

DePaul University School for New Learning
WHO'S LYING TO YOU NOW?
Critical Thinking & The Media



HC215 – Spring 2008 – 3 credit hours
Loop Campus
Thursdays, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. April 3 – June 5
Thomas Tresser
Voice: 312-804-3230
E-mail: tom@tresser.com

Course Description

The purpose of education, said the authors Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner ("Teaching as a Subversive Activity") is to give students a built-in "crap detector." Do you have one? And if you do, is it sounding shrilly night and day? This class will offer students several frameworks for critical thinking and media literacy. We'll look at who is lying to you and where the lies are coming from. We'll look at prominent sources of messages from the worlds of advertising, politics and public life. We'll look at topics such as what is a "fact," transparency on the Internet, when does our government lie to us, and how to recognize your own biases and assumptions. It may be hip to be cynical, but too much cynicism corrodes democracy and keeps us from participating in our communal life. This class will use a variety of media, lecture and visits from real experts on the subject of fraud, messaging and propaganda. We will do a special group project on the mass marketing of drugs to consumers.

Areas of investigation:

- Advertising & Marketing - they're trying to get you to buy something
- Politics & Civics - they're trying to get you to believe something and do something
- News & Media – they say they're trying to inform you
- Personal Life - when do you lie, when are you a sucker?

About the Instructor

Tom Tresser is a consultant, producer, educator and trainer works with individuals, companies and communities to leverage and amplify their creative assets in order to solve problems, create economic value and trigger civic engagement. He recently designed and produced training programs for the provincial government of Saskatchewan and Business Retention and Expansion International on how to use the arts, and creativity for local economic development. He has used creativity in the field of executive development, working with Fortune 500 companies on innovative and experiential strategic executive learning programs. During the Internet boom Tom served as a marketing director and community affairs manager for OurHouse.com, an e-commerce start-up. He was director of cultural development at Peoples Housing, in north Rogers Park, Chicago, where he created a community arts



program that blended the arts, education and micro-enterprise. This work was funded by the MacArthur Foundation, the Chicago Community Trust, the Joyce Foundation and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. Tom has acted in some 40 shows and produced over 100 plays, special events, festivals and community programs. He was an arts activist, having organized support for pro-arts candidates and developed a cultural policy think tank at Roosevelt University in the early 1990's, where he taught "Arts & Public Policy." He is an alumni of the Leadership Greater Chicago program. In 2003 he was appointed Visiting Fellow in Arts and Culture at the DePaul University College of Commerce's Ryan Center for Creativity and Innovation. Tom was elected to the Abraham Lincoln Elementary School's Local School Council and served from 2004 to 2006. He is teaching a number of classes on art, creativity and civic engagement for Loyola University and DePaul University. Tom also consults with arts organizations on strategic planning, audience development and peer-to-peer marketing.

Competencies Offered

A3C	Can examine a social issue from an ethical perspective. Students will be exposed to frameworks for critical thinking and bias detection. The ethics of lying will be investigated.
H2A	Can understand a social problem and can analyze the effectiveness of social institutions in addressing it. Students will be introduced to educational and activist groups attempting to counter bias and manipulation in the media.
H3X	Individual development – Written by student/instructor - awareness of one's own assumptions, biases and beliefs. Students will be exposed to frameworks by which they can begin to recognize, catalog and judge their own biases.
FX	To be written by the student and the instructor. Work will be done from one of these themes: (1) Why do people lie? (2) Great liars in history or (3) Public opinion and public trust.

The Learning Experience

We will use the text, "Critical Thinking – Tools for Taking Charge of Your Learning and Your Life," by Richard Paul and Linda Elder, 2nd edition. There will be a team assignment relating to our investigation of mass market pharmaceutical advertising.

Required readings, supplementary materials and resources for successfully completing this class will be posted on the course Blackboard site and all students are expected to visit this site on a weekly basis.

There will be a writing assignment that will be due in Weeks 7 and 9 (students registered for two competencies will be doing two writing assignments). Choose the assignment that matches the competency you are seeking:

A3C	Pick a major religious group – research the communications policy for that religion. How, if at all, does that policy reflect the values of that religion. Interview the chief communications officer for the Chicago region.
H2A	A wide number of groups are monitoring and advocating for change in the arena of media and communications. Pick an activist group (the instructor will help you select) and profile the group and its work.
H3X	For this competence, the student will be keeping a journal and will be recording instances of personal bias and prejudice. This reflection will be tied to the frameworks presented in class.
FX	The student and the instructor will agree on a paper based on one of the above FX themes.

- Detailed instructions for the writing assignments and the team assignments will be available in class and posted on the class's website.
- Please identify the topic(s) that you will be covering and submit a paragraph explaining your topic at the Week 4 class. If you know the topic(s) you'd like to cover, you can submit the proposal sooner.
- The first paper will be due Week 7 and the second, if you are doing a second, Week 9.
- No late work will be accepted. Students may hand in their papers in hard copies but they MUST submit their papers as Word documents via email.
- Students will make individual presentations of their findings at the final class. If you are registered for two competences, you'll be writing two papers and making two solo presentations during the last class.

