

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

**PHIL 2900, TRUTH AND PROPAGANDA**

**TERM: Fall/Winter, 2011-12**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Randal Marlin

**CLASS TIMES:** Mon. & Wed. 10:05-11:25 a.m.

**OFFICE:** 3A38 Paterson Hall

**OFFICE HOURS:** Mon. & Wed. 11:35 a.m.- 1 p.m.

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**Teaching Assistant:** Micah Clark

**Office hours, first term:** TBA

**Prerequisite:** A course in Philosophy or Second-year standing.

**Evaluation**

There will be an essay worth 40% of the final mark. Details about this essay are provided below. Two formally scheduled, three-hour examinations worth 30% each will be held in December and April.

**Required texts**

Note: All the textbooks other than the coursepack readings are available at New Octopus Books, 116 Third Avenue (just west of Bank St.).

Randal Marlin, Propaganda and The Ethics of Persuasion

Randal Marlin (ed.), Truth and Propaganda. Coursepack readings available only at Carleton University Bookstore.

Jacques Ellul, Propaganda

John Mearsheimer, Why Leaders Lie

Mickey Huff and Project Censored: Censored 2012: Sourcebook for the Media Revolution. The Top Censored Stories of 2010-2011 (available in October). It is likely that not all of this text will be used.

Highly recommended:

Stephen J.A. Ward, The Invention of Journalism Ethics

George Lakoff, Don't Think of an Elephant!  
Wendell Potter, Deadly Spin

Other reading materials will be on reserve in the main library, and on the Internet. On the latter see, notably, Global Media Journal, Canadian Edition, Vol. III, No 2 devoted to "Propaganda, Ethics and Media," December, 2010. It is most important that students be able to access the Net conveniently.

### **Course description**

What is propaganda? We often hear this term used pejoratively as an accusation. But ambiguities make the nature of the charge unclear. This course aims at providing an understanding of techniques of persuasion, both ancient and modern, in the light of which propaganda as a phenomenon can best be understood. Students should get a heightened awareness of the many influences on their opinions and attitudes, not all of which would necessarily be termed "propaganda." Misleading use of language and statistics, advertising imagery, political disinformation, press agency, ideologically motivated funding of "think tanks," reporting and editorial biases, all make it difficult for the ordinary citizen to make sound democratic choices. Knowledge of the various persuasive techniques will, it is hoped, improve individual freedom and autonomy. The ethics of various forms of persuasion is examined. The question of social and legal controls over communication is also treated, in the context of, e.g., hate propaganda, media ownership, world information imbalance, censorship and curriculum materials in schools, etc. The problem of relativity of "truth" and the concept of bias and objectivity are recurring questions that receive attention.

### **Guide to the Essay**

One essay, of about 3,000 words, will be required, due Wednesday, February 15, 5 p.m. at the latest. Essays with their dossiers are usually too big to fit the drop-off box, but I plan to be in my office to receive them during the afternoon of the 15th. Late essays will not ordinarily be accepted.

In the essay the student should produce some sample of current propaganda and analyze it, giving reasons for viewing the material as propaganda, discussing its likely or intended impact on the recipient, and commenting on the ethics of using such a form of appeal. By "current" is meant anything subsequent to February, 2011.

Students should hand in, along with their essay, a dossier of the materials discussed (e.g. photocopies of news stories or commentaries, press releases, audiotapes, videotapes, downloaded materials from the Internet, etc.). It is very important to present these in an orderly, easily retrievable format. A large, at least 11"x14," scrapbook may be advisable if you are working with newspaper clippings.

Some formatting guidelines can be found in the American Psychological Association website: <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx>, but any generally accepted academic style can be used, if used consistently.

Suggested Topics. New suggestions will be made from time to time as events unfold. The following subjects are fertile fields for propaganda.

(1) The Ontario election, Oct. 6. This will involve gathering materials almost immediately. An interesting contest will be the riding where Randall Denley is running. He was a long-standing provocative Ottawa Citizen columnist dealing with City Council issues.

