Instructor
Renee Hobbs, Ed.D.
Professor, Department of Communication Studies
Founder, Media Education Lab
Davis Hall 106
Cell: 978 201 9799
Email: **hobbs@uri.edu**
Web: **http://mediaeducationlab.com**
Twitter: @reneehobbs

Teaching Assistant
Zoey Wang
Email: zoeywong0825@gmail.com
Twitter: @prettyzhzh

Catalog Copy
This course examines the history, theory and practice of propaganda. Prerequisite: COM 383 and junior standing or permission of instructor.

Time/Location
Our course hashtag for Twitter, YouTube and Facebook is #COM416. This is a fully-online class, which has an optional synchronous video class meeting on Thursdays at 7 p.m. If you are unable to participate in the online class, you will be expected to watch and comment on the recording in order to receive credit for class participation.

Website
All resources are available at the course website: http://propaganda2017.com

Office Hours
Thursday 6 – 7 p.m. online and by appointment

WHY TAKE THIS COURSE?

Rationale
      Today, the rise of propaganda is inescapable. We see it everywhere, in the context of globalization, in the workplace and in politics, in consumer culture, entertainment and leisure. In the post-9/11 world, propaganda was used skillfully by the U.S. government in promoting a "war on terror" which led to an expansion of war from Iraq to Afghanistan. Since then, Al Qaeda and other extremist groups use martyrdom videos and other sophisticated appeal to recruit supporters, as terrorism has itself become a form of propaganda.
      The rise of social media, which enables the easy sharing and viral spread of ideas is combining with increased distrust of mainstream media to create what some have called a "post-truth society," where debate is framed largely by appeals to emotion that ignore, dismiss or trivialize facts and information. Activists, politicians, businessmen and public relations specialists make repeated assertions by using "talking points" – simplistic and emotionally laden phrases – thus avoiding or bypassing the truly democratic practice of reasoned dialogue and discussion.

Some critics believe that the result has been increased polarization and apathy, which can be exploited by those in power.

But propaganda can also serve beneficial purposes. The U.S. government spends $1 billion annually on public relations activities, including publicizing how to avoid risks caused by the Zika virus, public service campaigns against texting while driving, and how college students can apply for student federal aid. To sell products, services, ideas, or to make changes that improve society, it is essential to have the practical skills of being a propagandist in a digital age. But with the skills of learning how to create propaganda comes the social responsibility needed to use its power wisely.

Critical thinking about propaganda and understanding propaganda's intent are crucial responsibilities of citizenship in the 21st century. Entering into a discussion about contemporary propaganda invites us to think about the power of communication and our ethical and social responsibilities as authors and audiences. It raises questions about the use and potential impact of new media and technologies. In this course, we consider the past, present and future of propaganda in order to understand the complex role in plays in our lives.

Real World Connections
This course is designed to prepare you for any of a number of careers and professions that involve real-world skills of problem-identification, research, analysis, synthesis, and creativity. As independent learners, you will have the opportunity to customize your learning experience depending on your own interests and professional goals.

- **Creatives** will imagine and implement ways to express ideas through creative multimedia products, using print, visual, sound and digital media, learning how to use a variety of communication strategies that attract and hold the attention of the target audience to help increase awareness and knowledge.
- **Organizers** will exercise the skills of time, task and project management, developing leadership and collaboration skills by communicating with key stakeholders, ensuring that problems are resolved and that teams are working effectively to meet goals.
- **Researchers** will identify and understand the needs of the target audience and gather information through research and synthesize of key ideas.

Learning Outcomes
These learning outcomes are expected for every participant. You will:

1. Gain knowledge about propaganda and understand the historical lineage of the concept
2. Learn to recognize the many forms of propaganda in everyday life
3. Strengthen skills of interpretation and critical analysis, considering how context shapes how messages are understood and acted upon by audiences
4. Reflect on diverse interpretations of media messages in ways that promote understanding of and respect for other perspectives
5. Strengthen research and collaboration skills through activities that require the synthesis of divergent ideas, information and concepts.
6. Advance communication skills including interviewing, writing, performance and media production skills that require creativity and professionalism.
7. Gain problem-solving skills in project management, focusing the scope of an inquiry, establishing goals, and executing under tight deadline pressure.
8. Gain skills in using digital tools, texts and technologies, including social media, for learning, collaboration, communication and advocacy.
9. Reflect on how changing media and technologies reshape information, education and society.

