

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
PHIL 2901A, TRUTH AND PROPAGANDA**

**TERM:** Early Summer (May-June), 2018

**INSTRUCTOR:** Randal Marlin

**CLASS TIMES:** Tues. & Thurs. 11:35 a.m. - 2:25 p.m.

**CLASS LOCATION:** St. Pat's, SP435

**OFFICE:** 3A56 Paterson Hall

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tues.& Thurs. 2:45 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. Other times by arrangement.

**TELEPHONE:** 520-2600-ext. 3797 (voice mail number)

**E-MAIL:** marlin@ncf.ca

**WEB ADDRESS:** <http://www.carleton.ca/~rmarlin> (archived, accessible, but inactive.)

**Prerequisite:** A 0.5 credit in Philosophy or Second-year standing.

**Evaluation**

There will be an essay worth 50% of the final mark, due June 19, 5 p.m. Details about this essay are provided in a separate document titled "Guide to the Essay" posted in CuLearn. One in-class test will take place Thursday, May 24, worth 50%.

**Required texts**

1. Randal Marlin, *Propaganda and The Ethics of Persuasion* (Second Edition, 2013).
2. Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda*. Published in 1962 in French and 1965 in English, this has become a classic, losing none of its relevance in 2017.

**Highly recommended:**

Jacob Stanley, *How Propaganda Works*

Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Noam Chomsky & Edward Herman, *The Manufacture of Consent*

Jonathan Auerbach & Russ Castronovo, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*

Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler, eds., *The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory*

David Coady, *What to Believe Now*

David Nyberg, *The Varnished Truth*

Garth S. Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*

Other reading materials will be on reserve in the main library, or accessible on the Internet.

On the latter see, among many other sources, [Global Media Journal, Canadian Edition, Vol. III, No 2](#) devoted to "Propaganda, Ethics and Media," December, 2010. Consortium News, Truthout, FAIR, PRWatch, SourceWatch and the Real News Network are among the sites I find regularly rewarding. 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. We deal briefly with the ethics of various forms of persuasion and the question of social and legal controls over communication in the context of, e.g., hate propaganda, media ownership, etc. The problem of relativity of “truth” and the concept of bias and objectivity are recurring questions that receive attention.

### Schedule of Topics and Readings

Topics are not always confined exactly to the times allotted. Some take more time, others less than indicated.

Updated comments will regularly appear in the Announcements section during the term and should be consulted weekly (see the column on the left, click on "Announcements"). Some comments relate to media coverage (or non-coverage) of significant events.

*Additional readings available on other websites will occasionally be suggested, and some may be compulsory reading.*

Note: Reserve readings are of two kinds. One is accessible electronically through "Ares." If tags are mentioned, you can locate the item easily by looking for the tag on the right-most column. The other kind requires going to the Library reserve (rsv) desk and borrowing the item(s). Plan ahead to avoid finding they are already checked out when you want them.

Coloured typeface in the readings section indicates a direct hyperlink. Click on it.

| <u>DATES</u> | <u>TOPIC</u>  | <u>READINGS, VIDEOS, ON-LINE MATTER</u>  |
|--------------|---|--|
| May 8        | 1. Intro & overview   | Learn the course structure and requirements in the Course Outline. Begin readings for next class.  |
|              | 2. Defining propaganda  | Marlin, <i>Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition ( <i>PEP</i> ), 4-13; Jonathan Auerbach & Russ Castronovo: <i>The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies</i> , 1-16<br><a href="https://english.wisc.edu/castronovo/Papers/13%20Propositions.pdf">https://english.wisc.edu/castronovo/Papers/13%20Propositions.pdf</a> |
| May 10       | 1. Remarks on Ellul and Orwell                                | Ellul, v-xviii and 3-33; Orwell, <a href="#">“Politics and the English Language” online</a> ; <i>PEP</i> , 14-33   |
|              | 2. Propaganda history; Herodotus, Plato, and Aristotle to WWI | <i>PEP</i> , 35-55. Take the time to search online for information on unfamiliar names, places, etc.   |

