Course title: Communication: Social Power of Media
Course code: COMM 3006 PRAG
Programs offering course: Summer Communications, New Media, and Journalism
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Summer Session I 2020

Course Description

This course examines the influence of international and domestic media on political and social developments in Europe by shaping public opinion. The course explores the dynamic relationship between the development of communication technologies and the content of the disseminated messages, and the challenges this presents, including “fake news,” as well as the methods “traditional” media employ to adapt to the new situation and the effects this adaptation has on the practice of journalism. Incorporating field trips and guest speakers from local media, the course offers a first-hand experience of journalist methods employed by different Prague-based media companies, including the U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. In addition to the more general topic, the course also focuses on the coverage of religious, ethnic and other emotionally sensitive issues in the Central-European context and its effect on shaping public opinion and policies.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Analyze and assess the impact the media have on world events and the history of particular countries; identify and critically discuss the dangers and responsibilities involved;
- Identify and describe the perceptual differences of various audiences and the importance, in European context, of being aware of ethnic and religious sensitivities;
- Compare, analyze and discuss how significant world events were covered by media in the past and now: how the coverage has shaped public opinions;
- Demonstrate an increased ability to use relevant skills required for analysis of journalistic standards and background research of media organizations;
- Debate, present and defend their scientifically informed opinion.

Course Prerequisites

Understanding of the basic concepts of western journalism is helpful, however not mandatory.

Methods of Instruction

Lectures, home assignments with follow-up discussions, reaction papers, field trips/visits to media companies. Additional readings from the electronic Course Reader and/or handouts may be assigned by professor. PowerPoint presentation from lectures will be available on the CIEE course Canvas site. They are designed to serve as visual reminder of the main concepts of the course and as a short textbook for this course. Classes will take place at CIEE (or at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty or other media companies when indicated by the professor). Students may be invited to visit some of the broadcast services of RFE/RL or other media organizations and to participate in seminars or discussion groups sponsored by the radios and other organizations. Visits to media organizations will be announced by the professor. The course will also include demonstration of video materials. After watching them the students will be asked to answer quizzes or write short reaction papers. Volunteering for individual research assignments and short reports/reaction papers is encouraged and will earn extra credit points for the Final Grade. This may take a form of a travel report on a topic previously agreed with professor. All mandatory reaction papers may increase or deduct (in case of late submission or non-submission) credit points, whilst successful optional reaction papers will increase the score.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Homework / Research Papers 30%
2. Midterm Exam 10%
3. Final Exam / Essay 40%
4. Participation / Discussion 20%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Homework / Research Papers

Students are expected to have basic word processing and on-line searching skills. Students should complete their homework assignments in a timely manner and submit them in printed or electronic form as directed by professor. Late submission of work (without a justified reason) will be graded down 5% for the first day and 1% for each subsequent day.

Students are expected to read the indicated texts from the recommended literature. A course reader will be available electronically on the CIEE website. Additional readings may be provided by professor.

Midterm Exam

Final Exam / Essay

The course will finish with a written exam. It will consist of four questions requiring short essay-style answers. The fourth question will ask to analyze and compare two news items in accordance with the analytical structure provided by professor. It will make up to 40% of the final grade. To provide students with the opportunity to monitor their progress during the course and to familiarize with the format of the Final exam, a Midterm exam will take place half way into the course. It may constitute up to 10% of the final grade. However in the framework of this intensive course it should be regarded mainly as a revision of the course material and rehearsal before the Final exam. The philosophy of this course is to reward progress in learning, thus less successful results in the Midterm may be compensated by increased quality of performance in the subsequent assignments leading to the Final exam. One of the main criteria for evaluation of the students’ progress will be their increased ability to apply their theoretical knowledge to praxis. In addition to the above, short quizzes will take place during the entire course.

Participation / Discussion

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program.

If you will miss a class for any reason, notify the Program Coordinator and your instructor beforehand via Canvas. You are responsible for any materials covered in class during your absence, and except in the specific cases listed below, credit will not be granted for missed assessments.

