

HC 255 Analyzing Modern Public Deception

O'Hare Campus; Mondays and Wednesdays 8:15 am to 9:45 am

Start date: March 29, 2004

Instructor: Mark C. Amador was born in 1956 in Chicago, Illinois. He graduated from Wheaton College in 1977 and from Northwestern University, School of Law in 1981. He has practiced law in Chicago and the suburbs with an emphasis in civil trial and appellate litigation. He lives in Park Ridge with his wife and two children. You can reach Mark at 847-823-5960 and at P.O. Box 1031, Park Ridge, IL 60068

Course Description: The class will review and analyze a wide variety of public deceptions which have been launched and uncovered in the past 150 years. The main emphasis will be on exposed deceptions which are no longer in serious dispute, as opposed to ongoing controversies. Many deceptive techniques will be reviewed and deceivers and victims from diverse political and national backgrounds will be studied, with a particular study of totalitarian and non-totalitarian political systems. The overall goal is to study public deception from descriptive and ethical standpoints, to examine its consequences, and to help students sharpen their skills of "real-time" analysis of public persuasion while avoiding paranoia or embitterment.

Possible Competencies:

A-1-X Can explain how public arts and popular culture are used to deceive people and influence public perception. The student should identify a work of art or popular culture and analyze how it was used to deceive or influence others.

H-2-E Can compare one social, cultural, economic, or political institution in a society to a comparable institution in a different society.

H-2-G Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society.

S-3-D Can use scientific knowledge to understand varying perspectives on a policy issue.

Expected Outcomes: The student should be able to:

1. Explore the functions of public art and popular culture when they are used as tools of deception.
2. Compare the arts, media, literary establishment, and other social, cultural, economic, and political institutions and their approach to truth and persuasion in totalitarian and non-totalitarian societies.
3. Analyze the impact of mass media and information technology when used as part of a plan of public deception.
4. Analyze how questionable persuasion is used in the guise of pure science to influence perspectives on public policy issues.

Activities:

Two research papers of seven to ten pages, one at mid-term and one at the end of the quarter. Each paper should describe and analyze an example of public deception and should address one of the listed competencies. The student should answer as many of the following questions as possible:

1. What viewpoint or predisposition do you bring toward the subject deceiver and the deceived?
2. Describe what techniques or models of truth determination you use (i.e. legal, journalistic, historical, archeological, scientific, eclectic, or common sense). Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach. Tell something about the moral and ethical background that you grew up with, and what approach you now use to tell right from wrong.
3. Concisely and accurately what we now know about the deception with citations to sources. You may also list your suspicions and conjectures, but make clear distinctions between what you can prove and what you suspect.
4. Examine your sources and describe any known bias, prejudice, interest, or prior problems with the source.
5. As specifically and completely as possible, describe the real world impact of the deception and its fallout.

6. Was there a way to detect the deception as it was unfolding?
7. Could anything be done to prevent this deception and similar deceptions from happening again?

The student should also keep a journal with at least two entries a week discussing the possible examples of current public deceptions. Through class discussions, the class will attempt to extract what common elements appear in the public deceptions studied. The class will consider how to define the difference between ethical and unethical public persuasion, and will discuss what level of public deception is a risk to political self determination and to a free market economy.

Resources: Read for the first class the article by E. Debold, *Shifting Moral Ground: The Dilemma of Ethics in an Out-of-Control World*.

The Cheating Culture by David Callahan

Other selected readings, photocopies will be passed out in class for later discussion. Videos will also be shown during class

Tentative Schedule:

Week One: Introduction – Discuss article on Shifting Moral Ground.

Week Two, Three, Four, Five and Six: Selected chapters from The Cheating Culture.

Week Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten: Selected readings.

Attendance and Grading:

Students should attend at least 85% of class sessions. Each paper will count for 35% of the grade, class participation and journal entries for 30%. The University's guidelines on academic integrity in the student handbook will be upheld.