

Course Description:

This course will examine the ways in which the causes and consequences of war are portrayed through speech, image, and media. Students will examine the rhetoric of war as objective analysts and assess how speakers have rallied people to war or railed them against it. Exploring the relationship between communication and war, we will look at the role of address, journalism, propaganda, social media and pop culture in the waging and protesting of war.

Course Objectives:

In taking this class, you will be able to:

- Read & understand contemporary scholarship on communication in/of war
- Recognize and explain the role of communication in society & your own life
- Evaluate oral, written or visual argument with consideration to audience
- Recognize and explain the influences of new media technologies in the communication of war

Texts & Course Materials:

- ~~Bring 'Em On~~, edited by Lee Artz & Yahya Kamalipour (*Spring 2012 class*)
- Selected journal articles - citations available on Moodle (*Spring 2013 class*)
- Syllabus & Assignment Packet
- 4x6 index cards – strongly recommended, not required

Attendance: Regular, timely, attendance is expected. Studies have shown a positive link between class attendance and performance (in other words, the more classes students show up to, the better the grade they earn). Attendance is also a key job skill, being linked to not only maintaining your employment but also to raises and promotions, and is central to civic life because 'the world is run by those who show up.' To reinforce the importance of class attendance and participation, there is a direct and immediate pay-off for you: For every full week of class you attend (attendance means on time and for the entire class period) you will earn credit towards being able to "opt out" of one or more test questions on the exams.

Due Dates/Late Work: LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED. *If you know in advance you will not be in class when an assignment is due, turn it in early. If you wake up sick when something is due, please email it by class time.* All due dates are on the course calendar.

Etiquette: The success of this course is directly related to the sense of community that we develop in the classroom. Participation is essential to this process. I encourage you to share your views and listen to those of others. Debate and discussion are an important part of the learning process. While there will no doubt be disagreements, I expect the members of this community (including myself) to challenge ideas in a manner that reflects respect and recognition of opposing viewpoints without attacking individuals.

Extra Credit: Extra credit will not be available as an end-of-semester option to make-up-for or replace work that you did not do throughout the semester. There are some chances at bonus points built in to the course; remain attentive to course material and assignments to discover these opportunities.

Incompletes: Incompletes, or other arrangements for course completion, can be planned only in advance to the semester's end in extreme circumstances with documentation. To receive an incomplete, there must be a serious *emergency* so late in the semester that there isn't time to make up what you miss.

Grading:	● Exam 1:	25%	● Exam 3:	25%
	● Exam 2:	25%	● Paper:	25%

Full assignment descriptions, instructions, explanations, and grading procedures are found in the accompanying "Assignments Packet."

Final Grades are broken down **in this class** as follows:

- 4.0 = 95-100 ● 3.7 = 90-94 ● 3.3 = 86-89 ● 3.0 = 82-85 ● 2.7 = 78-81
- 2.3 = 72-77 ● 2.0 = 67-71 ● 1.7 = 61-66 ● 1.3 = 56-60 ● 1.0 = 51-55 ● (0.0 = below 51)

Work that meets the minimum requirements of an assignment, is completed on time and displays average involvement with the course content is deserving of a 2.0. A 2.0 is a "satisfactory" grade that indicates the *minimum* has been achieved. Higher grades are awarded to work that goes above and beyond the minimum standards to produce papers and presentations that reflect superior intellectual effort, excellence in critical analysis and overall creativity in the approach towards any given assignment. A 4.0 is attainable but will require much more than minimal effort.

Challenging a Grade: If you identify an error in grading, I am always willing to admit to a mistake and correct it. If you want me to *reconsider* a grade, follow these steps:

- Wait at least 24 hours before deciding to seek reconsideration, but no longer than one week.
- Write a 1-2 page explanation of why the grade should be reconsidered identifying what type of change you seek and providing a reasoned argument and evidence in support of that change. The burden of proof in any disagreement over evaluation of your performance rests with you.
- Resubmit the original work (complete with grade & comments) along with the rationale.
- Allow two weeks for reconsideration. Accept the final decision. *I will reconsider each assignment only once.*

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty: As stated in the Undergraduate Catalog, the following pledge is made on all academic work done by students at SUNY Potsdam. This pledge is regarded as an indication that you understand and have complied with the requirements and assignments as set forth by the course instructor and as stated in this Academic Honor Code

To plagiarize is to pass off *ideas or words of someone else* as your own or to use created productions without crediting the source. Any time you incorporate the words &/or ideas of another person into your work, no matter what the medium/source, without giving their creator the credit, you have plagiarized. It is literary and intellectual theft when you present work that someone else did as being new and original. This includes user-generated content on sites like Wikipedia. ***I have a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism. In the event of plagiarism on an assignment in this course you will A.) Definitely fail the assignment. B.) Possibly fail the course.*** Therefore, you will be responsible for authenticating any assignment submitted in this course. I recommend that you keep copies of all drafts of your work, make photocopies &/or careful notes of research materials, save drafts or versions of assignments under individual file names on computer disks, etc. Other forms of dishonesty or cheating are also not tolerated and will result in a failure of the assignment and/or class. If you think you are engaging in questionable behavior, you probably are, so either don't do it or seek clarification.

