Media and Conflict

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: BCLA 3009

Number of Credits: 3
Language of Instruction: English
Contact Hours: 45
Instructor: On-Site Faculty

Course Description

The course will provide a structured approach to address different media systems. It will explore the dynamics of news, politics, conflicts and freedom of the press. Focusing on ongoing, international crises of global importance, we will examine how various international media report on topics including armed conflicts and human rights abuses. Study the dynamics governing news, media, environment and structures. We will try to understand why different audiences from different cultural spheres perceive the same news in sometimes a diametrically opposed way. We will examine the rich arsenal of repression tools used by authoritarian and even democratic regimes to suppress press freedom or spin news to their advantage. We will look at the ways and means by which courageous journalists try to circumvent these obstacles.

Given the rapidly evolving nature of the subjects studied, this syllabus is subject to change as well.

Course Rationale

Security/Stability Vs. Freedom of Expression is the core of the relationship between governments and the media. This tension is heightened in time of conflict. Were the media and the whistleblowers who inform them, right to expose the truth about US engagement in Vietnam, Iraq, the NSA surveillance program? Weren't they demoralizing the troops and helping the enemy? Weren't they providing the public opinion with necessary information to judge and sanction the government actions to avoid bad policies and preserve the citizens' freedoms? Are Authoritarian regimes entitled to clamp down on freedom of the press in the name of stability? What tools do they use to control the media? When do media cross the line and become a propagator of hatred? How should the media deal with media savvy terrorist
organizations? This course is about providing a conceptual framework to think through this type of questions.

Course Objectives

Learning Outcomes

- The student will acquire the analytical tools to frame the main issues pertaining to the role of the media in a time of conflict.
- The student will be acquainted with the political, economic and cultural environment in which media operate.
- The student will acquire the historical background of the Media evolution in time of conflict.

Methodology

Lecture, workshop, discussion, group work, class exercises, and student oral presentation.

Required Reading / Materials

There are no required books. Readings are book chapters and Academic journal articles that will be emailed to students at the beginning of the course.

Suggested Online Resources

- Committee to Protect Journalists http://www.cpj.org
- Crimes of War Project http://www.crimesofwar.org
- Freedom House http://www.freedomhouse.org
- Human Rights Watch http://www.hrw.org
- Institute for War and Peace Reporting http://www.iwpr.net
- Journalist Express: News and research portal for reporters http://www.journalistexpress.com
- National Press Club: https://www.press.org/
- Nieman Reports Online http://nieman.harvard.edu/reports/contents.html
- Online Newspapers (Worldwide) http://www.onlinenewspapers.com
- Reporters without Borders http://www.rsf.org
- U.S. State Department Human Rights Country Reports https://www.state.gov/state-gov-website-modernization/
# Grading

## Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Score or Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93–100</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90–92</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87–89</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83–86</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80–82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77–79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73–76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70–72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67–69</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60–66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0–59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.
### Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response papers and quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Content

Unit 1
Introduction

Unit 2

Model of media systems (I): The North Atlantic or Liberal Model
- Starr, Paul. “Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers” The New Republic March 4, 2009

Unit 3

Model of media systems (II) The Mediterranean Model

Model of media system(III): The North Central European Model

Unit 4

History of War Reporting/Reporting Vietnam
Unit 5

How Iraq changed War coverage


- List

Unit 6

Whistleblowers and National Security From “The Pentagon Papers” to Snowden


- Elsberg, Daniel. « Snowden Made the Right Call » The Washington Post, July 8, 2013


Unit 7

Midterm exam

Unit 8

War reporting: The reporters

- Documentary: “War Zone Diary”
- “The principles of War Coverage” Nieman Reports Winter 2001. 4
- Griffin, Michael. “Images of War” Media, War & Conflict Vol 3 (1) 7-41 2010

Unit 9

Mass Media, Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs: The CNN effect

Unit 10

Documentary: The Control Room
- Documentary: “Control Room” Director: Jihane Noujaim

Unit 11

The Al Jazeera Phenomenon
Unit 12

Covering Terrorism

- Scahill, Jeremy. “AQAP develops its own version of Reddit’s AMA and Twitter’s blue checkmark verification” The Intercept January 2015
- “The Johannesburg Principles” Article 19
- “lakome Morocco accuses Spain’s El País of inciting terrorism” Committee to Protect Journalists April 8, 2014

Unit 13

Differing Perceptions: The Mohammed Cartoon controversy


Unit 14

Presentations
Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.