Syllabus
Course description

Course title	STUDIO IMAGE **Democracy in Distress?** **Manufacturing Majorities Through New Forms of** **Propaganda**
Course code	97122
Scientific sector	Module 1: ICAR/13 Photography/ Video Module 2: ICAR/13 Visual Communication Module 3: M-FIL/04 Media Theory
Degree	Bachelor in Design and Art (L-4)
Semester	Summer semester 2021
Year	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Credits	19 (Module 1: 8 CP, Module 2: 6 CP, Module 3: 5 CP)
Modular	Yes

Teaching language	Module 1: German Module 2: Italian Module 3: English
Total lecturing hours	180 (Module 1: 90, Module 2: 60, Module 3: 30)
Total hours of self-study and / or other individual educational activities	About 295 (Module 1: about 110, Module 2: about 90, Module 3: about 95)
Attendance	Not compulsory but recommended
Prerequisites	For students enrolled before 2018/19 to have passed the WUP project and all WUP courses; for students enrolled from 2018/19 onwards to also have certified the language level B1 in the 3rd language

Studio description and specific educational objectives	The course belongs to the class "caratterizzante" (module 1, 2 and 3) in the curriculum in Art for students enrolled before 2018/19. It belongs to the class "caratterizzante" (module 1 and 2) and "affine o integrativa" (module 3) in the curriculum in Art for students enrolled from 2018/19 onwards. **STUDIO DESCRIPTION** **Course description module 1 – Photography/Video:** "In our age there is no such thing as "keeping out of politics."" George Orwell, *All Art is Propaganda,* 1941

The term propaganda is derived from the Latin *propagare* (to spread, distribute) and today, in general understanding, describes targeted attempts to generate, manipulate and direct public opinions.

A prominent, historical example of totalitarian propaganda is the story of a photograph from the early 1930s. This picture originally shows the smiling Nikolai Yezhov, then head of the Soviet secret police, next to Joseph Stalin on the Moscow Canal. Yezhov fell out of favor a few years later, was executed in 1940 and should then be forgotten: he was removed from the photo by analog retouching.

Contemporary propaganda is no longer limited to analogue distribution channels such as posters, newspapers, radio or TV. Majorities of opinion are created in seconds via social platforms. Pictures and statements are posted, retweeted and liked millions of times by interest groups such as MAGA supporters, anti-vaxxers or climate activists. Twitter trends attract attention and are often picked up – with a slight delay – by traditional media, which often no longer have the means and resources to check the factuality of the message.

With the project *Democracy in Distress? Manufacturing Majorities Through New Forms of Propaganda*, Studio Image invites students to explore the relationship between images, opinions and interpretative sovereignty. In the coming semester, we will examine propaganda techniques such as playing with fears, simplifying complex issues, mixing information and opinion and spreading false information. These techniques stand in contrast to pluralistic, often contradicting views of democratic societies, which are shaped and continuously questioned through a wide variety of experiences, observations and evaluations in the context of a rational, fact-based discourse.

Referencing various local and national issues, we will examine how artistic processes can initiate, undermine and transform social, political and media discourses. One of the central questions will be how images are politically charged and instrumentalized through their dissemination and contextualization. How does our current, image-oriented, digital communication affect the formation of social opinion? Does today's propaganda still require (state) organization? We will examine how artists play with set pieces of propaganda and use them to convey their own content or satirize them to confront us with our own seducibility. Above all, we will ask ourselves how we as artists can design counter-narratives to propagandistic narratives. What does Orwell's statement "All Art is Propaganda" mean today?

The *Collateral* film program as well as discussions with invited artists, curators and theorists introduce diverse aspects of the topic, while the participants develop their own artistic ideas and concepts. The students realize these in a photographic and / or video-based project for the exhibition space as well as in the form of an individual artist book.