10. Gain sensitivity to the ethical responsibilities of being a communicator in the digital age.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Welch, David. (2013). *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion.* London: The British Library.

Holiday, Ryan (2013). *Trust Me, I'm Lying*. New York Penguin.

Additional required readings are listed on the syllabus.

COURSE DESIGN

Educational Philosophy
This fully-online asynchronous course is based on the assumption that (1) learners are engaged and self-directed, able to make strategic choices in order to maximize all available learning opportunities. Another key assumption of this class is that (2) people learn best by making and doing things. A final assumption of this course is that (3) reflection is an essential literacy component that can be activated through social interaction in a challenging and supportive community where there are high levels of respect and trust. For the best learning environment possible, we will depend on every student to respect and apply these fundamental design principles.

Format of the Course
This is an online learning experience so you'll have an intense experience that will require self-direction and independent learning.

- *Online Community.* We will use a combination of video face-to-face, threaded discussion, text messaging and other online tools to build and sustain a learning community. Each week, you will be expected to participate in a 60-minute synchronous video conference at a regularly scheduled time at a time that's best for most class members. If you are unable to attend the synchronous class, you will watch the recorded video and post a video comment to receive class participation credit. Other non-synchronous informal learning assignments (counted as Class Participation) will be assigned each week.
- *Creating media is a powerful form of learning.* The instructor will provide, in writing, specific description of the LEAP assignments with expectations and criteria to be used for evaluation. Assignment materials for each of the assignments listed below will be available under "Assignments" on the course website. After completing each assignment, you will receive written feedback through email.
- *Reflection Matters.* Learning works best when learners engage in self-assessment and reflection. You will be expected to notice what you are learning this semester and compose a reflective essay to summarize and synthesize key ideas using a combination of language, image and multimedia.

Open Network Learning Environment
The design for this course is a form of open network learning environment. Instead of keeping learning behind the walled garden of a learning management system like Sakai, learners participate in a variety of online creative and collaborative endeavors, using a variety of digital tools and technologies on the open Internet. The skills you learn by doing this directly transfer to your work as an engaged citizen. In an open networked learning environment, your work is visible and public, and you share your learning with the world.

A Note about Technology Competencies
Everyone is on the journey of a lifetime: learning to learning new technology tools, as our cell phones, tablets, laptops become essential part of leisure, work and citizenship. But we all don't begin this course with the same kinds or levels of skill. Many of the apps and digital tools we explore may be new to you. Others will be quite familiar. Some examples include: MUUT, YouTube, WordPress, FlipGrid, Puppet, Screencast-O-Matic, Padlet, Opinion and Google Docs. You can learn from others and teach others by supporting your peers by being a helper, coach, mentor, colleague, collaborator, and critic. Each of these roles promotes learning.

ASSIGNMENTS

LEAP Projects (600 pts)
In this class, we creating media as a means to demonstrate what we're learning from reading, viewing and discussion. Four LEAP activities designed to support the development of your digital media production skills and help you express the knowledge you are gaining through reading and discussion. Each of the short LEAP experiences contributes to the development of your personal and professional identity. Some LEAPs will be collaborative. You will have choices as you experiment with representing your learning through various media forms, genres and formats to develop your technology competencies, using different types of tools to accomplish your goals. Each of the following assignments will include specific and detailed guidelines that communicate expectations for the work you are to produce. A rubric with criteria for evaluation will be provided for each assignment.

LEAP #1. Propaganda in My Life
LEAP #2. Critical Analysis of Propaganda
LEAP #3. Collaborate: Compare and Contrast Propaganda in the Past and Present
LEAP #4 Course Reflection

Reading Quizzes (200 pts)
We encounter some powerful ideas from a variety of authors each week. Four times during the semester, you will have a 48-hour window to complete an open-book open note quiz that checks your active comprehension of the class readings.

