

**COMM 370 - The Rhetoric of Ideas: Ideology and Propaganda**  
**Course #20409 - MW 10:00-11:20 am**  
**ASC 328**

Instructor: Zoltan Majdik  
Office: ASC G6 (Ph.D Office)  
Office Hours: Tuesday, 3 - 5 pm, and by appointment  
email: zoltan.majdik@usc.edu

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**Course Description**

This course examines the role of communication and rhetoric in the workings of ideology and propaganda. We'll interrogate what ideology is, how (and if) we can identify and find it, where it can be found, and how it is created and maintained in U.S. political and popular culture. We'll work toward a historical and theoretical understanding of ideology and propaganda, as well as toward a practical understanding of how we can identify, reveal, and critically examine ideology. In the end, this course will leave you with an advanced understanding of the interplay between rhetoric, ideology, and propaganda from a historical and theoretical perspective, and equip you with the research skills and the critical sensibility necessary to read and respond to instances of ideological communication.

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**Course Materials**

- Pratkanis, A. R., & Aronson, E. (2001). *Age of propaganda: The everyday use and abuse of persuasion*. New York: Henry Holt and Co. (ISBN: 080507774X)
- Additional readings, distributed in class or via blackboard
- *Recommended: APA style manual*

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**Course Requirements and Grading**

- Final Exam 20%
- Midterm Exam 15%
- Term Paper 55% (written and graded in parts)
  - Part I: Selection & Justification of Artifact (15%)
  - Part II: Methodology & Evidence of Ideology (15%)
  - Part III: Analysis of Artifact & Findings (25%)
- Participation 10%

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## **Course Policies**

- *Participation* - Be prepared to speak and discuss readings in class every day. You are expected to have done the readings prior to class, and to contribute regularly to class discussion. Go beyond the readings and find examples from your daily lives, politics, or news to illustrate the theories we read about -- the assigned readings are only starting points for our discussion, so make sure you think about them in the context of events, people, objects, etc. you want to talk about. Read at the very least the front page of a major national news paper (New York Times, Washington Post, L.A. Times, etc.) each day of the week -- we'll draw examples from current news events to illustrate theoretical concepts, and you're responsible to be up-to-date on the week's news. Pop quizzes are not outside the realm of possibility if I feel like some of you don't do the readings.
- *Attendance* - You are allowed a total of 4 absences, both excused and unexcused, no questions asked. After that, each absence, whether excused or unexcused, may reduce your final course grade by as much as 1/2 of a letter grade. You are responsible for all material discussed and assigned in class during your absence.
- *Exams/Deadlines* - Due dates for assignments are final, and assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will receive a deduction of one letter grade for every day they are turned in late (weekends included). Makeup exams will only be given if you had a documented family or medical emergency on the day of the exam (please let me know of such emergencies as soon as you can); all others will receive an automatic F.
- *Grade Complaints* - Grade challenges must be made within 10 days after receiving a grade. Grade challenges must be made in writing. Note that a granted grade challenge results in a full re-grading of the assignment -- in other words, your revised grade may be higher, the same, or lower as your original grade. The revised grade is final.
- *Academic Integrity* - The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code as detailed in the SCampus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the academic integrity code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor. The University presumes that you are familiar with its standards and policies. Should you be found to have committed a violation, ignorance of these standards and policies will not be accepted as an excuse. For further clarification - please refer to the "University Student Conduct Code" and the "Appendix A: Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines" in the SCampus guide.
- *Students with Disabilities* - Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure to deliver the letter to me ASAP. DSP is located in STU 301, phone number 213-740-0776.

