

MILANO THE NEW SCHOOL
Spring 2012

as of 1-16-12

Media Advocacy in the Global Public Sphere

CRN 3656

Tuesdays, January 24 – May 8, 2012
Room 715 – 66 West 12th Street

6:00 - 7:50 p.m.

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Office Hours: By appointment
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Course Summary

Media advocacy is the strategic use of mass communication channels for the purpose of influencing public policy. It is a means to an end – policy change – and not the goal in itself. Media advocacy targets the broad, social environment to promote systemic change, rather than focusing on individual, human behaviors that occur further downstream in the change process.

Technological innovation, particularly the digitization of content, is forcing structural changes in mass media that encourage the rise of more specialized community, ethnic and online media outlets. At the same time, the theoretical space in which people debate and exchange ideas, termed the ‘public sphere’ by Jurgen Habermas, has become global, expanding to include many more voices (albeit elites) in dialogues that transcend national boundaries. These changes open up new lines of thinking and new influence opportunities for activists.

This course examines various media theories and their application to social change strategies as practiced by groups around the world. It employs a global, cross-cultural perspective to look particularly at so-called alternative media, which are generally more accessible and multi-faceted than are mainstream, corporate- or government-controlled outlets.

This term, we will study two specific global media events for examples of advocacy processes at work: the handover of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to China in 1997 and the Egyptian Revolution in the spring of 2011.

Course content will also cover some of the ethical dilemmas that arise when government agencies engage in issues advocacy and when commercial marketing and media techniques are applied to complex issues of social and public policy.

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Assignments and Grading

This course is highly participative. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings on schedule, attend class and offer original contributions to class discussions. Please register only if you are prepared to participate fully.

Grading Formula

Midterm issue paper:	30% of final grade
Class participation:	30% of final grade
Final project content:	20% of final grade
Final project presentation:	20% of final grade

Incompletes are granted only in cases of medical emergency or bereavement.

Issue Paper (due at course midpoint)

Each student will select an issue or topic currently in the news and write a 6 to 8 page paper analyzing how the media frames and reports that issue. Students are expected to support their views with citations from the course readings, as well as additional sources identified by the student's own research. Suggestions for paper topics may be found at the end of this syllabus.

A one-paragraph statement describing the issue/topic that you are following is due no later than 6:00 p.m. (the beginning of class) on February 7. Papers should be formatted using APA style and submitted via email no later than 6:00 p.m. (the beginning of class) on March 6.

PLEASE NOTE: The digital file of your paper should be labeled thusly: (Student's Last Name)_MedAv_Paper. File formats accepted: Word, Pages, Google Docs, Rich Text. Please do not submit your papers in PDF format.

Action Project (due at course end)

This is an **action** project, not a research paper. Each student must demonstrate her practical understanding of media advocacy strategies and techniques through a hands-on project involving the creation of a media product or the execution of a media advocacy idea. Suggestions for final projects may be found at the end of this syllabus.

A one-paragraph statement outlining your planned project is due no later than 6:00 p.m. (the beginning of class) on March 20. Each student will present his final project in class on April 24 or May 1.

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Required Texts

Global Activism, Global Media. de Jong, Wilma, Martin Shaw, and Neil Stammers, eds. London: Pluto Press, 2005. ISBN: 0-7453-2195-X (Amazon, \$24.69)

Revolution 2.0, The Power of the People Is Greater Than the People in Power. Ghonim, Wael. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. ISBN: 978-0547773988. (Amazon, \$15.60)

Global Media Spectacle, News War Over Hong Kong. Lee, Chin-Chuan and Joseph Man Chan, Zhongdang Pan and Clement Y.K. So. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002. ISBN: 0-7914-5472-X (Amazon, \$24.28)

Prices noted above are for new books. Some titles are also available used from several sources online. All sources consulted in developing this syllabus are listed in the attached course bibliography.

Class Schedule

Session 1 – January 24

Course Overview

Introductions, Syllabus Review

Media Theory and Media Advocacy

Reading (distributed in class): *Lights, Camera, ACT UP*, pp. 1 - 17 in Queer in America. Signorile, Michelangelo. New York: Random House, 1993.