Excessive absences will result in a notification letter, and finally a warning letter, sent to you and your home school, based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of course hours missed</th>
<th>Number of CIEE classes</th>
<th>Minimum penalty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>One to Three 90-min. classes; or One 180-min. class</td>
<td>No penalty</td>
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<tr>
<td>10% - 20%</td>
<td>Four 90-min. classes</td>
<td>Written notification* to the student, followed by a warning letter to the student and home school; 3% reduction in the final grade</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five 90-min. classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Two 180-min classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Six 90-min. classes; or Three 180-min. classes</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion with notification to the home school</td>
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* The notification letters are intended to ensure that you are well advised in advance of any potential for failure or dismissal, so that you can take steps to avoid this.
As the table shows, missing more than 20% of any class (e.g., due to undocumented illness, travel delays, flight cancellations, over-sleeping, etc.) results in automatic failure of the course.

If you miss an assessment in class due to an absence, you will be able to make it up in the following instances:

- You provide a relevant doctor's note from a local medical professional to your Program Coordinator within 24 hours of your absence (a scan or photograph sent via e-mail are acceptable)
- A CIEE staff member verifies that you were too ill to attend class.
- You provide evidence of a family emergency to your Program Coordinator.
- You have an approved absence related to the observance of a religious holiday from the Academic Director based on a request submitted before you arrived onsite.

Please note: Absences incurred due to documented illness, documented family emergency or the observance of a religious holiday approved before arrival onsite do not count towards the total of absences. Students may self-certify one absence due to illness without providing a doctor’s note as long as they notify the Program Coordinator within 24 hours of their absence by e-mail or a text message.

Other attendance-related policies

If you transfer from one CIEE class to another during the Add/Drop period, you will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of the new class provided you were marked present for the first session(s) of the original class.

If you are over 15 minutes late for a class, the instructor is required to mark you absent.

In case of class conflicts (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips and make-up classes), always contact the Academic Department to decide the appropriate course of action.

Please remember to track your attendance on the Canvas Course Sites and report any errors in the record to the Academic Department within one week of the discrepancy date, as later claims may not be considered.

These attendance rules also apply to any required co-curricular excursion, activity, or event, and to for-credit internships.

CIEE staff does not manage absences at partner institutions providing direct enrollment classes (FAMU, ECES and FSV), but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class:

Day 1 THE DEVELOPING MEDIA WORLD
- Course introduction: explanation of the course policies and content.
- The World of the Medias: Overview of how media has developed and how it works; how it shapes attitudes toward social and natural environment.

Required readings:
- PP 1
- Altschull, 3-7, 8-15,

Day 2 THE CHALLENGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION TO JOURNALISM ETHICS; RFE/RL TODAY: PRAGUE-BASED INTERNATIONAL MEDIA (PART 1) (Tour of the RFE/RL will be arranged at other convenient time).
- Professional Standards and Codes of Conduct; character of media professionals;
- Discussion of concepts of objectivity, balance, fairness.
- Propaganda and fabrication.
- Differences between US and European media; commercial, public, and state-run media.
- The ongoing debate between the two media philosophies: the impact of developing media technology versus the function of the content of message.
- Background on the organizational structure of RFE/RL: work of the services; field bureaus;
Required readings:

- PP 2
- PDF document: Reporters sans frontières publication, 9, 14 – 16.
- Raymond Williams, Television (2002) pp. 8-17

Day 3 RFE/RL TODAY: PRAGUE-BASED INTERNATIONAL MEDIA (PART 2); RFE/RL AND THE COLD WAR

- Goals and specific mission of each of the RFE/RL services.
- Mission and philosophy of RFE/RL. Strategic priorities; role of audience research in setting priorities.
- Editorial autonomy of services and cross-service coordination.
- Professional code. Structure of US international broadcasting.
- Video presentation.
- Short overview of RFE/RL history from Munich to Prague.
- Listening session: Sample of historical broadcasts from RFE/RL, BBC.

