

PUBD 510: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY and TECHNOLOGY

USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, Spring 2010

Time: Fridays, 10:00am – 12:50pm

Location: ASC 230

Lecturer: Matt Armstrong

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310-926-1942 (cell)

Office hours: By appointment

Introduction

The relationship between news producers and consumers has changed as a result of new technologies. Barriers to information acquisition, packaging, and dissemination have fallen, not just in industrialized countries but around the globe. This evolution creates and empowers new communities and engagement opportunities used and exploited by journalists, bloggers, analysts, activists, diplomats, politicians, terrorists, insurgents and others. A potential influencer – from a terrorist to a candidate for office – no longer needs to wait for network camera crews or newspaper reporters to show up when she can capture, package, and distribute her product globally or hyper-locally.

We are in a world where “old” and “new” media converge to create “now media”. Focus must be on the information, and the listening being generated in a noisy environment, not the channels of delivery. The modern information environment is fluid and dynamic and never simple. Information jumps from one medium to another with ease as it is repackaged and forwarded by proxies. Stories by the BBC or The New York Times do not exist solely in the realm of broadcast or dead trees.

Several questions are asked throughout this course: What of the traditional gatekeepers to news and information? Who decides where the fiction begins? What is the global information environment and how are audiences defined? Where are audiences getting their information and does the platform shape the listening being created?

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This is a practical course with real, contemporary examples. Current (or very recently retired) professionals will be available to contribute and guest lecture. After taking this course, the student should be capable of explaining to a senior policymaker the need and requirements to engage in the modern global information environment while cognizant that different geographies – physical, social, and cultural – demand different tools.

There will be guest speakers, either in person or via videoconference, to connect discussions to practice.

Assessment

By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

- Understand the use and utility of online media specifically but not exclusively to public diplomacy;
- Articulate the characteristics and utility of online media to convey requirements to utilize online media to others; and,
- Formulate public diplomacy plans that appropriately utilize online media.

Computation of Grade

Class participation (30%): Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in class discussions. This is a Friday class and students are expected to be aware of the week's events related to global affairs, particularly as it relates to the course. Every meeting, one student will be responsible for leading an initial discussion based on the week's events and course readings. The purpose of these discussions is to assess students' understanding of the course material and to promote active engagement with current events. Public diplomacy requires public speaking, leadership, and the ability to contextualize real-world events.

Writing (4 x 10%): Students will author four (4) short argument papers of 800-1200 words. The format is a blog post or an online op-ed. It must be submitted in a Microsoft Word-compatible format. Topic for papers 1-3 are the student's choice. Paper #4 will be a topic selected by the class on March 26. These articles will be evaluated on form, clarity, and persuasiveness.

Term paper (30%): Students will write a paper of 3,000-5,000 words (8-10 pages) on a subject related to one or more of the main topics discussed in class. Sources must include resources not assigned in the course. The term paper will be evaluated on depth, clarity of exposition, originality, and relevance. I will be available to discuss ideas during office hours. Papers are due the final week of March.

Academic Integrity Policy:

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 for 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, or from the graduate program.

ADA Compliance Statement

Any student requesting academic accommodations 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 the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Course Outline (consider this flexible)

Required books (note the last three will be provided courtesy of the respective authors):

- [Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations](#) by Clay Shirky
- [Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives](#) by James Fowler
- [Regret the Error: How Media Mistakes Pollute the Press and Imperil Free Speech](#) by Craig Silverman
- [Practicing Public Diplomacy: A Cold War Odyssey](#) by Yale Richmond
- [Dragon Bytes: Chinese Information War Theory and Practice from 1995-2003](#) by Tim Thomas (to be distributed in class, courtesy of Tim Thomas)
- [Options for Influence](#) by Ali Fisher and Aurélie Bröckerhoff (to be distributed in class, courtesy the British Council)
- [Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation](#) by Todd Helmus and Chris Paul (to be distributed in class, courtesy of Chris Paul)

Recommended books:

- [Losing Arab Hearts and Minds](#) by Steve Tatham
- [Readings in Propaganda and Persuasion: New and Classic Essays](#) by Jowett, O'Donnell (eds)
- [Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies](#) by Charlene Li, Josh Bernoff
- [The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and The Public Should Expect](#) by Bill Kovach

Weekly readings will be distributed on the first day of class and through Blackboard. This course will use Blackboard to distribute links, articles, papers, videos, and webcasts.

January 15 – Introductions & Foundations

Who are you & what do you want out the course; foundational concepts and imperatives; preview of some analytical tools and resources to be used during the course

January 22 – Purpose and Utility of Engagement & Influence, Definitions

Why do we engage & do we intend or need to influence? Definitions: public diplomacy, strategic communication, global engagement, propaganda, etc.

January 29 – Convergence of Old and New into Now

The blurring of producer and consumer of news and information, the speed and persistency of information and impact on the news environment; which is more important, the Last Three Feet or the First Three Feet?

February 5 – US Government: actors, opportunities, and constraints (*paper 1 due*)

US Departments of State, Defense, and others; White House / NSC; Congress; understanding laws, authorizations, and appropriations

February 12 – Adversarial use of the Global Information Environment

Enemy use of online media to reach target audiences & influence “traditional media”

February 19 – non-US use of GIE

Explore the use of online media by others: UK, NATO, China, Iran, opposition movements, hackers, etc.

February 26 – Analytics: listening to the hearing being created (*paper 2 due*)

Exploring tools and techniques to listen to and understand the listening being created of both friendly and unfriendly efforts

Discuss / confirm topics for term paper

March 5 – Public Diplomacy as a Listening Operation

Nothing happens in a vacuum; unilateral or bilateral, successful engagement requires understanding audiences and how and why it perceives what they do

March 12 – Citizen Diplomacy and non-traditional activities and issue areas (*paper 3 due*)

Corporate social responsibility, individual actors, and health security are some of the non-traditional topic areas that are interwoven in the global information environment

March 19 – Spring Break

March 26 – Domestic case study: health care debate of 2009

Explore the use of online media for research and propagation; compare this domestic discourse to a similar global discourse; establish case study/-ies for April 16

April 2 – Case Studies of private sector risk management (*Term paper draft due*)

April 9 – Case Studies: Afghanistan, Pakistan

April 16 – Case Studies: (student choice) (*paper 4 due*)

April 23 – Discussion (*Term Papers Due*)

Review definitions and topics from course: have views changed, areas for further research; integration with other course work, fields of studies

April 30 – Last day of classes: review, questions