Session 2 – January 31

The Global Public Sphere, Civil Society and the Media

Reading: de Jong, *Introduction* and Chapter 1, *Networks of Knowledge and Practice*, and Chapter 2, *Media and the Global Public Sphere*, pp. 1 - 49.

Session 3 – February 7

Media, Movements and Social Change

Reading: de Jong, Chapter 3, *Social Movements and Global Activism*, pp. 50 - 67. **One-paragraph description of paper topic is due at beginning of class.**

Session 4 – February 14

Restructuring of the Mass Media & the Rise of Alternative Forms

Reading: Chapter 2, *The Post-Advertising Age* in The Chaos Scenario. Garfield, Bob. Download free from www.thechaosscenario.net, and Ghonim, Chapter 1, *A Regime of Fear*, Chapter 2, *Searching for a Savior*, and Chapter 3, *Kullena Kaled Said*, pp. 1 - 81.

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Session 5 – February 21

Media Advocacy Processes

Reading: Lee, *Preface*, Chapter 1, *Global Event, National Prisms*, Chapter 2, *News Staging*, and Chapter 3, *Domestication of Global News*, pp. xi - 61.

***In-class Lecture:** McMAP (McEwan's Media Advocacy Process) – Action desired, Audience that can deliver action, Avenue that reaches the audience, Architecture of the frame, Access to the avenue (pitching), Articulate the message (interview or content piece), Assess the impact.

Download McMAP PowerPoint here: <http://www.slideshare.net/BonnieMcEwan>

One-paragraph description of final project is due at beginning of class.

***The content of this lecture is the foundation for the rest of the course. Don't miss this class session.**

Session 6 – February 28

Mainstream Approaches to News

Reading: Lee, Chapter 4, *Hyping and Repairing News Paradigms*, Chapter 5, *Banging the Democracy Drum: From the Superpower* and Chapter 6, *Essentializing Colonialism*, pp. 63 - 127.

Screenings: Occupy Wall Street: Various news reports

- 1) <http://abclocal.go.com/wabc/video?id=8358415> -- ABC-TV local, 9-17-11
- 2) <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1279916991001/failure-of-occupy-wall-street-movement> -- Fox News, 11-16-11
- 3) <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/occupywallstreet/> -- Al Jazeera, 12-27-11

Session 7 – March 6

Power and Point of View

Reading: Lee, Chapter 7, *Defining the Nation-State: One Event, Three Stories*, Chapter 8, *Human Rights and National Interest: From the Middle Powers*, and Chapter 9, *Media Event as Global Discursive Contestation*, pp. 127 - 188.

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Session 8 -- March 20

Power and Technology

Reading: Ghonim, Chapter 4, *Online and On the Streets*, Chapter 5, *A Preannounced Revolution* and Chapter 6, *January 25, 2011*, pp. 82 - 187.

****Issue Paper Due****

Session 9 -- March 27

Activism in Mainstream Media: Case Studies

Reading: de Jong, Chapter 6, *Dying for Diamonds: The Mainstream Media and NGOs: A Case Study of ActionAid*, pp. 95-109 and Chapter 8, *The World Development Movement: Access and Representation of Globalisation in the Mainstream Press*, pp. 125-132.

Session 10 – April 3

Activism in Alternative Media: Case Studies

Reading: deJong, Chapter 12, *Transgender Activism on the Net*, pp. 179-193; and Chapter 14, *Civil Society Organisations and the Internet: The Case of Amnesty International, Oxfam and World Development Movement*, pp. 208-222.
Project Statement Due. Guidelines for project presentations distributed in class.

Session 11 – April 10

Assessing Media Coverage and Advocacy Results

Reading: Ghonim, Chapter 9, *A Pharaoh Falls*, and *Epilogue*, pp. 249 - 296, and Lee, *Epilogue, After the Handover*, pp. 189 - 198 and Appendix IV, *Content Analysis*, pp. 215 - 219.