(2) There are City of Ottawa issues. The redevelopment of Lansdowne Park is one such issue, mass transit another, with concerns about the extent of developer influence over City Hall.

(3) Wikileaks about the U.S. led war in Afghanistan, and media coverage of these has arguably produced propaganda for and against continued involvement of foreign troops there. Iraq, Libya, Iran and North Korea are other areas giving rise to propaganda, with some arguing for military action against the latter two to prevent or reduce the threat of nuclear weapons capability.

(4) The Quebecor (Sun Media, TVA) success in obtaining a licence for an all-news channel, Sun TV News, is seen by many, including Margaret Atwood, as a move to bring Fox News-style reporting to Canada, with its polemical treatment of issues. Such fears were fueled by a meeting between Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and his media spokesman at the time, Kory Tenecyke, and Rupert Murdoch in New York March 30, 2009. Rupert Murdoch, who has enjoyed legendary influence over political leaders worldwide through the massive reach of his print media and broadcasting empire (Fox News, the Wall Street Journal, The Times of London, are only a few examples of many) recently got into hot water regarding his racy News of the World, which was exposed for hacking scandalously into people's private correspondence. He attempted damage control by closing that hugely profitable media outlet, but new stories and commentary have followed. Sorting the truth from the propaganda in this continuing saga would be a worthwhile (though difficult) undertaking.

(5) The treatment of Maher Arar was shown by Kerry Pither and the government inquiry into his treatment to have important propagandistic ramifications. Watch for treatment of other terror suspects, and for anti-Muslim or anti-American propaganda.

(6) The issue of global warming, climate change, and the fate of the Kyoto accords. Watch for "astroturf" from the oil industry and others.

(7) Canadian federalism vs. Quebec separatism. Watch for different ways in which incidents, such as enforcement of Quebec's language law, get reported in media (French and English) with different commitments or sympathies. A sharp line between information and propaganda is not always easy to draw.

(8) The U.S. has on-going struggles between the Tea Party faction of the Republican Party and others. Some of the issues came to a head in the brinkmanship between U.S. President Barack Obama and Republican leaders in the weeks and days before Aug. 1, 2011. There is propaganda to be analysed in the dispute and the coverage of it.

(9) There is a fight for public opinion in the matter of genetically engineered (GE) or modified foods or organisms (GM, GMO), dubbed " Frankenfoods" by critics. Monsanto is a key player in this battle.

(10) The war concerning tobacco controls is always a worthy topic. The tobacco industry has sponsored the web site "mychoice" hoping to encourage pro-tobacco freedom blogging.

(11) The economic downturn has produced a lot of analysis and forecasting, and suggestions for government spending to alleviate the crisis. But not all of the suggestions are disinterested. Watch for sustained propaganda favouring certain vested interests, either in Canada or the United States.

(12) The fallout from Israeli actions against Gaza, and against the humanitarian flotilla aimed at breaching restrictions on the flow of goods into Gaza continues to produce accusations of propaganda, both against Israel and against the Gaza sympathizers. These may be usefully analysed and evaluated. The Goldstone Report is useful background.

Some topics, in addition to those mentioned, are regular sources for good essays. Watch in case any of these comes to the fore. These include abortion, animal rights, oil supplies and the likely "peak" date, nuclear power (with overlapping concerns about nuclear weaponry and arms sales), "political correctness," ecological concerns, sports subsidies, gun control, and conflicts in Central America, Africa or elsewhere. The rights of various groups in society may come into conflict with business or other interests. These rights may be in connection with employer/employee relations, language, religion, or property; they may relate to women, aboriginal people, gays, particular age groups, etc. The rhetoric of deficit reduction, cost-cutting and job creation needs to be watched carefully for consistency. When a particularly striking instance of alleged rights-violation captures press attention, various opposed interest groups tend to speak out in relation to the case, and a fertile field for propaganda analysis may develop. The topic of marijuana control would be good except that there is so much available on the internet that a higher than usual standard will be set for any such essays; the challenge will be to deal with something current and with some originality.