Team Assignment

Mass Market Drug Advertising – The class will be divided into teams

Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance is required. Attendance will be taken. Students who miss more than two class sessions will not have met the requirements for a passing grade. If you expect to miss a class, please inform the instructor in advance. It's your responsibility to do all required work, including any mini-quizzes, so ask a fellow student to take notes for you and get an extra copy of any hand-outs.

Students are expected to be in class on time, and to remain until class ends. Each member of the class will make a name card for their classroom desk (materials supplied). You'll be responsible for your own name card, so please remember to bring it to class.

Class Schedule

April 3 (#1)

- Statement of the instructor's limitations and biases
- Pretest
- Introductions – students will say their name, where they are from, what they hope to learn from this class and tell us either (1) a lie that has been told to them, or (2) who they rely on for truth.
- Outline of the course and ground to be covered
- Video: "The Persuaders" PBS Frontline documentary
- Discussion
- Mini-Quiz #1 is assigned

April 10 (#2)

- Introduction to frameworks for critical thinking – looking at how we think
- Teams are formed for team assignments.
- For this class: Read Chapters 1, 2 of text and hand in Mini-Quiz #1.

April 17 (#3)

- Continuation of discussion of frameworks for critical thinking
- Discussion of "What is a fact?" with guest expert, a professional fact checker
- Discussion of results of online assessments.
- For this class: Students will have gone online and taken a critical thinking assessment.

April 24 (#4)

- Proposals for written assignments are due. Each student must submit a short written proposal for the paper(s) they intend to write for their competency. A proposal form will be posted on the class Blackboard site.
- Standards for thinking
- For this class: Read Chapters 5, 6 of text and hand in Mini-Quiz #2.

May 1 (#5)

- Introduction to topic: Who's lying to you in the arena of mass media?
- Watch video "OutFoxed"

May 8 (#6)

- Continuation of discussion of mass media
- Team presentations on material relating to drug advertising

May 15 (#7)

- First paper is due (Students working on only one competency turn in their only paper, students working on two, turn in their first paper)
- Introduction to topic: Who's lying to you in the arena of marketing?
- Watch video "The Merchants of Cool"
- For this class: Read selection from "No Logo" by Naomi Klein (posted on course site) and hand in Mini-Quiz #3.

May 22 (#8)

- Introduction to topic: Who's lying to you in the civic arena?

May 29 (#9)

- Students working on two competencies hand in their second paper.
- Are we wired to lie? Are we wired to be suckers?
- For this class: Read selection from "Blink" by Malcolm Gladwell and hand in Mini-Quiz #4.

June 5 (#10)

- Post test
- Students do their individual presentations
- Summary by instructor

Evidence to be Submitted

For each competence there will be one writing assignment as outlined above. More detailed guidelines will be distributed in class. The paper shall be at least six pages (typed/word processed, double-spaced, 1" margins on all sides) and reference at least five outside sources.

The student's overall performance in this class will be determined by the following criteria:

Attendance	10 points
Class participation	15 points
Mini-quiz on readings	20 points
Team work	15 points
Individual writing/research assignment(s)	30 points (20 for content, 10 for presentation)
Post test	10 points
Bonus for attending all 10 classes	05 points

Written Work Will be Evaluated As Follows:

A = designates work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of idea. Well-written with no errors (spelling, sentence fragments, unclear sentences, etc.). Excellent analysis and well-supported conclusions. Demonstrates complex understanding of topic and familiarity with supporting sources (readings, online resources and discussion). Fully and clearly responsive to question(s) asked.

B = designates work of good quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas. Moderately well-written with few errors. Good analysis and well-supported conclusions. Demonstrates correct understanding of topic and familiarity with most supporting sources (readings, online resources and discussion).

C = designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete. Content may show either less than correct familiarity with the topic or bulk of supporting sources, is not fully responsive to the question(s) asked, or is poorly written (major mistakes made).

D = designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that student has not done reading assignments thoroughly. Content is very poorly written.

DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for

further details. The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement." Plagiarism will result in a failure of the assignment or possibly of the course. If you are unsure of how to cite a source, ask!

DePaul University Incomplete Policy

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification. The SNL student who wishes to receive the grade of IN must formally request in writing that the instructor issue this grade. This request must be made before the end of the quarter in which the student is enrolled in a course.

DePaul Registration/Withdrawal Policy

According to the policies of DePaul University:

All students must be registered and listed on the class roster by the beginning of the second week of the term. Students not on the roster by this time cannot stay in the class under any circumstances. Please contact the SNL Advising Center (snladvising@depaul.edu) or the Office of Financial Aid (finaid@depaul.edu) to work out your particular situation.

Students who need to withdraw from the course must do so by the end of the second week of the quarter. After that point is reached, 100% tuition is charged. It is possible to withdraw from a course or competence through the end of the seventh week of the quarter, but there is no tuition refund after the end of the second week.

In certain circumstances (such as illness, death of family members, natural disasters, etc.), a late withdrawal will be refunded tuition. These circumstances must be documented, and presented to the University through the SNL Exceptions Committee (snlexceptions@depaul.edu). In no case is such a refund allowed more than once during a student's career at DePaul.