

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

**TERM:** Fall, 2017

**INSTRUCTOR:** Randal Marlin

**CLASS TIMES:** Tues. & Thurs. 10:05 a.m.-11:25 a.m.

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

**OFFICE:** 3A56 Paterson Hall

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tues.& Thurs. 11:35-1:05 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 60% of the final mark, due December 7. Details about this essay are provided below. One in-class test will take place Thursday, October 19, worth 40%.

**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 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, 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.

## **Guide to the Essay**

One essay, of around 2,000 words (2,500 max) will be required, due Thursday, December 7, 2016, 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 7th. Late essays will not ordinarily be accepted.

Students should hand in, along with their essay, a dossier of the materials discussed (e.g. photocopies or print-outs 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.

Note that social media (i.e. online material such as Facebook and Twitter) have increasingly been utilized for propaganda purposes, and what may appear to be a single voice may be computer-generated, or produced by people paid to post extreme views ostensibly favouring some blogger but in reality intending to discredit him or her by association.

In the essay the student should (1) produce some sample of current, arguably harmful propaganda and analyze it, giving reasons for viewing the material as propaganda, discussing its likely and/or intended impact on the recipient, and commenting on the ethics of using such a form of appeal and (2) give arguments as to why such propaganda should or should not be prohibited or subject to penalty in law or public opinion. The proportion of your essay devoted to (1) should be roughly equal to (2). In the second section I would expect substantial engagement with arguments encountered in the readings for the second half of the course.

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

(1) U.S. politics, with the presidential election in 2016 and the election of Donald Trump as president has generated much propaganda, either in support or in opposition to Trump. Websites like Consortium News, Truthout, FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), Nation of Change, Alternet, PR Watch, Fact Check, Source Watch, Common Dreams, Rabble.ca (a Canadian Website), etc. can be relied on to give viewpoints contrasting with the mainstream media. Newspapers like *The Guardian*, *The Independent* (caution: now owned by a wealthy Russian), and TV news outlets such as Al Jazeera are also worth consulting for contrasting views. It will be up to you to determine as best you can who, given the conflicting viewpoints, is engaged in deliberate distortion, omission or fabrication, warranting the description "propaganda" (using the term in the negative sense). Maybe both sides are guilty of this. Note that since the U.S. court case called *Citizens United*, corporations can spend unlimited amounts of money to support a favoured candidate or policy. Watch for disputes within different factions of the Republican Party regarding ideology and for attention-getting techniques used, so far with success, by Donald Trump.

(2) The situation in Ukraine has been fraught with propaganda since February, 2014. People differ as to which narratives are (more) deceptive. Mainstream accounts are regularly challenged on sites like Consortium News, Truthout, etc.

(3) The issue of global warming and climate change is for many the crucial issue of our time for human survival on this planet. Watch for "astroturf" from the fossil fuel industry and others.

(4) There is a fight for public opinion in the matter of labelling genetically engineered (GE) or modified foods or organisms (GM, GMO), dubbed " Frankenfoods" by critics. Monsanto is a key player in this battle. Some make the case that the federal government is influenced too much by the corporate lobbying of the big food industries.

(5) A big threat to world peace exists in relation to Iran's proceeding with development of nuclear energy, ostensibly for peaceful purposes, and Israel's adamant refusal to allow Iran to have a nuclear military capability. The issue is multi-faceted, and can turn on exactly what is meant by a "nuclear capability." Detecting propaganda can involve noting occasions where real reasons are suppressed in favour of giving reasons that are more likely to sway the general public.

(6) Oil pipeline construction raises environmental and safety concerns that the oil industry seeks to allay. An essay could compare what the industry says in public and discuss aspects of the communications that you find to be propagandistic.

(7) Peace talks between Israel and Palestine tend to generate propaganda from sympathisers on both sides. Especially important in many cases is not so much what is said as what is not said, and what is done while peace talks are underway. Sifting through propaganda here is likely to involve careful historical analysis and attention to documents such as the Hamas Charter, on one side, and the great damage done to innocent Gazans by Israeli attacks, on the other.

Some topics, in addition to those mentioned, are regular sources for good essays. Choose a topic where you have a special interest or concern, but be objective. Your essay should not itself be a case of propaganda! Topics that may generate renewed public interest and discussion (and advocacy) include abortion, animal rights, 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. Propaganda regarding marijuana was rampant some decades ago, but less so today, and the current context is very different. If you choose this topic, avoid merely repeating well-worn arguments that have become less relevant.

**Some pointers on propaganda campaign analysis can be found in Jowett & O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Chapters 6 and 7, or in Eleanor MacLean, *Between the Lines*, p. 164. Many students have found the former especially useful for structuring their essays.**

**More notes on the essay:**

By “current propaganda” is meant any propaganda appearing since February, 2016. 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 to me after class or at my office, or to the departmental office at 3A35 Paterson Hall (make sure you get a note saying when it was received and by whom). Should your essay, with dossier, be slim enough, you may use the departmental drop box opposite the departmental office. **But do not separate the essay from the dossier.** The two should be held together by elastic or string, or other suitable binding material. Make sure your name is on both. 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 that 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.

