

**CONF 695-A01**  
**THE MEDIA, CONFLICT, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Summer 2012

Tuesday & Thursday: 7:00 pm 10:05 pm

Saturday: 9:00 – 12:05 pm

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Location: Founders Hall, Room 209

Office Hours: by appointment

The open-ended revolutionary projects in the Middle East and the Occupy Wall Street movement have showcased the role of the media in *expanding* the public sphere and *widening* the virtualization of social institutions. They also illustrate the *interventionism* and *determinism* of the new and traditional media, as meta-media, in giving rise to a new consciousness and cultural order, and sometimes in changing political structures.

As communication action theorist Juergen Habermas argues, the current media have colonized the lifeworld. Sociology and communication studies have shown the interconnectedness between media narratives and how we develop our understanding, perceptions, and positions. Norm Friesen and Theo Hug (2009) argue that the "media not only present a necessary precondition for knowledge in everyday practice, understood as semiotic systems, it also shapes what it is possible to know and also to think." However, the scope of how the mass media influence our understanding, shape our perceptions, and control our knowledge is still understudied. Also, Conflict Resolution has not yet invested in some networking relationship with the media in addressing social change and formulating a *mediatized* framework of Conflict Resolution.

This course critically examines the power of the media, as an institution, either in perpetuating conflict escalation or stimulating some resolution. It discusses the impact of *mediatization* as a process of social change which subsumes other social and cultural fields into the logic of the media. It also explores what remain uncontested behind the journalists' repertoire of 'neutrality', 'objectivity', and 'balance', which has weakened with the emergence of spin journalism which has overshadowed the "CNN effect" and other journalistic genres since the mid-1990s. The course assesses the actual and potential role of peace journalism in transforming reporters' working habits, norms, and worldviews in conflict settings, and explores the prospects of mediatized conflict resolution.

**The Course Format:**

The course will be run as a combined lecture and graduate seminar with an emphasis on discussion of the readings and students' reflections on the media coverage and their presentations. Critical thinking is highly valued and, therefore, our meetings will expect 1) course participants will come to class with the readings fully digested and prepared to engage in quality discussion; 2) they will maintain their reflective monitoring of major conflicts coverage in the news in conjunction with concepts of the

readings and critique of the media performance during the course; and 3) the goal of this course is to build the foundation for an effective role of the media in conflict prevention, conflict transformation, and reconciliation.

To fully understand the conflict-media interconnectedness, the course will include discussions of a number of video presentations to reinforce the practice-theory foundation of the course and better assess how journalists deal with conflicts in the real world. Class participants will be encouraged to think creatively about constructing new frameworks and approaches to reporting and advancing the still-unexplored networking relationship between the media and the field of conflict resolution.

### **Exercises, Grades, and Course Requirements:**

Grades will be based on four exercises:

- **Student's participation** in classroom discussions (20%)
- **Reflective paper:** How would you evaluate the impact of the media either in escalating conflict or stimulating peacebuilding? (6 pages, font 12, double space – excluding endnotes) due Thursday, June 7. This reflective paper will account for 20% of the final grade.
- **Class presentations:** students are encouraged, early in the semester, to suggest the critique of the coverage of a particular conflict by two or more media organizations for their presentations (20%).
- **Final paper:** Through your critical thinking lens, analyze the coverage of two or more news outlets of a national or international conflict in light of the assigned and other readings (15 pages, font 12, double space excluding endnotes – due June 25 - %40). Further description of these exercises will be provided in class. It is S-CAR policy to grant grades of “Incomplete” only in cases of proven illness or other personal emergency.

### **Honor Code Policy:**

I expect you to understand and abide by the University's policy regarding the Honor Code, which may be found at <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode>

In short, the University's policy regarding the Honor Code prohibits any form of cheating on exams or written assignments. It also prohibits plagiarism, so be certain to properly cite all information that you use in your papers.

### **Assigned Readings:**

The following books are available at the GMU bookstore in Arlington. We will focus our discussions on key portions of each but all are worth reading in their entirety. Other book chapters, journal articles, and newspapers clippings will be either stored in E-reserve or e-mailed directly.