Class Participation (200 pts)
It is expected that you devote approximately 6 – 9 hours to this course each week in reading, viewing and completing weekly assignments. Each week, you will be asked to complete a set of tasks, which will include summarizing and sharing key ideas on Twitter using our course hashtag, #COM416. Your class participation grade will reflect your work on these informal learning activities.

COURSE POLICIES

What's Public and Private
In an open-network learning environment, you are expected to maintain a public identity as a learner, as the course aims to develop competencies that directly apply to your emerging identity as a leader in digital literacy education. For the work you create in this course, you may choose to use existing digital tool accounts you already own or create new accounts using a pseudonym. Class members give and receive public feedback in an authentic and responsible manner; instructor feedback and grading is privately provided via email.

NOTE: There are no make-up opportunities for missed homework, papers or other assignments. Please do not ask for an exception. Because media businesses rely on strict adherence to deadlines, this course employs a deadline standard similar to most print and TV newsrooms. Work submitted later than 7 pm. on the due date will not be evaluated or counted for course credit.

Accommodation for Disabilities and Special Needs
Any students who have a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation. Contact Disability Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities at 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098, http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/

Plagiarism
Students are expected to make use of remix creativity in this course and produce original writing and creative work. It is expected that you will be the author of all the work you submit. Students should use the American Psychological Association (APA) citation format for identifying all materials used for reference and information gathering. Penalties for plagiarism may range from a reduced grade on an assignment to failing the course.

Copyright and Fair Use
Human creativity depends upon the ability to summarize, use, and rework the creative contributions of others as part of our own learning experience. It is expected that you will carefully select images and multimedia to illustrate, contextualize and comment on ideas. Learn more about how to evaluate when your use of copyrighted materials is lawful.

COM 416 Propaganda
Professor Renee Hobbs
Spring 2017
Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to modification with fair notice.

WEEK	Topics, Readings, and Assignment Due Dates
1	Introduction to the Course
	21st CENTURY PROPAGANDA
February 2 WEEK 2	**Defining Propaganda** Welch, David (2013). Chapter 1. A Much Maligned and Misunderstood Term. Propaganda: Power and Persuasion. London: The British Library. Jowett, Garth and O'Donnell, Victoria (2012). Chapter 1. What is Propaganda and How is it Different from Persuasion? *Propaganda and Persuasion.* 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage. Hobbs, R. & McGee, S. (2014). Teaching about propaganda: An examination of the historical roots of media literacy. *Journal of Media Literacy Education 6*(2), 56 – 67. Hobbs, R. (2016). What is Propaganda and Where to Find It. Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda. FILM: Look Who's Back (2015). Director: David Wnendt.
Feb 9 WEEK 3	**Understanding Virality** Hobbs, R. (2016). Powerful Propaganda: KONY 2012. Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda. Hobbs, R. (2013). The blurring of art, journalism and advocacy: Confronting 21st century propaganda in a world of online journalism. I/S: *A Journal of Law and Policy for the Information Society 8*(3), 625 – 638. Brooking, Emerson & Singer, P.W. (2016, November). War Goes Viral: How Social Media is Being Weaponized. *The Atlantic.* FILM: Kony 2012. Director: Jason Russell. DUE: LEAP 1
Feb 16 WEEK 4	**Promotion and Marketing as Propaganda** Holiday, Ryan (2012). *Trust Me, I'm Lying*. New York: Pearson. Chapters collaboratively selected by students.

