

My intellectual application project is to facilitate a joint honors option for MC231 (secs. 01 and 02), Culture and Politics in Transnational Perspective. During the four meetings for the semester, we will examine how the media reported the conflicts between the United States and Iraq as well as how politicians have tried to manipulate public opinion related to such conflicts. We will look at case studies such as the dramatic accusations that Iraqi soldiers had taken babies out of Kuwaiti incubators in 1990 or the disinformation regarding Private Jessica Lynch's rescue operation in 2003. And we will take an interdisciplinary look at how media coverage differed between news outlets from different places around globe and the U.S. press. This includes news organizations from Great Britain (*BBC*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times*), Sweden (*Dagens Nyheter*), Pakistan (*The Dawn*), India (*Times of India*), and Qatar (*Al-Jazeera*).

This honors option has several objectives: (1) to identify rhetorical tools that are used to influence people to support the information messenger; (2) to recognize how politicians try to manipulate public opinion by transmitting false information that would support engagement in armed conflicts; (3) to cultivate understanding of how news media operate in an environment in which false information is spread; (4) to use interdisciplinary approaches to assess the quality of news media performances; and (5) to discuss the complex role of objectivity as a practice to report opposing political views.