Sample Media Analysis: *Working Press, An Analysis of Media Coverage of Low-Wage Work* by Bonnie McEwan. Download here: <http://www.slideshare.net/BonnieMcEwan>

Screening: Measuring Social Media with Digital Royalty (consultants). <http://bit.ly/gSgv1J>

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Session 12 -- April 17

It Cuts Both Ways

Reading: de Jong, *Activist Media, Civil Society and Social Movements*, pp. 149-164.

Screenings:

- 1) Chris Christie: This is the Crap I Have to Hear - YouTube <http://bit.ly/wSVEQ6>
- 2) Chris Christie Smacks Down Reporter - YouTube <http://bit.ly/ysGp4g>
- 3) Stop the Lies: Wall Street vs. Main Street - YouTube <http://bit.ly/w0gEDi>
- 4) Death By Firing Squad - YouTube <http://bit.ly/wQJQCh>
- 5) Death Row Inmate Goes YouTube - YouTube <http://bit.ly/yHicca>

Session 12 – April 24

Project presentations

Session 13 – May 1

Project presentations

Session 15 – May 8

The Two-Sentence Takeaway

Ideas for Paper Topics

Select a global issue such as climate change and compare/contrast the way it is presented by media in two or three different nations.

Identify an alternative media outlet that is working to raise awareness of an under-reported issue. What approaches is the outlet using to highlight the issue? Assess the level of impact that the media outlet is, or is not, making on its intended audience.

Analyze how the current US deficit debate is reported in a mainstream versus an alternative US media outlet. Or analyze how non-US media are covering the debate versus the way it is covered here in the US.

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Analyze the news coverage of a local incident that raised issues of national and/or global interest. For instance, how did news coverage of the shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007 impact security in colleges/communities around the world? If the coverage were reported differently, would its impact have been different as well?

Compare news coverage of the train bombings in Madrid in 2004 and in London in 2005. How do you think cultural, social or political differences between the two nations affected the news coverage, if at all?

Pick any big, international news story from the latest New York Times (nytimes.com) web site. Compare the way it is covered to the way that same story is covered on the latest version of Al Jazeera English. (aljazeera.com)

Consider how the religious, cultural or social norms of a community impact the way that local (or neighborhood) media report on current events. Is the coverage biased or merely targeted to a specific type of audience? At what point does meeting customer needs become pandering to special interests? Is there a difference?

Advertiser-supported media, at least in the US, is a business model that is clearly in trouble, perhaps even dying. Is this a good or a bad thing and why? What other models might replace it? Give examples.

There are some places in the world where low literacy rates make it challenging to keep people informed. Choose an issue and suggest alternative media formats that might be employed to reach people who have difficulty accessing traditional print media.

Ideas for Final Action Projects

Identify an issue that you believe has been under reported and educate yourself about the topic. Identify bloggers who write about similar issues and send them a pitch letter explaining why your issue deserves coverage. Offer to write a guest blog on the topic or suggest that the blogger interview you as the basis for her own blog post.

Secure a client organization that would like you to try to generate media attention for one of its programs or advocacy issues. Educate yourself on the subject matter and develop a list of journalists who cover it. Pitch the client to your list and facilitate the resulting interviews, should you succeed in securing some.

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Faculty throughout The New School are always doing interesting research projects. Offer your services to one of them to help get visibility for their expertise and activities. Identify and pitch appropriate reporters and facilitate any interviews you secure for the faculty member.

Research and write a speech or PowerPoint presentation for yourself or someone else to deliver. You may choose any advocacy topic or current social issue. You must also locate an appropriate venue and deliver the speech/presentation.

Create a video that advocates for or against any public policy or social issue. Upload the video to YouTube and promote it on Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets.

Create a Facebook page for a client organization. You must include ideas for ways that your client can promote the page and generate “likes.”

Other ideas to consider include:

- Creating a podcast or radio program
- Helping to execute a special event, such as a fund raising gala
- Writing and pitching an op-ed essay to a news outlet
- Developing brochures or other informational materials that take a position on a controversial issue or policy
- Using music, poetry or literature as an advocacy medium
- Documenting advocacy activities, demonstrations, etc. in film or in writing

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