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## **Course Schedule**

- 01/14 Defining Ideology & Propaganda I: Personal Definitions  
01/16 Defining Ideology & Propaganda II: Introduction  
- Laswell, "The theory of political propaganda"  
- Pratkanis & Aronson, "Our age of propaganda" and "The psychology of everyday persuasion"
- 01/21 - **MLK Day (No Class)** -  
01/23 Defining Ideology and Propaganda III: Toward Marxism  
- Eagleton, "What is ideology?"  
- Black, "The semantics and ethics of propaganda"
- 01/28 Ideology and Marxism I: Marx and Engels  
- Marx & Engels (excerpts)  
01/30 Ideology and Marxism II: Marxist Thinkers  
- Althusser, "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses" (excerpt)  
- Gramsci, "Hegemony, intellectuals, and the state" (excerpt)
- 02/04 Ideology and Consumerism I  
- Pratkanis & Aronson, "Packages," "Self-Sell," and "Why do they keep repeating the same ads?"  
- Heath & Potter, "I hate myself and want to buy"  
02/06 Ideology and Consumerism II  
- Frank, "Markets 'R' Us"  
- Klein, "The tyranny of brands"
- 02/11 Post-Marxist Theories of Ideology I  
- Barthes, "Myth today"  
- Hall, "The problem of ideology: Marxism without guarantees"  
02/13 Post-Marxist Theories of Ideology II  
- Foucault, "Power as knowledge"  
- Cloud, "*The matrix* and critical theory's desertion of the real"
- 02/18 - **President's Day (No Class)** -  
02/20 Ideology and Rhetoric I: Discursive Manifestations  
- Kuypers, "What is rhetoric?"  
- Pratkanis & Aronson, "Protagoras' ideal" and "The fear appeal"
- 02/25 Ideology and Rhetoric II: Verbal Atom Cracking  
- McGee, "The ideograph: A link between rhetoric and ideology"  
- Lee, "Ideographic criticism"  
02/27 Ideology and Rhetoric III: The Case of Hitler's Third Reich  
- Pratkanis & Aronson, "Propaganda in the third reich: A case for uncertainty"  
- Burke, "The rhetoric of Hitler's battle"

03/03	<p>Ideology and Propaganda in Media I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pratkanis &amp; Aronson, "What is news?"</li> <li>- Iskandar, "The great American bubble"</li> </ul> <p><b>- Due: Term Paper Part I -</b></p>
03/05	<p>Ideology and Propaganda in Media II: Left/Right Biases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chomsky, "Media control: The spectacular achievements of propaganda (excerpt)"</li> <li>- Anderson, "The old media regime" and "Illiberal liberalism"</li> <li>- Alterman, "Bias, slander, and BS" and "You're only as liberal as the man who owns you"</li> </ul>
03/10	<p>What's Liberal and What's Conservative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Readings TBD</li> </ul>
03/12	<b>- Midterm Exam -</b>
03/17	<b>- Spring</b>
03/19	<b>Break -</b>
03/24	<p>Ideology and Technology I: Celebrating Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Levy, "The perfect thing" (excerpt)</li> <li>- "The white wonder: Has the iPod really sparked a revolution?"</li> </ul>
03/26	<p>Ideology and Technology II: Contesting Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unabomber's manifesto</li> <li>- Slack &amp; Wise, "The Unabomber"</li> </ul>
03/31	<p>Ideology in Domestic Affairs I: Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frank, "What's the matter with Kansas?" (excerpt)</li> </ul>
04/02	<p>Ideology in Domestic Affairs II: Elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lakoff, "Don't think of an elephant" (excerpt)</li> </ul> <p><b>- Due: Term Paper Part II -</b></p>
04/07	<p>Ideology in Foreign Affairs I: The War on Terror</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Artz, "Political legitimacy, cultural leadership, and public action"</li> <li>- Harris, "Al-Qaeda's fantasy ideology"</li> </ul>
04/09	<p>Ideology in Foreign Affairs II: Anti-Americanism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Miller, "Anti-Americanism"</li> <li>- Zakaria, "Hating America"</li> </ul>
04/14	<p>Religion, Ideology, and Propaganda I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pratkanis &amp; Aronson, "How to become a cult leader"</li> <li>- Burke, "The rhetoric of religion" (excerpt)</li> </ul>
04/16	<p>Religion, Ideology, and Propaganda II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lilla, "The stillborn God: Religion, politics, and the modern west"</li> <li>- Sweetman, "Why politics needs religion: The place of religious arguments in the public square"</li> </ul>

- 04/21 Quick Takes: Ideology & Education
- Pratkanis & Aronson, "Education or propaganda"
  - Horowitz, "The professors: The 101 most dangerous academics in America" (excerpt)
  - Berube, "What's liberal about the liberal arts?" (excerpt)
- 04/23 Quick Takes: Ideology & Gender
- Rowe-Finkbeiner, "Introduction: The F-Word"
  - Bordo, "Beauty (re)discovers the male body"
  - Sessions-Stepp, "Unhooked" (excerpt)
- 04/28 Quick Takes: Ideology & Race
- Jhally & Lewis, "Television and reality: How real is *The Cosby Show*?"
  - Klumpp & Hollihan, "Debunking the resignation of Earl Butz: Sacrificing an official racist"
- 04/30 Final Exam Review
- **Due: Final Term Paper -**