1. Knut Lundby (ed.) *Mediatization*, Peter Lang Publishing, 2009
2. Andrew Arno, *Alarming Reports: Communicating Conflict in the Daily News*, Berghahn Books, 2009

## **Additional Readings (Recommended):**

Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung, *Reporting Conflict: New Direction in Peace Journalism*, University of Queensland Press, 2010

Karen S. Johnson-Cartee, *News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2004

W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston, *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina*, the University of Chicago Press, 2007

Philip Hammond, *Framing Post-Cold War and Conflicts and the Media: The Media and International Intervention*, Manchester University Press, 2007

Marda Dunsky, *Pens and Swords: How the American Mainstream Media Report the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Columbia University Press, 2008

Brigitte L. Nacos, *Mass-Mediatized Terrorism: The Central Role of the Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007

Wilhelm Kempf, "Conflict Coverage and Conflict Escalation" pp. 59-72: in *Journalism and the New World Order*, Wilhelm Kempf and Heikki Luostarinen (eds.) Vol. 2 Nordicm, 2002

Solveig Steien, "'Almost at War' - The Mohammed Cartoon Crisis in Norwegian Media" *Conflict and Communications Online*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2008

Robert Hackett, "Is Peace Journalism Possible: Three Frameworks for Assessing structure and Agency in News Media", *Conflict and Communications Online*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2006

## **Schedule of Classes**

### **Class meeting 1:**

*Tuesday, May 22*      **The Media and Conflict in the Post-Cold War Era**

- Self-introductions
- Discussion of the syllabus, course requirements, and expectations for the course
- Media structure and transformation: discussion of how journalists frame stories about social conflict, and recent trends in media dynamics and narrative
- Video presentation and discussion

**Class meeting 2:**

*Thursday, May 24*      **The Constructivism of the News Coverage**

Philip Hammond, "Introduction: Post-Cold War and Conflicts and the Media", in *Framing Post-Cold War and Conflicts and the Media: The Media and International Intervention*, Manchester University Press, 2007, pp. 1- 20 (E-reserve)

Gamson, W. Croteau, D. Hoynes, W. and Sasson, T. "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 18 (1992) pp. 373-393 (E-reserve)

**Class meeting 3:**

*Tuesday, May 29*      **Conflict, Mediatization, and Social Change**

Knut Lundby, "Introduction: Mediatization", pp. 1-18 (*Mediatization* book)

Friedrich Krotz, "Mediatization: a Concept with which to Grasp Media and Societal Change", chapter 1, pp. 21-40 (*Mediatization* book)

*Saturday, May 26:*      Memorial Day Holiday

**Class meeting 4:**

*Thursday, May 31*      **The News Media as a Political Institution**

Brian McNair, "The Global Public sphere: Fourth Estate or New World Information Disorder?" pp. 171-185 in "*Global Politics in the Information Age*", Mark Lacy and Peter Wilkin (Eds.), Manchester University Press, 2005 (E-reserve)

Kenneth Newton, "May the Weak Force Be with You: The Power of the Mass Media in Modern Politics", *European Journal of Political Research* 45: 209–234, 2006 (E-reserve)

Timothy E. Cook, "The News Media as a Political Institution: Looking Backward and Looking Forward" *Political Communication*, 23:159-171, 2006 (E-reserve)

**Class meeting 5:**

*Saturday, June 2*      **The New Media Power and Global Activism**

Andrew Arno, "The Dark Side of the Media: News as Control Communication", chapter 2 pp. 19-37, [*Alarming Reports* book]

W. Lance Bennett, "New Media Power: The Internet and Global Activism" pp. 1-34 in *Contesting Media Power*, edited by Nick Couldry and James Curran, Rowman and Littlefield (E-reserve)

Knut Lundby, "Media Logic: Looking for Social Interaction", chapter 5, pp.101-119 (*Mediatization book*)

**Class meeting 6:**

*Tuesday, June 5*      **The Narrative behind the Media Narrative**

Karen S. Johnson-Cartee, "News as Narrative", chapter 5, in *News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2004, pp. 147-182 (E-reserve)

Andrew Arno, "Two Theories of News: the Civic Model and the Conflict Discourse System Model", chapter 3 pp. 38-58 [*Alarming Reports book*]

Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung, "Controversies: Objectivity, Balance, Truth and Ethics", chapter 3 pp. 50-63 (E-reserve)