Required readings:

- PP 3
- PP4
- PDF: Cold War Radios 1&2;
- PDF: Markov Case documents 1 &2, Inside RFE/RL;
- Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History,” The National Interest, Summer 1989, 3-18;
- Altschull, 85-92; Gorman, Cold War and Communication 104-113, 114-121.

Week 2

Class: .

Day 4 COVERING SENSITIVE ISSUES

- Dealing with ethnic, religious and emotional sensitivities in Central European and in global media context: understanding different perceptual angles;
- Facing disinformation, propaganda, hate speech.
- Introduction to the past case studies.

Required readings:

- PP 5
- Houston Smith, The World’s Religions, 221-242 (Islam); 271-299 (Judaism); 317-335 (Christianity).

Day 5 COVERING RUSSIA: THEN AND NOW

- How did the international media cover Russia during the Cold War? What were the issues?
- What were the technology and production issues? What were the broadcasting strategies?
- What was the coverage and issues immediately after the Cold War, during and after the collapse of the Soviet bloc?
- What are the current approaches?
- Russia’s relations with Ukraine; their common historical roots and current differences.
- How independent is the media in Russia?
- How the conflict in Ukraine is covered by Russian, Ukrainian and Western media.

Required readings:

- PP 6
- Professor will provide you with historical and up-to-date materials on Russia and the current conflict coverage.

Day 6 MIDTERM EXAM
Written exam consisting of three questions to be answered in a short essay format.

Required readings:
- PP 7 (Sample of the Midterm exam)
- Revise the materials from day 1 to 6. Individual tutoring, as needed.

Week 3
Class:

Day 7 FACING THE PLURALITY OF BELIEFS
- The many new faces of global media.
- Facing ideological challenges through new multi-media environment.
- How the technology and competition affect broadcasting strategies of RFE/RL and other international broadcasters?
- Listening session on covering religious and ethno-linguistic relations issues.

Required readings:
- PP 8

Day 8 RESEARCHING THE MEDIA
- Journalism and advocacy.
- The manipulation of media.
- Journalist as public servant, citizen, business person, or political actor?
- Discussing careers of media personalities.
- Centralization of media ownership and its implications for democracy.

Required readings:
- PP 9
- Other up-to-date reading assignments will be indicated by professor.

Day 9 COVERING THE WORLD AT THE CZECH PUBLIC TV
- (Visit to Czech TV if available or at other convenient time)
- What are the issues covered at CPTV?
- What is the editorial philosophy?
- The process of gathering news for TV.
- What about the bias?
- The new technological challenges?
- Being present on the social media, following the format trends of the mainstream international media.
- New ways of competing for the viewership.

Required readings:
- PP10
- History and Professional Code of Czech TV (www.CTV.cz);
- Gorman, Media & War, New Media (2 files).

Week 4
Class:

Day 10 COVERING THE WORLD AT CZECH PUBLIC RADIO
- (Visit to Czech Radio if available or at other convenient time)
- What are the issues covered by CPR?
- What is the editorial philosophy?
- The process of gathering news for national public radio.
- What about the bias?
- The new technological challenges.

Required readings:
Day 11 COVERING HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

- Czech and International journalists on assignment in hot-spots abroad
- debate about cooperating with the military ('embedded' journalists);
- physical and psychological challenges.
- Overcoming information restrictions.
- Harassment of journalists.
- Real-life stories.

Required readings:

- PP12
- PDF document: Reporters sans frontieres publication 21-63, 94;
- Links to relevant IFJ, AI, UNHRC documents. (electronic links as directed by professor)

Day 12 MEDIA AND THE FUTURE; REVIEW OF THE COURSE

- The new frontiers for international media: what the continuing trends in mass communications and what is entirely new?
- Challenge and opportunities of Internet, multi-media, new ways of live coverage, the impact of hand-held communications equipment.
- How will develop the professional standards?
- The influence of media on the public opinion and on the ways of social interaction in society.
- Structured approach to estimating the character of this influence by analyzing media coverage.

Required readings:

- Be ready for discussion and group exercise involving the material discussed in this course.
- Personal tutoring as needed

FINAL EXAM

- Written test consisting of four questions to be answered in a short essay form.

Course Materials
Readings