Feb 23 WEEK 5	**Beneficial Propaganda** Welch, David (2013). Chapter 4. Trap Your Germs! Propaganda as Public Information. Propaganda: Power and Persuasion. London: The British Library. Joffe, Helene (2008). The Power of Visual Material: Persuasion, Emotion and Identification. *Diogenes* 217: 84 – 93. Jowett, Garth and O'Donnell, Victoria (2012). Chapter 6. How to Analyze Propaganda. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage. FILM: From One Second to the Next. (2013). Director: Werner Herzog. AT&T. Film. Crouch, Ian (2013, October 21). Why AT&T is Talking about Texting and Driving. *The New Yorker*. Do Something (2016). Do Something. Interactive.
	HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES
March 2 WEEK 6	**The Propaganda of Nation Building** Welch, David (2013). Chapter 2. One People, One Nation, One Leader (pp. 41 – 78). *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion.* London: The British Library. DUE: LEAP 2
March 9 WEEK 7	**War Propaganda** United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The State of Deception. Welch, David (2013). Chapter 3. Your Country Needs You (pp. 79 – 112). *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion.* London: The British Library. Welch, David (2013). Chapter 5. Know Your Enemy (pp. 151 – 188). *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion.* London: The British Library. FILM: Forbidden Films. (2015). Director: Felix Moeller. Brody, Richard. (2015, January 22). The Virtues of Screening "Forbidden" Films. *The New Yorker*.
	SPRING BREAK WEEK – No Class
March 23 WEEK 8	**Propaganda in 20th Century America** Kimble, James. (2015). The Illustrated Four Freedoms: FDR, Rockwell and the Margins of the Rhetorical Presidency. *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 45(1), 46 – 69. Gilsinian, Kathy (2014, November 26). The Meaning of Thanksgiving, as Told through Cold War Propaganda. *The Atlantic*.

	FILM: U.S. Government (1962). The Wall. Film.
March 30 WEEK 9	**Fake News, Demagoguery and the Alt-Right** Welch, David (2013). Chapter 6. We Are All Americans Now? (pp. 189 – 200). *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion.* London: The British Library. Lehmann, Nicholas (2016, November 30). Solving the Problem of Fake News. *The New Yorker.* Heller, Nathan (2016, November 18). The Failure of Facebook Democracy. *The New Yorker.* Minnute, Lorraine. (2012). New Challenges in the Study of Right-Wing Propaganda: Priming the Populist Backlash to "Hope and Change." New Political Science 34(4), 506 – 526. Wallace-Wells, Benjamin (2016, May 5). Is the Alt-Right for Real? *The New Yorker.* Anti-Defamation League (2016). Alt-Right: A Primer about the New White Supremacy. Stack, Liam (2017, October 13). He Calls Hillary Clinton a Demon: Who is Alex Jones? *New York Times.* DUE: LEAP 3
	GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES
April 6 WEEK 10	**Terrorism as Propaganda** Winter, Charlie and Bach-Lombard Jordan (2016, February 13). Why ISIS Propaganda Works. *The Atlantic.* Winter, Charlie (2016, March 23). ISIS is Using the Media Against Itself. *The Atlantic.* Cottee, Simon (2015, December 24). The Challenge of Jihadi Cool. *The Atlantic.* Waddell, Kaveh (2016, June 22) A Tool to Delete Beheading Videos Before They Even Appear Online. *The Atlantic.* Federal Bureau of Investigation (2015). Don't Be a Puppet. Interactive.
April 13 WEEK 11	**Chinese Propaganda and Censorship** Xuecun. Murong (2013, December 20). The New Face of Chinese Propaganda. *New York Times.* Hernandez, Javier. (2016, December 31). Propaganda with a Millennial Twist Pops Up in China. *New York Times.*

	Manjoo, Farhad (2017, January 18). Clearing Out the App Stores: Government Censorship Made Easier. *New York Times*. Isaac, Mike (2016, November 22). Facebook Said to Create Censorship Tool to Get Back into China. *New York Times*.
April 20 WEEK 12	**Russian Propaganda** Chen, Adrian (2016, December 1). The Propaganda about Russian Propaganda. *The New Yorker*. Delman, Edward (2015, April 22). When is a TV Channel a Foreign Agent? *The Atlantic*. Pomerantsev, Peter (2014, September 9). Russia and the Menace of Unreality. *The Atlantic*.
April 27 WEEK 13	**Education, Propaganda and Democracy** Cooley, Aaron (2010). Failed States in Education: Chomsky on Dissent, Propaganda and Reclaiming Democracy in the Media Spectacle. *Educational Studies* 46: 579 – 605. Temelkuran, Ece (2016, July 2). How My City Washes Away the Blood. *New York Times*.
May 4 WEEK 14	DUE: LEAP 4