Thomas Friedman, "America vs. the Narrative", *New York Times*, (E-mailed)

Ted Koppel: "Olbermann, O'Reilly and the Death of Real News", *The Washington Post*, November 14, 2010 (E-mailed)

**Class meeting 7:**

*Thursday, June 7*      **The Media Narrative as an Early Warning System of Conflict**

William B. Hunt, "Predicting International Conflict with Mass Media", *International Communication Association*, 2005 (E-reserve)

Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung, "Media Monitoring", chapter 7, pp. 148-163 (E-reserve)

Scott London, "How the Media Frames Political Issues" (E-reserve)

**Class meeting 8:**

*Saturday, June 9*      **Civilians and War Reporting**

Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung, "Reporting Conflict: the Low Road and the High", chapter 1, pp. 1-24 (E-reserve)

Mohammed Cherkaoui, "Civilians Overshadowed by Soldiers: Faceless Victims in Public Media Narrative" chapter 9 in "*Civilians and the Ideology of Modern War*", D. Rothbart, K. Korostelina, and M. Cherkaoui (eds.), Routledge, (E-reserve)

Bob Zelnick, "War Reporting: How Should Civilian Casualties Be Reported?"  
Neiman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard

<http://www.neiman.harvard.edu/reports/article/101255/War-Reporting-How-Should-Civilian-Casualties-Be-Reported.aspx>

**Class meeting 9:**

*Tuesday, June 12*      **Spin Journalism as a Driver of Conflict**

Jesper Strömbäck and Frank Esser, “Shaping Politics: Mediatization and Media Interventionism”, chapter 10, pp. 206-223 (*Mediatization* book)

Bennett et al. “Managing the News: Spin, Status, and Intimidation in the Washington Political Culture”, Chapter 5 in *"When the Press Fails"* (E-reserve)

Mohammed Cherkaoui, "Civilian, Pundits, and the Mediatized Ideology" chapter 10 in *"Civilians and the Ideology of Modern War"*, D. Rothbart, K. Korostelina, and M. Cherkaoui (eds.), Routledge (E-reserve)

**Class meeting 10:**

*Thursday, June 14*      **The Media as an Agent of Resolution**

Johannes M. Botes, “Television Debates as a Form of Pre-negotiation in Protracted Conflicts: Nightline in South Africa (1985) and Israel (1988)”, *International Negotiation* 9: 161–192, 2004 (E-reserve)

Sandra Melone et al., “Using the Media for Conflict Transformation: The Common Ground Experience” 2002 (E-mailed)

**Class meeting 11:**

*Saturday, June 16*      **Case studies: Coverage of Rwanda, Iraq, and Terrorism**

Romeo Dallaire "The Media Dichotomy" chapter 2 in *"The Media and Rwanda Genocide"*, Allan Thompson (ed.) 2007 (E-mailed)

Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung, "Reporting 9/11 and 10/07", chapter 5 pp. 95-126 (E-reserve)

Lindsey Hilsum, "Rwanda and the Media: What Can a Journalist Do?" POLIS, Journalism and Society Online: <http://www.charliebeckett.org/?p=2246>

**Class meeting 12:**

*Tuesday, June 19*      **Peace journalism Class Presentations I**

Lea Mandelzis, "Representations of Peace in News Discourse - Viewpoint and Opportunity for Peace Journalism", *Conflict and Communications Online*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2007 (E-reserve)

Mohammed Cherkaoui, “Media as Critical Reflective Practice”, *Common Ground News*, May 16, 2009  
<http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=25300&lan=en&sid=0&sp=0>

Akiva Eldar, "Serving the public's best interests: A story of one journalist's dilemma", *Common Ground News*, May 16, 2009

<http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=25304&lan=en&sid=0&sp=1&isNews=0>

**Class meeting 13:**

*Thursday, June 21*     **Peace journalism and Class Presentations II**

Luc Reyhler, "Challenges of Peace Research", *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Volume 11, Number 1, Spring/Summer 2006, (E-reserve)

Bukhard Blosi, "Implementing Peace Journalism: The Role of Conflict Stages", *Conflict and Communication Online*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2009, (E-reserve)

**Wrap-up Discussion: Toward Mediatized Conflict Resolution**

[Final papers due June 26]