

Government 134 (Cross Listed as Journ. 134)  
WAR, PEACE AND THE MASS MEDIA  
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Tuesday 12 noon—1 p.m.  
(Or by Appointment)

COURSE OUTLINE###  
SPRING 2007

Anyone who wishes to comprehend the making of foreign and defense policy in particular and modern warfare in general must come to clearly understand the nature of the symbolic environment in which people lead their lives, together with the forces--most particularly the mass media--that shape the public's "second-hand world." For most Americans, on either a day-to-day or long-term basis, the mainstream press is likely to serve as their primary text on foreign affairs, defense policy and international conflict. Put another way, the press can play a decisive role in providing a sense of who is enemy and who is friend; of who deserves our help and admiration and who deserves our hatred, fear and contempt; of what is in the country's interest and what is not. In short, the press with its labels and frames provides an audience with a sense of what is right and proper in international politics. Only the most recent example is the 2003 war with Iraq and its vicious aftermath, a conflict which promises to get much worse before—and if—it ever gets better. Looming on the horizon is the possibility of armed conflict with countries ranging from Iran to North Korea.

It is the thesis of this course that the mainstream media significantly contribute to the creation of a general mood for the politically active public, a mood that can set the boundaries of policy by producing passivity and acquiescence on the one hand or alarm and active dissent on the other. This mood, which is particularly instrumental during a national election year, as the Republican Party was reminded this past November, consists of a generalized sense of whether foreign policy actions taken are in the country's best interests. During the Cold War (1947-1989) the best evidence that this mood can have significance in an open society was the government's history of systematic attempts to deceive and manipulate public opinion about matters ranging from Soviet nuclear strength to United States involvement in Latin America. In the post-Cold War period, the role of the press has been equally significant, perhaps even more so. Indeed, the media now have a prime strategic role. As Clinton's Secretary of State Madeline Albright once put it, "CNN has become the sixth member of the UN Security Council."

In sum, while it's true that the cold war ended, what followed has hardly been "peace," particularly after the events of September 11, 2001. War as a system of resolving conflict still prevails; thousands of nuclear weapons are still in arsenal; the military-industrial complex remains intact; politicians continue to believe the use of military force can bring electoral success, and potential sources of international conflict, ranging from the ecological to the economic, loom large on the horizon.

**FOCUS:** This course is concerned with the relationship of the mass media to US. foreign and defense policy, particularly those aspects of policy that relate to crisis or conflict situations. The semester's central concern will be with the impact of mass media on political consciousness, defense and foreign policy making, and public opinion, with an emphasis on recent concepts of political communication. To what extent do the US. media provide an accurate picture of foreign events where American interests are involved? To what degree are the media independent of foreign policymakers? Are the media non-ideological, as some defenders of the US. press system argue? Are the media highly ideological, as their critics contend? How efficient is the American system at information gathering abroad? How do the media cover conflict in a post-9-11 world? Are the possibilities for peaceful resolution of international conflict enhanced or diminished by media performance? What effects do economics and the pursuit of profit have on journalism?

***Areas of Study***

The period before the first midterm will concentrate on the dynamics of media performance toward foreign policy in general and war in particular. The semester's second unit of study will deal with a study of press performance during the 1991 and 2003 wars with Iraq. Finally, the semester will end with a consideration of how the press performed during the Cold War and what we might learn from that period.

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###This course fulfills the General Education Program's requirement for Area D2: Major Social Issues of the Contemporary Era. The course is cross-listed as Journalism 134, and course credit is similarly applicable in all respects

***Specific Goals:***

- (1) To develop an understanding of mass media as a system that creates a general yet highly significant public mood about defense and foreign policy, particularly in times of conflict or open warfare and/or military intervention abroad
- (2) To develop criteria for judging media performance in coverage of foreign crisis or conflict situations particularly those involving military intervention, particularly in terms of the effects ethnocentrism and ideology can have on the reporting of foreign affairs
- (3) To develop awareness of media/foreign policy dynamics.
- (4) To consider ways journalists and members of the public can bring about change in how the press treats foreign and defense policy issues.

***Course Method***

This basically is a lecture-discussion course. Class participation is expected and encouraged. Guest speakers and films also may be used.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

All students will be expected to complete reading assignments, participate in class discussion and hand in all mini-assignments, particularly in-class, no-fault writing exercises (SEE BELOW).

**ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS/ CLASS PARTICIPATION:** There will be a number of mini-assignments during the semester, most of which will be completed in class. Therefore, regular class attendance is essential or you will fall behind.

