New York University
The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development
Communication and Persuasion: Sociological Propaganda

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4pm

Course Description:
This course will investigate the history, theories, techniques, and results of sociological propaganda in the Technological Cybernetic Society, with special focus on the relationships between communication and persuasion in advertising, documentary, and historical representation in American culture.

Learning Objective:
At the end of the course, students well be able to
1. analyze, critique, and compare conflicting constructs of how advertising serves as sociological propaganda;
2. conduct an individual case study into one current sociological propaganda campaign;
3. analyze how different media have presented the Myth of the Frontier in American Popular Culture.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Jacques Ellul, Propaganda (Vintage Books)
Stuart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness (Basic Books)
Michael Schudson, Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion (Basic Books)
Erik Barnouw, Documentary (Oxford University Press)
Richard Slotkin, Gunfighter Nation (Antheneum)

Requirements/Evaluations
1. Prompt and regular attendance (two excused absences), including preparation for class by reading the assigned texts and handouts and participation in class discussion. Value = 25%

2. A written comparison of Ewen, Schudson, and Ellul in the form of a unified essay structured according to the following protocols:
   Do not summarize the book, but do use specific page references. Organize your analysis by answering the following question in the order given:

   2.1 What are the main assumptions, premises, arguments theses, conclusions, etc. in Ewen and Schudson?
   2.2 What areas of agreement do you find in these two books?
   2.3 What areas of disagreement do you find in these two books?
   2.4 How do you account for their differences? (Consider these categories: basic assumptions, the data used, the methods used for gathering and analyzing the data, other possible causes.)
2.5 How does Ellul relate to Ewen and Schudson? Who is more compatible with Ellul? (Be specific.)
2.6 What is your own judgment on the positions put forth by Ewen, Schudson, and Ellul? Which views seem more valid to you? What criteria are you using for your evaluation?

Due Date: November 1 (length: 5-7 pages) Value = 25%

3. An individual case study of some current propaganda campaign (not analyzed in class) designed to sell a product or service, promote an idea or cause, encourage or discourage social beliefs, values, and lifestyles. You need to choose a campaign for which the data needed are available to you. Use Ellul, Ewen, and Schudson in your analysis and discussion. Organize your paper by responding to the eight categories listed below:
3.1 The propaganda maker or makers: This should include manufacturers, advertising and public relations firms, consultants, etc.
3.2 The messages being sent: These may differ for different audiences, at different times, places, etc. Be as specific as possible.
3.3 The target audience or audiences: You should try to be as specific here as possible, although you may have to infer the audience on the basis of the messages.
3.4 The desired goals: What did the propaganda makers want the audience to think, to feel, to do?
3.5 The medium (or media) used: What media were used? How did the media used influence the message being sent? Did the messages change from one medium to another? What evidence is there of “orchestration”?
3.6 The actual effects: What were the actual results of the propaganda campaign? Did these results achieve the desired goals?
3.7 The techniques used: What propaganda techniques were used? Which techniques predominated? Which techniques were not used? You should use one of the models introduced in class to identify and describes these techniques (Mythic, Aristotle, Maslow).
3.8 Your own thoughts on the campaign.

Due Date: November 29 (length: 6-8 pages) Value = 25%

4. As individual response to Tombstone in which you analyze the film within the Myth of the Frontier in American culture. You are expected to use Slotkins’s Gunfighter Nation, Ellul’s Propaganda, and the handouts I provided in conducting your analysis. Focus on the central myth of the hero as it is presented in the film. Make specific references to the film (characters (including casting), costumes, sets, properties, narration, dialogue, action, shots, scenes, camera angles and positions, etc.) in your analysis.

Due Date: December 13 (length: 5-7 pages) Value = 25%
Evaluation Rubric

A = Excellent
This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully to class discussions.

B = Good
This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C = Average
This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D = Unsatisfactory
This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the reading or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F = Failed
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments.

A = 94-100
B = 90-93
B+ = 87-93
B- = 84-86
C+ = 80-83
C = 77-79
C- = 74-76
D+ = 70-73
D = 65-69
D- = 60-64
F = 0-59

Course Policies
Absences and lateness
More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work. Travel arrangements do not constitute a valid excuse for missing class. There are no extra credit assignments for this class.

Format
Please type and double-space your written work. Typing improves the clarity and readability of your work and double-spacing allows room for me to comment. Please also number and staple multiple pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please identify and use it consistently throughout your writing. No email submissions will be accepted.
Grade Appeals
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

General Decorum
Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism
The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is an important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principles for all that you do, from taking examinations to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you:
• cheat on an examination;
• submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors;
• receive help on papers that call for independent work; or
• plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, and oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:
• copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
• download documents from the Internet;
• purchase documents;
• report from other’s oral work;
• paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
• copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development imposes heavy penalties for plagiarism in order to safeguard the degrees that the University grants. Cases of plagiarism are considered among the most serious of offenses.
Student Resources

- Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 719 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

- Writing Center: 269 Mercer Street, Room 233. Schedule an appointment online at www.rich15.com/nyu/ or just walk-in.

Additional References

Each of the required texts has an extensive bibliography related to its particular topic. You will find a wealth of information in these sources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Requirements, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: Characteristics of Propaganda;</td>
<td>Ellul, Chapter I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conditions for the Existence of Propaganda</td>
<td>Ellul, Chapter II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Discussion: Necessity for Propaganda;</td>
<td>Ellul, Chapter III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Psychological Effects of Propaganda</td>
<td>Ellul, Chapter IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>Discussion: Socio-Political Effects;</td>
<td>Ellul, Chapter V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Effectiveness of Propaganda</td>
<td>Ellul, Appendix I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Columbus Day Holiday</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: Advertising as Sociological Propaganda</td>
<td>Ewen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Discussion: Captains of Consciousness versus Capitalist Realism</td>
<td>Schudson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>Case study: Barbie Meets “Sex and the City”</td>
<td>Ewen and Schudson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: Film and Video Documentaries as Sociological</td>
<td>Barnouw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Documentary Case Study</td>
<td>Barnouw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: History as Fact, Legend, and Myth</td>
<td>Slotkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: Gunfighter Nation and the Myth of the Frontier</td>
<td>Slotkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>Case Study: Wyatt Earp <em>(Tombstone)</em></td>
<td>Slotkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Analysis and Discussion: <em>Tombstone</em> as Sociological Propaganda</td>
<td></td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>(Wednesday)</td>
<td>Discussion: Sociological Propaganda in the Technological Cybernetic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Society</td>
<td></td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Final Meeting: All questions answered. All answers questioned.</td>
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