Educational objectives module 1 – Photography/Video

Creation:
ï Advanced ability to transfer individual concepts into strong, surprising works of art
ï Inventiveness concerning subject, approach and materials
ï Playful and sophisticated use of language/text/sound in relation to images
ï Profound knowledge of contemporary technical skills such as (digital) photo, video, light and sound systems and development of personal formal criteria in relation to each project
ï Refined artistic practice of different forms of analysis, expression and presentation

Contexts and concepts:
ï Strong awareness of socially relevant discourses, their contexts and implications
ï Advanced ability to develop a personal idea into a concept
ï Advanced understanding of the coherence of intentions, choice of means, process and result
ï Advanced ability to relate conceptually to the public/viewer as well as different communities
ï Refined ability to locate personal work/strategies/methods within larger contexts
ï Growing ability to theoretically explore own and others' ideas and concepts
ï Development of an independent and challenging study path

General skills:
ï Ability to give, receive and process constructive criticism
ï Ability to integrate reviews and critique in the work process
ï Assumption of responsibility
ï Investigative attitude
ï Development of long-term interests/endurance
ï Communication/presentation skills

ï   Proactive attitude/behaviour

Course description module 2 – Visual Communication

In 2010 a flyer, written in July 1939 by the writer Heinrich Mann, was found. Disguised as a tourist advertisement for the Dolomites, under the title "Deutsche, Hitler verkauft euch!" it denounced the attempted ethnic cleansing associated with the South Tyrolean Options and called on the local population to resist.

In connection with the main topic of the semester, in the visual communication module we will look at the specific media used for propaganda and counter-propaganda phenomena that have characterised the recent history of the last hundred years. In the first part of the semester a particular focus will be placed on the poster as a medium. More than others it has become the protagonist of the phenomena under analysis: from the Russian Rosta, to the propaganda posters during nationalisms, to all the countercultural movements of the 1970s, up to the most recent digital phenomena and languages. What can today be the equivalent of the function that the poster had in the 20th century? Together we will try to explore this media and critically analyse and discuss the role of text and images in social, political and cultural contexts.

With a zoom that moves from local history to national and international experiences, we will critically analyse the work of artists and designers to try to acquire a clear awareness of the basic elements, qualities, meanings and fields of application of different techniques of visual communication. If we accept the fact that the description of events through any language reshapes the events themselves, we have also to be aware of the implications related to each representation technique, decode their implicit messages and, finally, decide the most appropriate tool to convey and display an information.

Through meetings, visits and personal research we will explore events, languages and communication tools. Students will be actively involved in developing practical interpretations of the materials and stimuli collected through a series of assignments.

Educational objectives Module 2 – Visual Communication

ï   The acquisition of the essential basic knowledge to carry out a project in the field of visual communication, with a focus on typography and editorial design.

- ï Correct use of graphic design elements and graphic syntax.
- ï Ability to analyze, design and develop visual and textual outputs.
- ï Ability to communicate and argue the reasons of choices and justify them from a formal, technical, scientific and theoretical point of view. Advanced understanding of the coherence of intentions, choice of means, process and result.
- ï Aware attitude to articulate and argue well-structured projects and to build relationships between different topics and subjects.
- ï Advanced ability to transfer individual concepts to develop a personal idea into a concept.

Course description module 3 – Media Theory:

Media Theory, as a field of studies, is grounded on a multidisciplinary approach to the complex and problematic relationship between society, technology and mechanism of production of social imaginary, which means, mechanism of production of narratives. Media Theory, indeed, embraces different traditional academic fields: from Communication to Philosophy, crossing through Informatics, Arts, and above all Politics. Thanks to its multidisciplinary nature and its capacity to conciliate terminologies, visions and academic traditions, Media Theory represents a privileged discipline to analyze complex phenomena deriving from the ways society construct narratives within a precise technological context. Above all, its well articulated interest in the whole universe of media technologies and practices represents an asset when the interest focuses on the way different media and their respective mechanisms of production of meaning interact.

This course proposes a survey on the technological context from which emerged first the phenomena of fragmentation and, then, of convergence of mass media. In fact, it is from these technological contexts that derived different ways of constructing narratives, which also means different forms of censorship as well as diverse forms of social manipulation. By analyzing a number of historical media technological context, the course intents to inquiry into the relationship between technologies and the emerging of diverse forms of both censorship and propaganda. We will deal with the strict relationship between technologies and the shape of social space, which means the way in which public opinion is produced, and sometimes, manufactured. This historical survey will allow us to develop a deep analysis on our current post-media condition and the contemporary ways that public opinion is collectively constructed. In fact, through the lens of the popularization of digital technology

– which meant the radical transformation from a Mass Media society to a Post-Media one, shaped by the emerging of social media and the P2P logic - the course intents to study current forms of propaganda, of censorship and of media activism that oppose those forces of social manipulation. Particular interest will be placed on the way different mechanisms of creation of meaning, coming from traditional media, started to coexist, and the way their coexistence represented a tool to strengthen democratic systems.