Some pointers on how to proceed can be found in Jowett & O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Chapters 6 and 7, or in Eleanor MacLean, *Between the Lines*, p. 164.

#### More notes on the essay:

To repeat: By "current propaganda" is meant any propaganda appearing since February 11, 2011. Depending on the subject matter, it may be possible to get special permission to lift the restriction.

As a matter of departmental policy, students are required to keep a copy of their assignment, and if the paper is lost at any point the paper will be considered not to have been submitted unless a copy can be produced immediately on request. Where the dossier cannot easily be duplicated, at least have some record of what it contained.

Essays may not be faxed or e-mailed. Hand them in after class to me, or to the departmental office at 3A46 Paterson Hall (make sure you get a note saying when it was received and by whom). If the essay is mailed, it is the student's responsibility to see that it arrives by the due date.

It is sometimes possible to arrange to do an essay which does not quite fit the instructions provided, but this should be done only with prior written permission from the instructor.

#### Plagiarism

This is a serious offence. It involves submitting work of others as one's own, failing to give proper credit for the source of ideas presented. See the current Undergraduate Calendar, under "Instructional Offences," for the nature and scope of penalties for this offence.

#### Review Period

If a class is missed by the instructor during normal term time, the review period will be treated as a make-up class with full pertinence for the final examination. Otherwise, the review period time will be used for additional office consultation

### Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) to complete the necessary forms. After registering with the Centre, make an appointment to meet with me in order to discuss your needs. Make sure you register before the deadlines.

For more information, contact: [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca), or visit their web site at <http://www.carleton.ca/pmc> (Tel. 613-520-6608).

### Writing Tutorial Service

This is free of charge for all Carleton students. Call 520-6632, or go to Room 215 Paterson Hall. Those who have difficulty writing essays should make use of this service. To visit their web site go to <http://www.carleton.ca/wts>

### Departmental and Carleton University Policies

A full statement of these can be found appended to the printed version of this outline or at the departmental Web site at [www.carleton.ca/philosophy](http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy). This information should be consulted.

### Recommended additional reading

Edward Bernays, Propaganda (With Introduction by Mark Crispin Miller)  
Noam Chomsky & Edward Herman, Manufacturing Consent. (Do not confuse with Mark Achbar, ed., Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media, which is also good.)  
John Collins & Ross Glover (eds.) Collateral Language  
David Edwards and David Cromwell Newspeak in the 21st Century  
Robert Fisk, Pity the Nation  
Todd Gitlin, ed. Conglomerates and the Media  
Robert Hackett et al. The Missing News  
Václav Havel, Living in Truth  
Naomi Klein, No Logo and The Shock Doctrine  
Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty  
David Leigh and Luke Harding, WikiLeaks  
Eleanor MacLean, Between the Lines  
John MacArthur, Second Front  
Randal Marlin, (ed.) Propaganda and the Ethics of Rhetoric, Vol. 3 of Canadian Journal of Rhetorical Studies, 1993.  
Robert M. McChesney, The Problem of the Media  
" " et al., The Future of Media  
David Nyberg, The Varnished Truth  
George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia, Nineteen Eighty-Four, Collected Essays (especially "Boy's Weeklies," "Notes on Nationalism," and "Politics and the English Language").  
John Prados, Hoodwinked  
Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, (1) Toxic Sludge Is Good for You, (2) Trust Us, We're Experts, and (3) Weapons of Mass Deception. The last-mentioned, published August 1, 2003, provides very useful documentation on deception in the build-up to Gulf War II, 2003. Go to PRWatch to see their more recent observations.  
Riverbend, Baghdad Burning (Accessible also on the Internet. The author left Iraq about three years ago and her blog has had no new entries since then.)  
Paul Rutherford, Endless Propaganda  
Frances Saunders, The Cultural Cold War  
Wayne Sumner, The Hateful and the Obscene

General Background References: (Don't be frightened by the length of this list. You might just get interested in one or two of these.)