**NO FAULT EXERCISES:** A "no-fault" exercise is one that must be completed, but is not given a letter grade. Rather, I rate it on a scale of **0** [off-task, perfunctory, woefully inadequate]; **1** [on-task]; and **2** [exceptionally insightful and unusually well done]. The average rating for a no-fault in this class is a **1**. In other words, no-faults are considered a *routine* part of class work, and therefore usually can't *help you*, but if there is a string of **0s** [meaning you've been off-task a lot or absent when no-faults were given], then they can hurt you. By the same token, a string of **2s** [which is extremely rare] can help your final grade. No-faults are counted into calculation of the *participation* segment of your grade. Most no-faults on reading assignments will not be returned, and they **MAY NOT** be made up.

**COURSE MATERIALS:** Please purchase a package of unruled 3X5 note cards to use for in-class no faults dealing with assigned reading.

**SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** During lecture, I'll frequently refer to current articles on press performance within the context of the course. You can read these articles in their entirety by following the links on my War, Peace and Mass Media **BLOG**, which can be found at <http://warmedia.blogspot.com/> For those who are interested, I edit a similar blog for my foreign policy course, which can be found at <http://usfp.blogspot.com/> You may wish to bookmark one or both in your browser.

**GRADING SYSTEM:**

*This course has a two-tier grading system*

**Examinations Option:** Under the first option, students may earn up to a "C+" grade by meeting the expectations listed above and by taking all THREE examinations (two midterms and a *comprehensive* final) on reading and lecture material). Your final grade will be a combination of 95% examination scores and essay and 5 per cent participation and other assignments (no-faults, etc.) **NOTE:** Under this option, you must receive an average of "C+" or better on exams to get the "+".

Research Paper Option: Under the second option, students may earn up to an "A" grade by taking the TWO midterms but NOT the comprehensive final, **AND** completing a research paper. Under this scheme, 60% of the final grade will be determined by midterms, mini-assignments, a book review, and class participation, and 40% will result from the paper. [Please understand that students electing to submit a paper are *not guaranteed* an "A" or a "B", they merely become eligible to receive one.]

\*\*\*\*\*I will assign term paper topics to all students at the beginning of the semester, and those who decide to take this option must submit a finished draft of **Parts I and II only** [see term paper guide in Supplementary Readings Handbook) **no later** than Monday, April 16.

The completed paper will consist of an analysis of media coverage of a crisis or conflict situation abroad since World War II. The instructor will assign topics. The paper will be between ten and fifteen pages in length, **follow the prescribed outline**, and be typed and double-spaced. See course **Term Paper Guide** in Course Supplementary Readings for details. Final draft must be handed in no later than between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 noon, Monday, May 21 at the Instructor's office, MND 3026.

SPECIAL NOTE: Unexcused late papers, whether essays or research papers, will result in the student receiving a reduced grade on the paper. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO **AVOID COMPUTER** problems by beginning work early enough, saving your work frequently, backing it up, and printing out rough drafts.

Extra Credit: Students with grades too low after the first two midterms to qualify for an "A" or "B" even with an exceptional term paper might still wish to do the term paper AND take the *comprehensive* final. Under these circumstances, the grade on the final could be used to substitute for the lowest of the midterm grades. Coupled with a superior grade on a term paper, the student could still raise her/his final grade

#### EXAMINATION MAKE-UP POLICY

**MAKE-UP POLICY:** Only students who have a compelling reason such as illness will be allowed to make up a missed examination. Should you unavoidably miss an examination, you **MUST** speak with me personally or leave a message at my voice mail number **no later** than the morning of the scheduled examination.

If your excuse is acceptable, you must take the exam on a day agreed upon by the instructor at the Testing Center, which offers a make-up test service on a limited basis for missed classroom exams, which usually means you will take the makeup exam no later than the first day you return to campus. The Testing Center's Make-up testing hours is by appointment only, Monday through Thursday AFTER 5 PM. The fee is \$6.00 per exam To call about an appointment, dial (916) 278-7870.

#### *Required Texts:*

1. G.134 Course Supplementary Readings and Materials (Available in Hornet Bookstore)
2. Massing & Schell, Now They Tell Us: The American Press and Iraq (New York Review of Books)
3. Andrew J. Bacevich, The New American Militarism (Oxford University Press)

#### *Recommended Text*

William A. Dorman and Mansour Farhang, The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference (U.C. Press) **SPECIAL NOTE:** You are **NOT** required to purchase this text. However, it (1) presents in narrative fashion many of the key concepts of this course and (2) serves as a case study of how course concepts can be applied.