### **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 (501 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).

**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). There is a direct link at the end of this online version. This information should be consulted.

### **Additional recommended resources**

*(Don't be frightened by the length of this list, nor be perturbed by the date of publication; propaganda has been going on for a long time. You might just get interested in one or two of these. The same applies to the general background list that follows.)*

Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (With Introduction by Mark Crispin Miller)

John Collins & Ross Glover (eds.) *Collateral Language*

Nicholas J. Cull, David Culbert, David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion, A Historical Encyclopedia*.

David Edwards and David Cromwell, *Newspeak in the 21st Century*

Todd Gitlin, ed. *Conglomerates and the Media*

Glenn Greenwald, *No Place to Hide*

Isabelle Gussé, *L'armée canadienne vous parle*

Jason Holt, ed., *The Daily Show and Philosophy*

Naomi Klein, *No Logo* and *The Shock Doctrine*

Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty*

David Leigh and Luke Harding, *WikiLeaks*

Eleanor MacLean, *Between the Lines*

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*

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* and *Baghdad Burning II* (The author left Iraq and has not been heard from since shortly after her last communication in 2006.)

Paul Rutherford, *Endless Propaganda*

Frances Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*

Wayne Sumner, *The Hateful and the Obscene*

Philip Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda*.

### **General Background References:**

William Albigh, *Public Opinion* (1939) and *Modern Public Opinion* (1956)

D.L. Altheide and J.M. Johnson, *Bureaucratic Propaganda* (1980)

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)

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 )

Stanley Cunningham, *The Idea of Propaganda*, (2002).

Stuart Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin* (1996)

Government of Canada: *Report of the Special Committee on Hate Propaganda in Canada*, (1965)

John Grierson, *Eyes of Democracy* (1990)

Forsyth Hardy, *Grierson on Documentary* (1966)

David Halberstam, *The Powers That Be* (1979)

Sheila Harty, *Hucksters in the Classroom* (1979)

Karim H. Karim, *Islamic Peril* (2000)

Daniel Katz, et. al., *Public Opinion and Propaganda* (1954)

Michael Kearney, *The Prohibition of Propaganda for War in International Law* (2008)

Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (1975)

Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (1922). (A classic)

Jerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (1978)

Robert Martin & G. Stuart Adam, *A Sourcebook of Canadian Media Law* (1989)

Naomi Oreskes & Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt* (2010)

Kerry Pither, *Dark Days* (2008)

Terence Qualter, *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare* (1962)

Oliver Thomson *Easily Led: A History of Propaganda* (1999)

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. The Office of Consumer Affairs, Industry 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 also valuable 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 here](#).

**The Web, and Freenet:** For help getting on-line, contact the ITS Desk, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, McOdrum Library, [its.service.desk@carleton.ca](mailto:its.service.desk@carleton.ca).

Google is of course a well-known resource, but I find students often underuse it. It 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:**

There is a wealth of useful Web sites to be found listed in Tom Engelhardt's engaging blog [www.tomdispatch.com/](http://www.tomdispatch.com/).

*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:*

War propaganda materials: <<http://www.psywar.org/leaflets.php>>

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/>>

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 "(Astro)Turf 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 has produced a pertinent six-part series on World War II propaganda, "Love, Hate & Propaganda." Some old classics: "The Mind-Benders," "The War for Men's Minds," "Red Nightmare," "Lobbying for Lives" (very important for showing an all-out propaganda battle with Big Tobacco), "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."

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2017-18)

### **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:
  - student name
  - student number
  - course number and section
  - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- 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 Final Exams:**

If you miss a final examination (formally scheduled or take-home) because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral. You must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of your formally scheduled exam or within 3 working days after the due date of a take-home exam. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/#2.5>

### **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. <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

### **Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy 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: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**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: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**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 scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC

website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 6	Classes start.
Sept. 19	Last day for registration and course changes for Fall term and Fall/Winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 9	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 23-27	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for summative or final examinations in Fall term courses before the official examination period.
Dec. 8	Last day of Fall term classes. <b>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</b> Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a Fall term course.
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 8	Classes begin.
Jan. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in the Winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from Winter term courses or from the Winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 19	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 19-23	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 27	Last day for summative or final examinations in Winter term or two-term courses before the official examination period.
Mar. 30	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 11	Last day of two-term and Winter term classes. <b>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</b> Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall/Winter and Winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for Winter term courses.
Apr. 14-26	Final examinations for Winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 26	All take home examinations are due on this day.

### **Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy">www.carleton.ca/philosophy</a> 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/registrar">www.carleton.ca/registrar</a> 520-3500
Academic Advising Centre:	302 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising">www.carleton.ca/academicadvising</a> 520-7850
Writing Services:	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Library <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/">http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/</a> 520-3822
MacOdrum Library	<a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a> 520-2735