William Albright, *Public Opinion* (1939) and *Modern Public Opinion* (1956)  
Valerie Alia, et. al., *Deadlines & Diversity: Journalism Ethics in a Changing World* (1996)  
D.L. Altheide and J.M. Johnson, *Bureaucratic Propaganda* (1980)  
Paul Berman, ed., *Debating P.C.: The Controversy over Political Correctness*. (1992)  
Roger Bird, *The End of News* (1997)  
Sharon Boder, *Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism* (1997)  
D. Boorstin, *The Image or What Happened to the American Dream* (1961)  
William Brennan, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable: When Word Games Take Lives* (1995)  
J.A.C. Brown, *Techniques of Persuasion* (1963)  
Dr. Helen Caldicott, *The New Nuclear Danger* (2002)  
Alex Carey, *Taking the Risk Out of Democracy* (1997)  
Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions* (1988 CBC Massey Lectures); *Deterring Democracy* (1991, 1992); *Chronicles of Dissent* (1992); *Letters from Lexington* (1993); *Year 501, (1993); Hegemony or Survival* (2003); *Hopes and Prospects 2010*  
Michael Clow, *Stifling Debate: Canadian Newspapers and Nuclear Power* (1993)  
R.H.S. Crossman, *Plato Today* (1937)  
Stanley Cunningham, *The Idea of Propaganda*, (2002).  
Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right* (1990)  
Jacques Ellul, *FLN Propaganda in France during the Algerian War* (trans. R. Marlin. 1982)  
Stuart Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin* (1996)  
Government of Canada: *Report of the Special Committee on Hate Propaganda in Canada*, (1965)  
William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not* (1997)  
John Grierson, *Eyes of Democracy* (1990)  
Robert Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998) *Sustaining Democracy?*  
Forsyth Hardy, *Grierson on Documentary* (1966)  
David Halberstam, *The Powers That Be* (1979)  
Sheila Harty, *Hucksters in the Classroom* (1979)  
W.E. Hocking, *Freedom of the Press* (1947)  
William Johnson, *Anglophobie made in Québec* (1991). Text is in French.  
Karim H. Karim, *Islamic Peril* (2000)  
Daniel Katz, et. al., *Public Opinion and Propaganda* (1954)  
Thomas W. Keiser & Jacqueline L. Keiser, *The Anatomy of Illusion* (1987)  
Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (1975)  
Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (1922)  
Josina M. Makau and Ronald C. Arnett: *Communication Ethics in an Age of Diversity* (1997)  
Jerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (1978)  
Robert Martin & G. Stuart Adam, *A Sourcebook of Canadian Media Law* (1989)  
Linda McQuaig, *The Cult of Impotence* (1998)  
Naomi Oreskes & Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt* (2010)  
Kerry Pither, *Dark Days* (2008)  
Terence Qualter, *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare* (1962)  
Arthur Schlesinger, *War and the American Presidency* (2004)  
Edward Silva, *More Perishable than Lettuce or Tomatoes* (1995)  
Oliver Thomson *Easily Led: A History of Propaganda* (1999)  
Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (1989)  
Douglas Walton, *Media Argumentation* (2007)  
J.B. Whitton and A. Larson, *Propaganda: Towards Disarmament in the War of Words* (1964)

Among primary sources, Hitler's Mein Kampf, Goebbels' Diaries and Lenin's What Is to be Done? are important. Many government documents are pertinent: The Royal Commission on Newspapers Report (1981) and the CRTC Task Force on Sex-Role Stereotyping, Images of Women (1982) are two examples. Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada gives some useful documentation: just type "Strategis Canada" into a search engine). Journals and magazines such as Le Monde Diplomatique, Ryerson Review of Journalism, Canadian Journal of Communication, Columbia Journalism Review, Global Media Journal - Canadian Edition, The Nation, Adbusters, Z Magazine, Content (no longer published), Media Studies Journal, This Magazine, Cité Libre, Pollution Probe, Harper's, Propaganda Review, and Alternative Press Review, give valuable critiques of the media. Also noteworthy is Extra! produced by F.A.I.R. (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, New York). An ideologically opposed counterpart is A.I.M. (for Accuracy in Media). Trade magazines can be useful: Public Relations Quarterly, e.g., or the Lobby Digest. There is some attention to media in The Hill Times. Community newspapers are sometimes worth contrasting with the major media. There are many other sources to investigate: newsletters by activist groups such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Project Ploughshares, Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade, Non-Smokers' Rights Association, etc. Most of these magazines, etc. can be contacted by typing their names into the Google search engine.