Technology/Electronic Devices: Technology use is permissible in the classroom IF:

- Your usage is polite. You are taught from kindergarten on that it is not acceptable to carry on personal conversations with others or to pass notes to people during class time.
- Your usage does not interfere with your performance in class. Multitasking is a fact of modern life, but if you're not good at Facebooking and listening at the same time, don't do it.
- Your usage does not bother your neighbors. Be aware of and polite to people near you. Communication devices should always be set to silent & only answered outside the room.
- You are willing to apply your technology use to course materials in productive ways.
- You do not secretly record any portion of a class without seeking permission from all involved parties.

Consider your technology use outside of class, too. If contacting me via email, be professional: use an appropriate and informative subject, address me politely, and use good Standard English. Many (potential) employers will not be impressed by communication like, "hey-idk wuts du 2mrw. tia"

COMM390: Communicating War, with Dr. K. Spring 2012 Assignment Packet

This packet is designed to provide you with all the basic information and instructions to succeed at the graded portions of this course. Instructions and grading schemes for every assignment in this class, for the entire semester, are provided here for you. Use this resource in conjunction with the Syllabus and class meetings. You are responsible for reading the information in this packet just as you are responsible for reading any other assignment in class.

Readings

Nearly every week, one or more readings will be due. To maximize our class time and your learning, you should read the chapters *before* coming to class. This way, our discussions in class will make more sense to you and you will be better prepared to ask questions or contribute to dialogues. As an added bonus for keeping up with the reading, you have to following *option*:

On the day a chapter is due you may turn-in one 4x6 index card with handwritten notes (front & back) from the chapter, which you will be able to use as a cheat sheet on the quizzes/exams:

- You may have **only 1 card per article**
- Cards can be **no larger than 4x6 inches**. (See below.)
- Notes must be **handwritten**, not typed.
- **Your name** must be on the card.
- Cards will be accepted **only on the day the reading is due**, no exceptions.

This is approximately a 4x6" card.

If you do not have index cards available,
you may cut paper to this size to use.

It may not be any larger than this outline.
Larger notecards WILL NOT be accepted.

If you do not have a ruler, trace this box.

Exams

To help reinforce course material, there will be three exams throughout the semester – one for every five chapters, and related material, covered.

The exams will be comprised on multiple-choice questions, and you will be given some limited options on the exams for which questions you choose to answer.

Exams will never be longer than 25 questions.

There are several ways to prepare for the exams:

- Read (and take advantage of the note cards)
- Listen carefully and take notes in class.

★ *Good attendance will pay off in having credit that you can use to “buy out” of 1 or more questions on an exam.*

Exams can only be made up when they are missed because of **DOCUMENTED** emergencies or college-sanctioned events, or for religious observances with notice.

Paper

The final paper for this course is designed to reinforce the course content, provide you a chance to engage with the material in personal, in-depth and contextual ways, and to offer you the opportunity to more fully explore an aspect of war communication that most interests you. All the options will take the same amount of work, time, and consideration. All the options will be evaluated according to the same criteria. So... do not make your selection based on perception of easiness or quickness. Instead, select the option that is the most interest to you personally, educationally, and/or professionally.

In all three options, you should rely on and reference what you have learned during the course; support your arguments with examples from the readings and/or lectures. Chapters from the course textbook should also be cited. Lecture material should be referenced by date. Use APA, MLA, or Chicago format.

Option 1: Pop Culture Analysis -- MIMENET (the military-industrial-media-entertainment network) is the linkage of governmental entities and private industries, including the film, gaming, and music industries, which makes war possible. World War II cooperation between the government and entertainment media to promote the war effort became legendary – and similar efforts continue to this day. Simultaneously, many anti-war voices use the entertainment media to get their messages out to the mass public. This assignment is designed to give you the opportunity to examine war rhetoric in popular culture.

First, find at least one journal article that has done a scholastic study of some artifact of banal militarism. Next, choose any war-themed novel, movie, comic book series, or video game (or a selection of 5 songs) and prepare an analysis of the rhetorical aspects of the artifact you selected. What is the war message that is being made – is it pro or anti-war? In what ways do the entertainment elements shape audience understanding of the message? How does the medium/platform (FPS game, book?) or style of presentation (drama, comedy, satire?) influence the message?

A brief list of possible artifacts follows:

<u>Movies</u>	<u>Video Games</u>	<u>Novels</u>	<u>Comic Books</u>
• The Hurt Locker	• Halo	• The Things They Carried	• Hawk & Dove
• Saving Private Ryan	• Call of Duty	• Killer Angels	• Captain America
• Rules of Engagement	• America's Army	• Fallen Angels	• War Machine
• The Deer Slayer		• Across Five Aprils	

The bottom line is to make sure that you are dealing with the rhetorical aspects of artifact. An essay describing how cool the special effects in *Saving Private Ryan* are would not be appropriate, but an essay discussing how the special effects contribute to a pro-war message would be quite appropriate.