This course will provide students with the fundamental notions to approach the analysis, the history, and the criticism of media. During the lessons, we will compare and discuss diverse theories and the socio-technological context that generated diverse ways of constructing collective imaginary. Every theory will be examined as the product of a specific socio-political, technological and cultural context in order to better understand the close-knit relationship that exists between media, technology, culture, ways of production of value and social structures. Particular emphasis will be placed on the generation of social imaginary and the contemporary phenomena that transformed this into a collective act.

Educational objectives module 3 – Media Theory:
- The acquisition of the essential basic knowledge of looking critically at their own work and to deal with the complexities of the contemporary media society
- The acquisition of the knowledge and understanding of different media context as well as theoretical subjects
- To have the ability to grasp the main phenomena that characterizes our hypermedia society and to analyze them from a social and ethical perspective
- The acquisition of the basic knowledge concerning the culture of design in all its aspects
- Knowledge of the important aspects of the history and analysis of Media Theory
- Know how to apply the research methods and results in the project and to the various areas of the project itself
- To develop independent judgments in the critical evaluation of their work by using appropriate interpretive tools with respect to different contexts

Communicate at a professional level and argue the reasons for their choices from a formal, technical scientific, and theoretical point of view.

Module 1	Photography/Video

Lecturer	Prof. Eva Leitolf Eva.Leitolf@unibz.it, Tel. +39 0471 015327 Webpage: https://www.unibz.it/de/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/37228-eva-leitolf
Scientific sector of the lecturer	ICAR/13
Teaching language	German/English
Office hours/Assistance	Mo 14:00 – 18:00 via Teams
List of topics covered	Artistic practice; conceptual and theoretical framework for individual projects
Teaching format	Frontal lectures, assignments/exercises, group and one to one critiques, presentations

Module 2	Visual Communication
Lecturer	Giulia Cordin Giulia.Cordin@unibz.it, tel. +39 0471 015333, webpage: https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/31248-giulia-cordin
Teaching language	Italian
Office hours/Assistance	Monday 09:00–11:00
List of topics covered	Graphic and editorial design
Teaching format	Exercises, in-group discussions, frontal lectures, workshops

Module 3	Media Theory
Lecturer	German Duarte Peñaranda GDuarte@unibz.it, tel. +39 0471 015108, webpage https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/37717-german-a-duarte
Scientific sector of the lecturer	M-FIL/04
Teaching language	English
Office hours	Mo – Tu: 12:30 – 14:00 via Teams
List of topics covered	Media Theory, Media History
Teaching format	Frontal lectures, in-group discussions

Learning outcomes	**Learning outcomes for module 1 – Photography/Video** Knowledge and understanding

Students will understand the photographic image as a medium related to different historical and contemporary contexts within a changing framework of politics of representation. They will deepen their understanding of different forms of image narratives as well as comprehend various visual strategies. They will acquire an individual project methodology in the field of visual art.

Applying knowledge and understanding
Students will be able to apply their acquired technical, theoretical and practical knowledge to produce own strong artistic projects from concept to realization as well as to develop methods to document their own formation processes. Students will acquire the ability to recognize and critically evaluate socially relevant phenomena and transfer them constructively into an individual artistic project.

Making judegments
Through constant constructive critical discourse, students will be able to critically question own concepts/work as well as the concepts/works of others and start to develop individual criteria for quality. Students will learn to experience and evaluate their own artistic approach in relation to historical and contemporary artistic practices.

Communication skills
Students will learn to give and receive constructive critique as well as to explain and defend own ideas and decisions from a conceptual, formal and technical point of view in plenary presentations and discussions. They will be able to present their personal project orally, in writing as well as in the form of a spatial presentation.

Learning skills
Students will be able to independently research and conceptually follow own interests/ideas and represent them within a personal artistic process. They will develop an individual creative methodology to identify, explore and realize artistic solutions for complex formal and conceptual challenges.

Learning outcomes for module 2 – Visual Communication

Knowledge and understanding
Students will understand visual communication as a medium related to different historical and contemporary contexts in order to acquire an individual project methodology in the field of visual art.

Applying knowledge and understanding

Students will be able to apply their technical, theoretical and practical knowledge to produce own projects from concept to realization as well as to develop methods to document their practices.

Making judegments
Students will be able to critically question own concepts/work as well as the concepts/works of others in order to develop individual criteria. Students will acquire the ability to recognize and critically evaluate relevant phenomena and style and transfer them constructively into an individual project.

