symbolic or rhetorical problematic (historical case study, analysis of relevant artifact, analysis of a communication issue, research project of some symbolic action, collective identity, messaging and influencing strategy, and so on). Final papers are due to me by Dec. 16 by 7:00 pm. You may leave them in my mailbox in the RWS department office in Storm Hall West (SHW), or slip them under my office door (SHW-111). Please do not send them electronically.

Thank you for your good work and effort and best of luck!