PUBD 510: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY and TECHNOLOGY

USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, Spring 2011

Time: Fridays, 10:00am – 12:50pm
Location: ASC 230

Lecturer: Matt Armstrong
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               Office hours: By appointment

Introduction

"Modern means of communication…have opened up a new world of political processes. Ideas and phrases can now be given an effectiveness greater than the effectiveness of any personality and stronger than any sectional interest."*

This class examines the political, bureaucratic, technological and operational challenges – and opportunities – of engagement in today's complex environment. This is a practical course to educate and empower students to effectively engage senior policy makers on issues related to identifying, understanding and engaging audiences by the U.S. Government in the modern information and human environment.

The semester is divided into three (somewhat equal) sections. The beginning third focuses on the foundation through lecture and reading. Lecturing and reading declines in the middle third as discourse and student analysis begin to dominate each meeting. During the last third, the class functions more like a think tank of experts with minimal to no lecturing. Students are encouraged and expected to apply the lessons learned to their own area of interest or expertise. Throughout the course, even in the lecture-heavy beginning, students are encouraged to ask questions. Discourse is always encouraged.

The course is taught on Friday in part to review the events of the week, which is how each class begins. Guest speakers, appearing either in person or via video conference, will share their experiences to connect discussions to the real world.

Assessment

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

- Understand and be able to effectively articulate relevant issues, purposes and methods of "public diplomacy";
- Understand and be able to effectively articulate the utility of technologies relevant to "public diplomacy";
- Understand and articulate the distinctions between public diplomacy, public affairs, military information support operations (formerly known as PSYOP), public relations and political campaigning; and,
- Apply this knowledge to the student's relevant area of interest or expertise.

Computation of Grade

Class participation (30%): Public diplomacy requires public speaking, leadership and the ability to contextualize real-world events. Each class begins with contextualizing the week's events that are relevant to "public diplomacy" and reviewing the reading material to assess understanding of the course material and to promote active engagement with current events.

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to actively participate in class discussions.

At the beginning of a given week (to be determined), students will be tasked with giving an "elevator speech." The topic is up to each student and must be relevant to the course (likely it is an issue we have been discussing). This is an exercise in (relatively) impromptu presentation. The time limit is six minutes (it is a very long "elevator ride") and not a second more. The purpose is to practice organizing thoughts for the inevitable "impromptu" opportunity to communicate with a senior policy maker.

Writing (4 x 10%): Students will author three (3) short argument papers of 800-1200 words <u>and a fourth of no more than 700 words</u>. The format and structure is an op-ed or a blog post (think of an op-ed with links) intended to persuade relevant audiences. Documents must be submitted in a Microsoft Word-compatible format. Word's review feature is used to give feedback (which is often extensive). The first three paper topics are individual choice. The fourth paper topic will be chosen by the class after Spring Break. Each paper will be evaluated on form, clarity and persuasiveness. Papers are graded on a "slope:" expectations will increase with each submission. In other words, the last paper will be reviewed much more critically than the first.

Final paper (30%): Students will write a paper of 3,000-5,000 words (excluding footnotes, bibliography, etc.) relevant to the course subject matter. Each student will select their own topic, which may be the same as one of the short papers. Source material must include resources not assigned in the course and may include interviews. The term paper will be evaluated on depth, clarity of exposition, originality and relevance. A draft must be turned in early (see the schedule) to show effort and to allow for guidance. Students are encouraged, but not required beyond the previously mentioned requirement, to submit additional drafts before the final due date for comment. Papers are due before the start of the last class.

All papers are to be submitted through Blackboard. If you encounter a technical problem with Blackboard, email your paper to me.

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 Material (consider this flexible)

Required books:

- [Engage: The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web](#) by Brian Solis
- [Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives](#) by Nicholas A. Christakis and James Fowler
- [Propaganda](#) by Edward Bernays
- [Blur: How to Know What's True in the Age of Information Overload](#) by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosensteil

The following are also required but free copies will be distributed in class courtesy of the authors.

- [Dragon Bytes: Chinese Information War Theory and Practice from 1995-2003](#) by Tim Thomas
- [Options for Influence](#) by Ali Fisher and Aurélie Bröckerhoff
- [Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation](#) by Todd Helmus, Chris Paul and Russell Glenn

The following are recommended, but optional:

- [Trust Agents: Using the Web to Build Influence, Improve Reputation, and Earn Trust](#) by Chris Brogan
- [Regret the Error: How Media Mistakes Pollute the Press and Imperil Free Speech](#) by Craig Silverman
- [The Public Diplomacy Reader](#) by Mike Waller
- [Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes](#) by Jacques Ellul
- [Public Opinion](#) by Walter Lippman

In addition to the above, online documents will be assigned and available through DropBox.com, which allows me to spend less time uploading documents to Blackboard and you greater flexibility in retrieving documents and links. Invites to various repositories will go out before the first day of class.

Course Outline (consider this flexible)

January 14 – Introductions & Foundations

> Who are you & what do you want out the course; foundational concepts and imperatives.

January 21 – Definitions, Purpose, Utility and Means of Engagement & Influence

> Why do we engage, what is inform, influence, public diplomacy, strategic communication, global engagement, propaganda, etc.

January 28 – Now Media

> Understanding information flows, audiences and effects.

February 4 – US Government: actors, opportunities, and constraints *(paper 1 due)*

> Explore the roles, structures, resources and authorities of different parts of the US Government.

February 11 – Non-US activities

> Explore the engagement of other actors: UK, NATO, China, etc.

February 18 – Wikileaks and Other Non-State Actors

> Explore engagement by Wikileaks, individuals ("citizen diplomacy"), corporations and other non-state actors.

February 25 – Listening to what is heard *(paper 2 due)*

> Nothing happens in a vacuum: monitoring, measuring, adjusting and informing leadership of activities in complex environments.
> *Discuss / confirm topics for term paper*

March 4 – When Bytes Bite

> Explore adversarial use of information mediums.

March 11 – Review *(paper 3 due)*

> Discuss what was missed and topics raised by students.

March 18 – No class: Spring Break

March 25 – Case Studies: Domestic Politics *(Identify case studies for April 15)*

April 1 – Case Studies: Private-Sector Risk Management *(Final paper draft due)*

April 8 – Case Studies: National Security-related activities

April 15 – Case Studies: Student Choice / TBD *(paper 4 due)*

April 22 – Discussion

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

April 29 –Last day of class: review, questions *(Final Papers Due)*

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* Source: H.G Wells, "A New China Stirs the World", January 23, 1927, The New York Times.