Media, War and Peace

Course description
Focusing on the media coverage of war, this course examines the challenges and dilemmas that journalists have to face when reporting on war, as well as the media’s role in, and influence on, conflicts and conflict resolution.

The course provides historical and sociological approaches to war correspondence, from Thucydides’ account of the Peloponnesian War to the current “war on terrorism,” through the two World Wars and the Cold War. In this perspective, we will analyze the evolution of media norms and practices, in different countries and war situations. The discussion will emphasize the war correspondents’ roles as victims, actors or denunciators of propaganda endeavors and will be nourished by a reflection on the responsibility of journalists for the evolution of armed conflicts.

Assignments
This course has four requirements: active in-class participation, a reading report, a midterm examination in class and a take-home final paper. All requirements must be completed in order to pass the course.

(1) Active and informed in-class participation: Attendance is required, and any absences must be cleared with me.

(2) Reading report. During the semester, each of you will write a two-page critique of one of the week’s recommended readings
(3) In-class midterm exam (1h30min.): It consists of 5 to 7 questions on the crucial concepts and ideas studied in the first part of the course.

(4) Take-home final paper: Essay (10 pages -- due at the end of the semester)

These requirements will count toward your final grade as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Report</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Class Midterm Exam</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Final Paper</td>
<td>50 percent</td>
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Schedule of Classes, Readings and Assignments

Session 1: Introduction
Presentation of the course organization and assignments
History of war coverage: key dates
Sociology of war correspondence: standards, practices and public perception
Political involvement of war correspondents: manipulation and propaganda, tensions and dilemmas, role in conflict resolution

Session 2: Lessons from the first wars covered
Thucydides’ History of the Peloponnesian War: an objective record of the past or a piece of literature?
The Crimean War: the first modern war coverage? Comparing William Howard Russell’s articles with Roger Fenton’s photographs
The Russo-Japanese War and the telegraph: the role of communication technology
The American Civil War: questions of aesthetics and ethics

Reading

Recommended


Session 3: War and anti-war propaganda

Propaganda techniques
Bernays and the role of PR
The end of innocence (Lippmann)

Reading

Recommended


Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda (Great Britain) (1932-) What everybody should know about propaganda, how and why it works. London

Session 4: Involvement, commitment and detachment

Lessons from the Spanish Civil War

Hemingway: between journalism and literature

Robert Capa’s photographs: democracy against fascism

Picasso’s Guernica: siding with the victims

Reading


Recommended


Rankin, Nicholas (2003) Telegram from Guernica. Faber & Faber

**Session 5: War on all fronts**

WWII: Journalists as team players or truth tellers?
The question of censorship
The role of music and cinema

**Reading**


**Recommended**


**Session 6: The controversial role of journalists**
The Cold War and McCarthyism
The controversial coverage of the Vietnam War
The role of television
The influence of Literary Journalism

Reading

Recommended

Session 7: War and collective memory
The image of war correspondents in popular culture
Iconic news images and Israeli collective memory

Reading

Videos
Midterm examination

Session 8: War as a spectacle
Blurring the lines between fiction and reality
Representing pain and trauma
The Gulf War as a videogame

Reading

Recommended
Session 9: Media and terrorism
Terrorism needs the media
Evolution of the coverage of terrorist attacks in Israel

Reading

Recommended

Session 10: The drone war
Drones as weapons of targeted killing and mass communication
Case study: Operation Protective Edge (2014)

Reading

Recommended


Session 11: Fake news and war

What’s new about fake news?
Does fake news influence opinion formation?
How to detect fake news?

Reading


Recommended


**Session 12: Fairness in war reporting**

Comparison between American and French models of journalism

Labeling the participants

Framing the reported event

Narrative and storytelling

**Reading**


**Recommended**

Boudana, Sandrine (2016) “Impartiality is not fair: Toward an alternative approach to the evaluation of content bias in news stories”, *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism* 17(5): 600-618


Session 13: Is Peace Journalism the solution?
The conflict in former Yugoslavia and the emergence of Peace Journalism
The role of journalists in conflict resolution

Reading

Recommended