Communication skills
Students will learn to present, explain and defend own ideas and decisions from a conceptual, formal and technical point of view. They will be able to present their personal project orally, in writing and in the form of a spatial presentation.

Learning skills
Students will be able to independently research own interests and develop ideas and projects.

Learning outcomes for module 3 – Media Theory

Knowledge and understanding
- To acquire a critical approach to historical-media phenomena
- To analyze mass media, social media, and communication through the basic knowledge acquired in media theory and cultural studies.

Applying knowledge and understanding
- The ability to grasp the socio-political role played by media and to know how to look at these critically.
- To apply this knowledge to any professional situation that requires a theoretical expertise as well as to develop appropriated solutions in terms of the proposal/response of the project.

Making judgments
- To develop an independent judgment both in the critical evaluation of their work and in the ability to use the appropriate interpretive tools with respect to the context where they are going to apply their own artistic practice and/or continue their studies, assessing also the social and ethical aspects.

Communication skills

	- To be able to clearly communicate, at a professional level, projects, information, concepts, and solutions related to the questions of media society and artistic practices. Learning skills To improve their research methods, as well as how to pertinently apply them during the development of projects and research projects concerning different fields of media and art. By the end of the semester, each student must upload on the Microsite of the faculty detailed documentation of the semester work. http://portfolio.dsgn.unibz.it/wp-admin Documentation is an integral part of the exam. The documentation must include visual documentation and an abstract of the project.

Assessment	**Assessment details for module 1 – Photography/Video** • Production of artistic work (e.g. photographic prints, video, digital formats etc.) • Several presentations of own artistic work in plenary critique sessions as well as one to one meetings with teacher that show an extensive artistic process • Presentation of researched topics to class • End of semester presentation in individual form of presentation/exhibition, (self-)/evaluation of results **Assessment details for module 2 – Visual Communication** Students will be asked to develop three different assignments in relation with the main project. Reviews will be held on a weekly basis and the conclusion of the project will coincide with the exam date. **Assessment details for module 3 – Media Theory** 1. Short essay (max. 5 pages) Oral examination at the end of the semester.
Assessment language	The same as the teaching language
Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks	The evaluation of the single modules does not result in three separate marks but will add up to the overall studio

evaluation. There is only one final overall mark for the studio which is agreed by the three professors, who evaluate the studio according to the following criteria:

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks for module 1 – Photography/Video

- Strength and clarity of artistic concepts
- Coherence of concept, choice of means and resulting art work
- Innovativeness/inventiveness concerning subject, approach and materials
- Virtuosity of technical skills
- Mastery of oral presentation: ability to summarize, evaluate, and establish relationships between topics and own artistic practice
- Ability to work in a team
- Capability of integrating reviews and crits in the work process
- Skills in critical thinking and adequate communication to peers
- Comprehensive artistic processes and presentation of results
- Proactive attitude/behavior
- Taking on responsibilities
- Development of long-term interests

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks for module 2 – Visual Communication

- Strength and clarity of concepts
- Completeness and coherence of concept, choice of means and resulting art work.
- Clarity in the presentation of the process that leads to the final choices.
- Inventiveness concerning subject, approach and materials.
- Correct use of new tools and competences.
- Ability to summarize, evaluate, and establish relationships between topics and own practice.
- Capability of integrating reviews and critics in the work process.
- Skills in critical thinking.
- Taking on responsibilities.
- Active participation and quality of contributions.

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks for module 3 – Media Theory

- Ability to summarize and present concepts and theories presented in the required readings

	- Ability to establish relationships between theories and so-cio-technological contexts - Clarity in presenting and structuring ideas By the end of the semester, each student must upload on the Microsite of the faculty detailed documentation of the semester work. http://portfolio.dsgn.unibz.it/wp-admin Documentation is an integral part of the exam. The documentation must include visual documentation and an abstract of the project.

Required readings	**Module 1 – Photography/Video** **Module 2 – Visual Communication** Readings will be made available during the course in the reserve collection **Module 3 – Media Theory** George Orwell, 1984
Supplementary readings	**Module 1 – Photography/Video** Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, 1922 Edward Bernay, Propaganda, 1928 George Orwell, All Art is Propaganda: Critical Essays, 1941 Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, 1951 Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy, Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction, 2004 **Module 2 – Visual Communication** Richard Hollis, Graphic design a concise history Ruben Patter, The Politics of Design Alexander Langer, Il viaggiatore leggero **Module 3 – Media Theory** Umberto Eco, Cimitero di Praga