

9-2013

## COMX 491.80: Special Topics - Propaganda in Context - Honors

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Communication Studies 491-80  
Propaganda in Context: Nazis and Soviets  
Fall 2013/Winter 2014

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**Course Description:**

Propaganda is difficult to define yet its ethical status is assumed to be clear: Propaganda is a tool used by organizations and governments bent on manipulating others (workers, consumers, citizens); those who wield it are unjust, perhaps even evil. In contemporary thought, the twentieth century regimes of Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R. are thought to exemplify propaganda at its worst. In this course, we will explore Nazi and Soviet propaganda with an eye toward understanding 1) what distinguishes propaganda from other forms of persuasion and 2) why and how citizens were swayed to go along with regimes whose actions included numerous atrocities, even the murder of innocent citizens. Additionally, we will explore how historical and cultural memory of these two regimes functions to position us as contemporary world citizens.

This is a four-credit course taught over two terms: fall semester 2013 and wintersession 2014. During the fall, we will meet five times for three-hour blocks; students are also invited to join the instructors for optional viewings of movies related to each unit; see the schedule for specific dates and times. During wintersession (December 27, 2013-January 8, 2014) we will tour the Central European cities of Berlin, Warsaw, Krakow, Prague, and Munich.

**Required Readings:**

Bytwerk, Randall L. (2004). *Bending Spines: The Propagandas of Nazi Germany and the German Democratic Republic*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.

Frankl, Viktor E. (2006/1959). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Funder, Anna (2002). *Stasiland: Stories from behind the Berlin Wall*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Scholl, Inge (1983). *The White Rose: Munich 1942-1943*. (A. R. Schultz, trans.) Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press. (Original work published in 1952).

Any recently published guidebook of Central Europe and/or Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

## **Academic misconduct:**

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarizing, and deliberately interfering with the work of others. Plagiarizing means representing the work of someone else (such as another student or an author of a book or an article) as your own. Following university regulations, cheating and plagiarism will be penalized with a failing grade in this course.

Please refer to the information provided by the Office of International Programs regarding the expectations of students representing the University of Montana as they travel abroad.

**Grades:** Although this course is offered over two sessions, we consider it a whole; as such, you will receive the same grade for both sessions. Your grade will be based on the following:

Fall semester report and essay assignments:	40%
Journal entries	40%
Participation:	20%

A=92% and up; A- = 91-90%; B+ = 88-89%; B = 82-87%; B- = 80 - 81%; C+ = 78 -79 %; C = 72 - 77%; C- = 70 - 71%; D+ = 68 - 69%; D = 62 - 67%; D- = 60 - 61%; F 59% and below.

## **Major Assignments:**

**Report:** Each student will make a five-minute report about a monument, museum, city, or other site we will be visiting. Your report should offer something beyond what is written in the tour itinerary or your guidebook. We encourage you to use Powerpoint or Prezi so that you can illustrate your report with images. Please be prepared to meet the demands of good public speaking -- e.g., be clear, engage your audience, and be mindful of the time limit! We will provide a handout with more specific guidelines to help you prepare for this assignment. Presentations will be made over the course of the semester.

**Essay Assignments:** Two weeks prior to each class period we will upload onto Moodle a set of essay questions based on the assigned readings. Your answers to each session's questions should be approximately six typed, double-spaced pages. Classroom discussions will revolve around the questions posed. Please plan to bring two copies of your answers – one to turn in and one for your reference.

The report and essay assignments together count toward 40% of your grade.

**Journal Entries:** During the tour, you will be asked to keep a journal in which you explore what you have experienced in light of fall readings and discussions, additional readings to be completed during the tour, and information provided by our tour guides. Good journals will make *specific connections* between course concepts and your observations. To provide time to reflect on your experiences, we will collect your journals on the first day of spring semester 2014 (Monday, January 27). The journal is worth 40% of your grade.

**Participation:** Students are expected to attend all five sessions fall semester 2013; if you foresee difficulty attending any of the sessions, please speak with one of the instructors. During the tour, students are expected to participate fully and appropriately. Remember that you are ambassadors of the University of Montana! Participation counts toward 20% of your grade.

### **Optional Sunday Viewings:**

The Sunday prior to each fall semester session, we will meet in LA 302 at 3:00 pm to view a film related to the next day's class. These will be informal gatherings (feel free to bring snacks and beverages; alcohol is permitted for those 21 years of age and older). We will follow the viewing with a short, informal discussion.

### **Fall Semester Schedule Mondays, 6:10 pm - 9:00 pm LA 302**

#### **September 16: Re-orientation and Context**

Optional Sunday Viewing -- September 15, *Valkyrie*

#### **September 30 -- Propaganda (emphasis on the Nazis)**

Read Bytwerk, introduction and chapters 1, 2, 7; Moodle, Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle;" Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism"

Optional Sunday Viewing -- September 29 -- *The Triumph of the Will*

#### **October 29 -- Propaganda (emphasis on the GDR)**

Read Bytwerk chapters 5 and 6; Funder, *Stasiland: Stories from behind the Berlin Wall*.

Optional Sunday Viewing -- October 28 - *The Lives of Others*

## **November 18 -- Social Movements, Resistance, and Resilience**

Read Scholl, *The White Rose*; Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Part I.

Optional Sunday Viewing -- November 17 – *Rosenstrasse*

## **December 2 -- Memory, Memorialization, and final trip preparations.**

Read: Bytwerk, Chapter 8; Moodle, excerpts from Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*.

Optional Sunday Viewing -- December 1 -- *Schindler's List*

### **To be read before or while we are in Central Europe:**

Young, J.E. (1993). *The texture of memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (pp. 49-72).

Jaskot, P., & Rosenfeld, G.D. (2008). Urban space and the Nazi past in postwar Germany. In G.D. Rosenfeld & P.B. Jaskot (Eds.), *Beyond Berlin: Twelve German cities confront the Nazi past* (pp. 1-21). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Jaskot, P. (2008). The Reich party rally grounds revisited. In G.D. Rosenfeld & P.B. Jaskot (Eds.), *Beyond Berlin: Twelve German cities confront the Nazi past* (pp. 143-162). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

McKim, J. (2011). Berlin's 'Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe' and the Problem of a Postmodern Monumental Rhetoric. In J. L. Golden, G. F. Berquist, W. E. Coleman, and J. M. Sproule (2011). *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* (pp. 427-335). Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.

Rosenfeld, G.D. (2008). Memory and the museum: Munich's struggle to create a documentation center for the history of national socialism. In G.D. Rosenfeld & P.B. Jaskot (Eds.), *Beyond Berlin: Twelve German cities confront the Nazi past* (pp. 163-184). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

### **Please note:**

Students are expected to complete both the fall semester class and wintersession tour. Credit will not be given for either session if both sessions are not completed.

Incompletes will be given only in emergencies and only with the consent of the instructors. Please speak with one of us immediately if you foresee having difficulty fulfilling one or both sessions