

## COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

**Academic School/Department:** Communications, Arts and Social Sciences

**Programme:** International Relations

**FHEQ Level:** 6

**Course Title:** International Relations and Media

**Course Code:** INR 6425

**Course Leader:** Dr Mike Keating

**Student Engagement Hours:** 120

Lectures: 45

Independent / Guided Learning: 75

**Semester:** FALL and/or SPRING and/or SUMMER

**Credits:** 12 UK CATS credits

6 ECTS credits

3 US credits

### **Course Description:**

This course explores the role of the media as an actor in International Relations. To that end, the course asks whether and how issues of corporate ownership affect the agendas of a variety of media actors. The course will specifically look into the agenda-setting powers of the media in the areas of diplomacy, foreign policy, war and conflict resolution, environmental protection, international development and global justice campaigns. It will also analyse how states, international organisations, terrorist organisations and actors from the global civil society use and respond to the media through strategies of news management, public and cultural diplomacy, propaganda and censorship. Finally, the course will consider the manner in which journalists and news-makers gather, produce and disseminate information. This course may be co-taught with INR 7121 International Relations and the Media.

**Pre-requisites:** INR 4100 or INR 4105 or HST 4105

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To critically engage with the central debates, themes pertaining to theories of International Relations and communications, and how they relate to contemporary events.
- To integrate theoretical and empirical discussions about the role of the media as an actor in international relations in an informed and comprehensible matter.
- To develop an interdisciplinary understanding of how communication theories can help to understand the motivations and actions of actors of international relations.
- To gain a deep understand of how state actors, international organizations, actors from the global civil society, social movements and terrorist organizations use media outlets to achieve their ends.
- To gain a deep understanding of the political agenda and designs of media actors.
- To critically engage with the theories of media agenda-setting, framing and priming and apply them to international relations.
- To gain a deep and critical understanding of how state actors use the media for political aims through news management strategies, public diplomacy, propaganda and censorship.
- To critically analyse the debate about the “CNN effect”, a theory that argues that the media coverage of humanitarian disasters forced political actors to respond to the crisis.
- To critically engage with theories and empirical studies that consider the impact of social media in diplomacy, terrorism and news management.

#### **Programme Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following programme outcomes. 6A(ii); 6A(iii); 6B(iv); 6C(i); 6C(iii); 6D(ii); 6D(iv)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification.

This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate the ability to develop critical responses to, and a systematic and historical understanding of, theoretical approaches taken in International Relations and Media
- Demonstrate the ability to provide critically appraisals of some of the widespread common sense understandings and misunderstandings of the subject area, and the debates and disagreements to which these give rise.
- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of concepts of power and influence in international relations as they pertain to the relationship between media actors, nation-states, international organizations and actors of global civil society.
- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge of theories about the agenda-setting powers of the media as well as the concepts and theories of framing and priming.
- Demonstrate the ability to produce detailed analyses of competing perspectives and concepts, to make comparisons and connections and to identify the possibility of new concepts

- Demonstrate the ability to gather, organise and deploy complex and abstract ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or other forms
- Take responsibility for their own learning, and complete assigned work with a degree of clarity, contextualisation, critical thinking, and reflexive normative understanding appropriate for a 6000-level course
- Demonstrate the ability to flexibly locate their own normative views and cultural commitments within the practice of research, with a level of autonomy
- Demonstrate advanced media literacy skills.

**Indicative Content:**

- Media ownership
- Theories of agenda-setting, framing and priming
- The CNN Effect
- The 'Twitter Effect'
- Public Diplomacy
- The Propaganda Model
- Peace Journalism and Conflict Resolution
- News management and the PR industry
- Cyber-Terrorism
- Social media, democracy and social movements
- The media, the global social justice movement and dissent
- Censorship

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board.

**Teaching Methods:**

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate. Lectures provide a framework for the course, and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

**Bibliography:**

Allen, Danielle; Light, Jennifer S. (2015) *From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in the Digital Age*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bennett, W. Lance (2016) *News: The Politics of Illusion*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Bjola, Corneliu (2015) *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, London, Routledge

Castells, Manuel. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, (Polity Press, 2015)

Chadwick, Andrew (2017) *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

McCombs, Maxwell (2014) *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Robinson, Piers (2002) *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, London: Routledge.

Seib, Philip (2012) *Real Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era*, Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan

| Nature of Change | Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB) | Change Actioned by Academic Registry |
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