

POLS 4551: Propaganda and American Politics

Please make sure to read the entire syllabus.



Dr. Audrey A. Haynes
Spring Semester 2026
Time: 1:15-2:35 PM Tu Th
Classroom: Baldwin 101D
Office: Suite 103 Baldwin
Student Drop-In Hours: TU TH 12 pm to 1 pm and by appointment
Email: polaah@uga.edu

Overview:

In this course we will explore the world of propaganda within politics. We begin with the biological hardware that is our brain as the way it is configured is the reason propaganda takes some of the forms it does. We will then examine the definition of propaganda and comparisons with other forms of communication. We will compare propaganda with persuasion – and some days that will leave us scratching our heads trying to determine which is which as it can sometimes be difficult to tell unless you know the source and their objectives.

We will examine theories of propaganda and utilize tools (logic, detective work) to analyze it, deconstruct it, and determine its effects. In addition, we will examine propaganda's history from ancient Rome to modern America and see how its use has developed and evolved over time. We will learn to create our own propaganda and produce our own research on the use of propaganda.

Course goals for students:

1. Be familiar with the basic structures of the brain and how some of our biological processes make it easier for propagandists to manipulate us. Understand the key theories and concepts related to the psychology of human attitude development and decision-making.
2. Develop a clear understanding of propaganda; be able to compare propaganda with persuasive and informative communication.
3. Understand that propaganda itself is simply a tool – perhaps a less desirable one; it can be used for both objectively good and bad efforts. It can be effective, and it can fail. It is certainly not foolproof and often requires a great deal of time and effort.
4. Discuss the origins and development of propaganda over the course of history, with an emphasis on the major points of change in technique, delivery tools, audience, or source. Examine consistencies relating to propaganda over time
5. Be able to critique a variety of theories of propaganda with the view to understand models of propaganda.
6. Understand the human psychology that underlies these theories.
7. Deconstruct political ads, as well as other advertising, into the components of propaganda.
8. Produce research on propaganda in the form of team or individual research paper or a creative work.
9. Engage with peers in discussion and in peer assessment.

Required Reading and Assessments:

You will be reading selected chapters, articles, and watching media sources, available within our eLC course, from a variety of other books and articles. There is no required textbook per se, but what is required will be available within the confines of our eLC course page. You will have ample time and access to read the materials prior to exams.

Assessment Tool	Material Covered	Percentage
Test 1 (online)	Module 1,2 content	10
Test 2 (online)	Module 3,4 content	10
Test 3 (online)	Module 5,6,7 content	10
Paper Peer Review	Reading, feedback, participation	10
Paper/Project topic	Full page prospectus	10
Annotated Bibliography	15 sources and annotations	10
Paper/Project	Completed Research Paper	20
Study Guides for select chapters	Reading materials	10
In Class and Online	Quizzes and Activities	10
Module information and descriptions of projects are located on the course eLC page.		

Make-Up Policy

If you are called to jury duty, or have a verified medical illness or emergency, you will qualify for an excused absence. Absences on quiz days will result on 0. But I will always make the actual work accessible to you so that you do not miss out on the content of any in-class quiz. Students who have some other type of event that takes them away from class may certainly make a case for themselves. It is important that you communicate with me if such an occurrence takes place.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required in the course. I will take attendance on a regular basis, generally through a quiz or activity. So please bring a pencil/pen and paper each day.

No Electronics Use in the Classroom

We are all adults, and having a smart phone in class is something that is considered a part of our existence (and a necessity), but I would kindly ask you to put your phones on silent and tuck them away during class. They should not be out in view for you, me or anyone near you to see. Moreover, we will NOT be utilizing laptop computers in class unless it is a part of an exercise. Students are expected to close and put away laptops during class time. Lectures will be made visible to student prior to exams. So

you should feel free to take notes but know that the material will be made available to you prior to exams.

Academic Honesty Policy and AI Policy:

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

<https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy/student-honor-code>

Unless included as part of the assignment, use of Artificial Intelligence in any form (be it ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.) is prohibited in your work. The only accepted use of AI is that which we find in our routine programs for writing, i.e. spelling and grammar check.

Use of these tools to answer test questions will result in an automatic zero and you will be required to redo the work in person as well as have the incident report to Academic Affairs. Please know that your brain gets stronger when you use your brain. AI is good for some things, but it is not reliable, nor does it transfer knowledge or understanding to your brain. You may use it as a research assistant for your paper, but it cannot be used to compose material, and all material must be vetted.

There is an academic honesty pledge quiz that you will be taking in the checklist for our start module. When you pledge to be honest and adhere to the rules of the class, you are pledging to not utilize AI unless it is specifically included in the prompt or directions.

Students with Disabilities/Challenges

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment.

Accommodations for Disabilities (e.g., If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.) See <https://drc.uga.edu/sample-access-statements/> for additional examples.

UGA Well-being Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services.

They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; changes announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

FERPA Notice (e.g., The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation at reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/. FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar.)

NOTE: See following pages for University Spring 2026 Calendar. Our specific activities and due dates will be available in eLC.

Classes Begin	Jan. 12	Monday
Drop / Add for undergraduate and graduate level courses	Jan. 12-16	Monday - Friday
Holiday: Martin Luther King Jr. Day- No Classes	Jan. 19	Monday
Midterm	March 2	Thursday Monday
Last Day of Classes prior to Spring Break	Mar. 6	Friday
Spring Break- No Classes	Mar. 9-13	Monday - Friday
Classes Resume	Mar. 16	Monday
Withdrawal Deadline	April 9	Thursday
MW and Monday Only Class Schedule in Effect (Does not include MWF Classes)	April 27	Monday
Classes End	April 27	Monday
Reading Day	April 28	Tuesday
Final Exams	April 29- May 5	Wednesday - Tuesday
Graduate Commencement	May 7	Thursday
Undergraduate Commencement	May 8	Friday
Grades Due	May 11	Monday, 12 PM