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| May 15 | 1. British propaganda in WWI  | <i>PEP</i> , 55-71. See also Neander & Marlin, " <a href="#">Media and Propaganda: The Northcliffe Press ...</a> "   |
|        | 2. Leninist and Nazi propaganda   | <i>PEP</i> , 71-90; Domenach, Jean-Marie (Ares Tag #3)   |
| May 17 | 1. Nazi propaganda WWII, Communism and Cold War                                   | Doob, Leonard (Ares Tag #4)<br>Snow, Nancy, in Snow, 120-147 (rsv)   |
|        | 2. Ellul: characteristics of propaganda, myth, technique. Ideology and propaganda | Ellul, 33-87; Marlin, "Jacques Ellul's Contribution to Propaganda Studies," in <i>The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies</i> 348-365 (rsv); Jacob Stanley & Miranda Fricker readings TBA.   |
| May 22 | 1. Rhetorical devices and political persuasion                                    | <i>PEP</i> , 91-118; Whately, Richard (Ares Tag #6); Shakespeare (Tag #7); Plato, Aristotle (Tag #8); MacLean (Tag #9); Senate Minutes (Tag # 10); <i>Globe and Mail</i> letters (Tag #11); George Lakoff<br><a href="https://www.nationofchange.org/2017/08/04/president-nation-central-metaphor-trump-lives/">https://www.nationofchange.org/2017/08/04/president-nation-central-metaphor-trump-lives/</a> |
|        | 2. Bias in science reporting: polls & statistics                                  | <i>PEP</i> , 118-135; Marlin (Ares Tag #12); Sproule in Snow, 75-93  |
| May 24 | 1. Chomsky on news filters  | <i>Manufacturing Consent</i> , Ch 1 (rsv); Cynthia Boas (Tag #22)  |
|        | <b>2. In-Class Test</b>   | <b>This is worth 50% of your overall mark for the course. Exam starts at 12:45 and ends at 2:25 p.m. sharp (25 minutes per Question).</b>  |
| May 29 | 1. Lippmann & stereo-types; News distortion, Multiperspectivism                   | Philosophical issues in journalism: Halberstam, David; Glasser, Cohen, Gans & Newman (Tags #16 through #20)  |
|        | 2. Ethical Theory, Truth and Objectivity  | <i>PEP</i> , 139-144; Ward, <i>Invention of Journalism Ethics</i> , Chapter 7 (rsv)  |

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| May 31  | 1.The Morality of Lying  | <i>PEP</i> , 144-158; McGovern, Ray (Tag #24)   |
|         | 2. Lies, Deceptions and Other Manipulations for “Public Good”        | <i>PEP</i> , 158-182; Optional: Mearsheimer, <i>Why Leaders Lie</i> .   |
| June 5  | 1. Advertising and Ethics  | <i>PEP</i> , 183-195; Miller, Mark (Tag#25); Moser, Ronald, et al. (Tag #27); Miller, Reese, "Persuasion and the Dependence Effect" (rsv)   |
|         | 2. Public Relations and Ethics                                       | <i>PEP</i> , 195-215; Sherry Baker, "The Ethics of Advocacy; Moral Reasoning in the Practice of Public Relations," in Lee Wilkins and Clifford G. Christians, <i>The Handbook of Media Ethics</i> 115-129 (rsv).  |
| June 7  | 1. Free Speech Theory; Mill and Classical Arguments                  | <i>PEP</i> , 217-245; Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> (found on the Web, also one copy on reserve. Focus on chapters 2 and 5); Stephen J.A. Ward, “Classical Liberal Theory in a Digital World,” in Fortner & Fackler, <i>Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory</i> Vol. I, 3-21. |
|         | 2. Controls on Free Speech: Hate Propaganda, Advertising, News Media | <i>PEP</i> , 247-281; Clifford G. Christians and P. Mark Fackler, “The Genesis of Social Responsibility Theory,” Fortner & Fackler, <i>Handbook</i> Vol. I, 332-356.  |
| June 12 | 1. Government information and propaganda                             | <i>PEP</i> , 281-305; Norman Solomon, "Spinning War and Blotting Out Memory," in Yahya R. Kamalipour & Nancy Snow, <i>War, Media &amp; Propaganda</i> , 47-58 (rsv).  |
|         | 2. Democratic ideals, propaganda dilemma                             | Ellul, 118-192; Arthur Charity (Tag #38)<br>Film: "Grierson”  |
| June 14 | 1. War propaganda, ethics & law. Propaganda for peace.               | Whitton, John & Larson, Arthur (Tag #39). Seow Ting Lee, "Peace Journalism," in Lee Wilkins & Clifford Christians, eds., <i>The Handbook of Media Ethics</i> (rsv). Mordecai Lee in Snow, 94-119 (optional).  |
|         | 2. Propaganda, ideology, and the future with the Internet            | <i>PEP</i> 307-340; Ward, 317-331 (rsv); Ellul, 193-232 (optional).   |
| June 19 | Course review and discussion of essays                               | <b>All essays due at 5 p.m., latest.</b>  |

**Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies**  
**Summer 2018**

**Assignments:**

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- Must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips.
- Must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box).
- Must include the following on the first page: student name and number; course name and number; instructor's name.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates below.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

**Deferrals for Term Work:**

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

**Deferrals for Final Examinations:**

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 2.4, 2.5 and 2.5.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

**Plagiarism:**

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 12.0, or [Academic Integrity < Carleton University](#))

**Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [Equity Services](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

**Important Deadlines:**

Please review important dates and deadlines that pertain to summer courses here: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/registration/dates-and-deadlines/>

**Useful Contacts:**

Department of Philosophy: 3A35 Paterson Hall  
613-520-2110  
[www.carleton.ca/philosophy](http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy)

Academic Advising Centre: 302 Tory  
613-520-7850  
[www.carleton.ca/academicadvising](http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising)

Writing Services: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Library  
613-520-3822  
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>