**Reading Assignments**

{Abbreviations: *Supplementary Reader* [SR]; *Now They Tell Us* [M&S]; *The New American Militarism* [Bacevich];  
**\*\*Recommended Reading from U.S. Press and Iran [D&F]**}

FIRST UNIT READINGS—Weeks 1-6  
*Shooting Wars and the American Press*

<u>Week No.</u>	<u>Read by:</u>	<u>Textbook:</u>	<u>Assignment:</u>
1	February 2	<b>SR</b>	Reading A/Study Guide
2	February 5	<b>SR</b> <b>Bacevich</b>	Reading B by Bennett Preface & Introduction
3	February 12	<b>SR</b> <b>Bacevich</b>	Reading B by Bennett Chapter 1
4	February 19 February 23	<b>Bacevich</b> <b>SR</b>	Chapter 2 “Frame Analysis” by Dorman (Reading C)
5	February 26	<b>Bacevich</b>	Chapter 3
6	March 5	<b>Bacevich</b> <b>SR</b> <b>**D&amp;F</b>	Chapters 4 & 5 Term Paper Guide (Reading D) Introduction

**\*\*First Examination is on Friday, March 9**

SECOND UNIT READINGS—Weeks 7-12  
*Case Study: The First and Second Iraq Wars*

7	March 12	<b>SR</b> <b>**D&amp;F</b>	Reading #1 by Dorman & Livingston (“News...”) Chap. 1
8	March 19 March 23	<b>SR</b> <b>Bacevich</b> <b>**D&amp;F</b>	Reading #2 by Dorman (“Debate...”) Chapter 6 Chaps. 2-5
9	April 2 April 6	<b>M&amp;S</b> <b>SR</b> <b>M&amp;S</b> <b>**D&amp;F</b>	Preface Reading # 3 by Mooney “Did our leading...” The Unseen War Chaps. 6-7
10	April 9 April 13	<b>SR</b> <b>M&amp;S</b> <b>**D&amp;F</b>	Reading # 5 “Mind Games” Now They Tell Us <i>AND</i> Epilogue: Unfit to Print Chapter 8
11	April 16	<b>SR</b> <b>**D&amp;F</b>	Reading # 4 “Iraq, the Press and the Election” Chapter 9
12	April 23 April 27	<b>SR</b> <b>Bacevich</b> <b>**D&amp;F</b>	Reading # 6 “View from the Embassy” Chapter 8 Conclusion

**\*\*Second Examination is Friday, April 27**

THIRD UNIT READINGS—Weeks 13-15  
*The Press and the Cold War*

13	May 1	SR	Reading #7 by Dorman
14	May 8	SR	Reading # 8 “Hiroshima Coverup”
15	No assigned readings		

**\*\*Comprehensive Final Examination is Wednesday, May 23, 10:15-12:15**

(Term Paper Option Students) **Research Paper Due:** Final draft will be due no later than between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 noon, Monday, May 21 at the Instructor’s office, MND 3026.

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**RETURN OF PAPERS:** The only guarantee that your final exam or research paper can be returned is that you turn it in with a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage.  
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**INTERNET RESOURCES:** Students often ask which sources I depend on for timely updates on current foreign policy situations. Here are a few of them, which you may wish to bookmark:

Journalism-Related

- For excellent commentary on the practice and ethics of journalism, see Poynter Institute:  
<http://www.poynter.org/web/>)
- For commentary on and stories about journalism, see the “Industry Bible’s” website:  
<http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/index.jsp>
- For an excellent alternative source for analysis of international affairs and U.S. foreign affairs, see  
<http://www.ips.org/>
- The Tyndall Report monitors the American TV networks’ weekday nightly newscasts, and produces statistics on the amount of time devoted to each story in minutes on all three networks (CBS, ABC and NBC), which gives a revealing profile of the character of the television news agenda.  
<http://tyndallreport.com>

Some other very useful websites dealing with the U.S.- Iraq conflict in particular include:

- The War in Context: Iraq + war on terrorism + Middle East Conflict+ critical perspectives. This is a extraordinarily useful roundup of articles from around the world dealing with the immediate concerns of this course. It’s free, but donations are welcome. See <http://warincontext.org>
- National Security Archive for declassified documents on history of American foreign policy. Most recent documents on U.S. relations with Iraq are of particular interest. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/>  
 Depending on your research paper topic, this site can be invaluable.
- Columbia International Affairs Online: <http://www.ciaonet.org> A first-rate page with scholarly approach
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: <http://www.ceip.org/files/Iraq/index.htm> The Carnegie site is comprehensive and worth a daily visit, with updated news stories, analysis by its experts.
- Council on Foreign Relations: [http://www.cfr.org/background/background\\_iraq\\_readings.php](http://www.cfr.org/background/background_iraq_readings.php) CFR's site offers plenty of background information and reprints of articles making the Bush administration's case for war, as well as other perspectives.
- BBC Conflict With Iraq Page:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/middle\\_east/2002/conflict\\_with\\_iraq/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/2002/conflict_with_iraq/default.stm) The Beeb's site has a more international feel, with key documents, maps, and timelines, even a review of the Arab press.
- For excellent, informed commentary on Iraq, see Prof. Juan Cole’s site: <http://www.juancole.com/>