Other materials: It would be a good idea to get into the habit of reading more than one news source each day, especially sources from different ownership chains. Pay attention to how stories are "played," what the sources are, nuances in language, etc. Sometimes it is a good idea to follow one issue consistently, making clippings of pertinent articles and building a dossier. Films, television, posters, leaflets, etc., may also provide interesting material. Items of immediate interest will be noted from time to time during the lectures. Le Devoir often gives a point of view very different from mainstream English-language media. Many newspapers have web sites, so you can surf around for some really contrasting views. To gain access to a wealth of sites, click on the Links section of this site or just click here.

The Web, and Freenet: For help getting on-line, contact the Computing and Communications Services, Robertson Hall, Room 401 (520-3700) or e-mail [ccs\\_service\\_desk@carleton.ca](mailto:ccs_service_desk@carleton.ca)

There is so much to explore on the Internet, in relation to propaganda, that it should be a significant feature of this course. My experience is that Google will get you to most places just by saying what you want: for example "Democracy, Propaganda and the Internet" brings up some very interesting Web sites, each of which produces links to others, etc.

#### Some useful Web sites:

A list of these can be found by clicking on Links in the left hand panel at the top of this outline or the Home page. In addition to the few already mentioned, here are some to get started on. When words are separated, use a search engine. When they are in URL format, type in directly. Mostly you will need to follow the links provided by these sites; they are only a start. Newspapers and magazines are easy to find through search engines and are not listed, except some that are only on line. There is no particular order to the following, some of which are also listed on the Links page.

If any links don't pan out, please let me know so I can keep the list in useful working order. Treat this section as under constant repair. Here are some other links:

Straight Goods: <http://www.straightgoods.com>

Government press releases for Industry Canada can be reached at the Web-site of Strategis Canada:

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/oe01053e.html> Look for links to lobbying control.

War Posters: <http://www.propagandaposters.com>

The Fraser Institute (has a lot of right wing materials): <http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/>

Center for Media and Democracy:

<http://www.prwatch.org/links/index.html>

For Nazi archives: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/ww2era.htm>

For comment on the Internet, see

Salon (Web Magazine): <http://www.salon.com/>

Canoe News <http://www.canoe.ca/TechNews>

Wired News: <http://www.wired.com/news/politics/story>

If you don't have a computer or modem, you may gain access to computers and modems in the Carleton Library and in other libraries in Ottawa.

Films, videos etc.: Students are encouraged to see "The Billionaires' Tea-Party,,: also named "AstroTurf Wars," "Manufacturing Consent" and Robert Fisk's June 11, 2004 Convocation Address and lecture on "Weapons of Mass Destruction and 'Democracy'." The dilemma of the whistleblower is well treated in "The Most Dangerous Man in America" (2009) about Daniel Elsberg and the Pentagon Papers. It is worthwhile seeing "The Corporation" (Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott & Joel Bakan). The CBC recently produced a pertinent six-part series on World War II propaganda, "Love, Hate & Propaganda." At least some of the following will be shown during the year, in or out of class time: "The Mind-Benders," "The War for Men's Minds," "Red Nightmare," "Lobbying for Lives" (very important for showing an all-out propaganda battle), "I.F. Stone's Weekly," "Killing Us Softly," "Grierson" (an account of the life of John Grierson, founder of the National Film Board), "Action: the October Crisis," "Outfoxed," and "The Hecklers."