Option 2: News Analysis -- This assignment is designed to give you the opportunity to examine the use of rhetoric in everyday events in war and peace.

First, find at least one journal article that has done a scholastic study of war or military related news. Next, choose a current news event related to military actions (US or foreign) and prepare an analysis of some rhetorical aspect of the news event in question. In what ways does the use of persuasion help shape our understanding of the event in question? You may comment on the way the media represents the event, the way in which the various actors (heads of state, military analysts, antiwar protesters, media pundits, government officials, etc.) shape the event through the use of language, etc. Your analysis should also consider the coverage from multiple sources – mainstream and/or alternative. Do sources with known political biases shape the event differently, do different platforms/mediums report the story differently – what influence can these differences have?

A brief list of acceptable examples follows:

- the way the term "terrorist" mobilizes a vast amount of emotional charge, and an analysis of the ways in which it is used (and not used) in particular circumstances
 - a comparison of characterizations of the Islamic world during the Gulf War vs. the contemporary characterization in the "war on terrorism"
 - the way that terrorists are paradoxically glamorized in media representations through the use of specific rhetorical devices
 - the way in which the term "war" is deployed in other contexts (e.g. "war on drugs")
 - the notion of the "Vietnam Syndrome" and its persuasive function in authorizing particular kinds of responses to international conflict
 - the ways in which different militaries are categorized (of the people- as in Israel- or opposed to the people –as in Egypt)
 - constructions of "heroes" or "heroics" in war or other armed conflicts
- (That is simply a short list to get your mind working; do not limit yourself to the items on the list.)

The bottom line is to make sure that you are dealing with the rhetorical aspects of a news event. An essay describing how glad you are the Iraq War officially ended is not appropriate for the assignment, but an essay describing the way the media characterization of the event helped produce reactions of joy would be quite appropriate.

Please note that a full citations of news related to the event, including URLs, must be included.

Option 3: Mil Blog Analysis -- During the War on Terror, the US (and other) military's confronted the changing media landscape through attempts at prohibiting, controlling, and ultimately embracing social media. "Milblogging" (military blogging) soon earned the reputation of being one of the most honest depictions of war. This assignment gives you the opportunity to examine the rhetoric of a milblog.

First, locate at least one journal article that has done a scholastic study of military (or other) blogs. Next, choose a selection of entries from a single milblog (about 5 entries: depending on the blog's structure, it might be a week's worth, a month's worth, or simply a topical collection – if the entries are very short, you may need to include more to have enough material to critique) and prepare an analysis the rhetorical aspects of the entries in question. In what ways does the use of persuasion help shape our understanding of the events discussed? You may comment on the way the event or issue is represented, the ways in which the various actors (heads of state, military analysts, antiwar protesters, media pundits, government officials, etc.) are described or cast (heroes, villains?). What is the credibility of the blogger? What is the reach of the blog?

A sample of milblogs follows:

- <http://milblogging.com/> (a list of milblogs)
- Bouhammer's Afghan Blog www.bouhammer.com/
- The Sandbox gocomics.typepad.com/the_sandbox/
- A Soldier's Perspective militarygear.com/asp/

The bottom line is to make sure that you are dealing with the rhetorical aspects of the entries. An essay describing how funny the blogger is would not be appropriate for the assignment, but an essay discussing how the blogger uses humor to better reach the audience would be quite appropriate.

Please note that full citations of the blog entries, including URLs, must be included.

BASIC PAPER STRUCTURE

For all three options, make sure your paper does/has the following:

Part A.

2-3 pages reviewing the relevant material from the course (both readings and lectures), in conjunction with the information you learned from the additional journal article(s) you acquired. Cite this information using MLA, APA, or Chicago format.

Part B.

1-2 pages describing the artifacts/texts you chose.

Part C.

3-5 pages critiquing the content of the chosen artifacts/texts in relation to the information you presented in Part A.

Paper Grading Rubric (25 total points)

As you can see, all elements of the paper are important – from the spelling and format to references and content, but the most substantial areas have to do with time, effort, argument, and application of course content.

Offers substantial information from course material and additional article(s)	[7 points]
Selection of texts/artifacts is thoughtful and appropriate	[2 points]
Demonstrates careful attention to the texts analyzed	[3 points]
Provides adequate and specific evidence from the texts to support the argument	[3 points]
Analysis clearly relates back to the course & article materials	[2 points]
Uses good grammar and punctuation	[1 points]
Uses good spelling	[1 points]
Is written in an academic or professional tone	[2 points]
Is typed, double-spaced using 12-pt, Times New Roman font	[1 point]
Sources used are correctly cited	[2 points]
Is no fewer than 6 no more than 10 pages long (not counting references)	[1 points]