



**Course FB-23 PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSUASION IN THE MASS MEDIA: FROM
ADVERTISING TO PROPAGANDA**

(45 class hours)

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OBJECTIVES

We human beings are essentially social beings that communicate with the people around us. Communication, therefore, constitutes the basic element without which society itself would not exist. In specific terms: the community arises as a result of the human capacity to communicate, while, at the same time, communication is a phenomenon that can only arise from within the framework of what is social.

The study of the interaction of human beings with each other and with the mass media (radio, cinema, TV, the press ...), together with the analysis of the technologies and strategies employed by these media, have become fundamental instruments by means of which our present-day reality, as well as the way in which we imagine the future, may be understood. Moreover, among the discourses that proliferate in the media, this Course understands that knowledge concerning the phenomenon of persuasive communication is of key interest, while, specifically, the kind that forms the basis of commercial advertising and propaganda.

It is precisely Social Psychology that may be considered an ideal tool to enable us to become aware of the mechanisms through which the media influence our behaviour so as to attain acceptability and, thereby, the consumption of the product concerned; or of how they are capable of generating adhesion to, or the rejection of, a specific ideology.

The fundamental aim of the Course is to address the issue of persuasion and manipulation as strategies by which the media can "enter into" our minds and direct our behavior. Moreover, what will also be undertaken is a brief diachronic review of the historical forms assumed by persuasive discourse types and, fundamentally, by advertising and propaganda.

METHODOLOGY

In addition to theoretical classes, their practical counterpart will always be sought, and in every possible form: class-based assignments, viewing and commenting on video and movie material, the reading of ad hoc texts linked with sessions of commentary and debate, as well as reviews of a further range of texts and items that will be brought into use.



Practical Activities:

The back-up material for practical sessions will include (keeping in mind the possible variants that, due to necessity, may arise as the Course evolves):

1. Videos and TV series: *Flight of the Phoenix* (R. Aldrich), *The Wave* (Dennis Gansel), *Good* (Vicente Amorim), episodes from the series entitled *Black Mirror*.

2. Reading of, and commentary on, books and / or articles: *The Lucifer Effect* (Ph. Zimbardo), *The Bubble Filter* (E. Pariser), *Obedience to Authority* (S. Milgram)

SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION

1. Social Psychology: definition and directions

1.1 From *homo sapiens* to *homo socialis*: the individual and the community

1.2 Communication and society

THEORY

2. Psychology of communication

2.1. Communication as a global phenomenon

2.2. Psychological strategies of communication

2.3. Implicit communication: between leadership and identity

2.4. Paradoxical communication: the double bond

2.5. Communication and suggestion: scenarios of influence.

3. Persuasion

3.1. The psychology of everyday persuasion

3.2. Words that exert influence

3.3. The power of the image

3.4. Lures and factoids

4. Psychology of beliefs

4.1. Ideas and beliefs

4.2. Thought, reason, and emotion

4.3. Cognitive dissonance and "blind spots"

5. Obedience to authority, obedience to the tribe

5.1. Milgram and the West's guilty conscience

5.2. The Zimbardo Experiment: the darkness within

5.1. Collective thinking versus individual thinking

5.2. Nostalgia for a common past

5.3. Nationalism as a revival of the tribe



APPLICATION

6. Advertising and propaganda.

6.1. Definitions, similarities and differences

7. Communication strategies

7.1. The word: between orality and written form

7.2. The domain of the iconic

8. Historical overview: the beginnings

8.1. Manifestations of proto-propaganda

8.2. From antiquity to modernity

8.3. The nineteenth century: between nationalism and socialism

9. Twentieth Century: the era of propaganda

9.1. From voter to consumer: the birth of political marketing

10. Twenty-First Century: algorithms hold sway

10.1. The generation of wishes and the anticipation of behavior

10.2. The Orwellian prophecy: Big Brother now

SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment and final grading will be based on two key criteria. Firstly, the undertaking of two written exams. Secondly, when assigning final grades, to what was obtained in those same written exams will be added the scores corresponding to active participation in class sessions, as well as to the assignments handed in when required (reports and reviews, as well as commentaries, etc). The written exams represent seventy percent of the final grade, while the other thirty percent will be divided between twenty percent for practical work and ten percent for active participation in class sessions.

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