



EXTENDED CAMPUS

COLLEGE of PROFESSIONAL
and CONTINUING STUDIES

COMM 6970-104: Seminar – War, Peace, and Media

Course Description:

As long as Homo sapiens have existed, warfare has played an influential role in defining the human condition. Throughout time, warriors, tribes, nations, and allies have experienced the challenges of contemplating and communicating the realities of war to themselves and the world around them. More recently, the information age has transformed the landscape of news coverage, journalism, and propaganda, as the internet and social media have altered the media environment, fundamentally shifting and changing the ways people view, engage, and comprehend the nature of war, peace, and media (WP&M).

This course is designed to expose students to an objective, in-depth, scholarly analysis of some of the major problems faced by a world where wars are a constant condition of existence. Students will consider how various forms of armed conflict that have raged around the world have been construed and presented to the public. This course will study recent real-world examples of economic, regional, ethnic, ideological, and religious conflicts by focusing on some of the most influential and highly-cited WP&M scholarship currently being produced.

Our primary goal is to comprehend the major communication theories and methodologies within the relevant WP&M literature, identifying and assessing the various lines taken relative to their past effectiveness and future potential. A wide range of instructional approaches and student participation will be employed throughout the course, including: readings, writing, lecture, film, web-based reviews, in-class discussions, and student oral presentations.

One overarching framework for understanding human motivation—terror management theory (TMT; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986)—will be used as a lens through which to investigate and comprehend the dominant themes within the WP&M literature.

Class Dates, and Format Information:

Dates: July 30-August 1 & August 6-8, 2021
Format: Hybrid; course will be held via Canvas and Zoom
Hours: Friday 6:00 – 9:30 p; Saturday 8:30 a. – 4:30 p Sunday 8:30 a – 12:00 p
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: July 1, 2021

Site Director and Information for VA Benefits:

Location: College of Allied Health, OU Health Sciences Center, 1200 N. Stonewall, Oklahoma City, OK 73117-1215
Hours: Friday 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.
Email: apokc@ou.edu. Phone: 405-271-4522.

Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Claude Miller, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: Department of Communication
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019
Telephone Number: (405) 325-0861

Fax Number: (405) 325-7625
Cell Phone Number: (405) 234-0455
Email Address: cm@ou.edu
Professor availability: The professor will be available via email to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

Instructional Materials:

There is no single text; however, a collection of WP&M articles and chapters, and TMT articles will be provided via Canvas by the course professor at no charge.

Materials posted on the OU Canvas learning management system: Access Canvas at <https://canvas.ou.edu>, enter your OU NetID and password, and select course to access material. If you require assistance with Canvas, please click on the Help icon. You can search the Canvas guides, chat with Canvas support, or contact OU IT.

Course Outline & Schedule:

This course will be conducted as a seminar with the expectation that all members will participate actively in class discussion. Participants are therefore expected to come to each class having thoroughly prepared for that class session

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Students should have read the bulk of the readings—particularly the **TMT articles provided on Canvas**—before the course begins and should be prepared to discuss topics from among the readings relevant to each class session. This is a graduate level seminar; the professor will act more as a facilitator than a lecturer; this means seminar participants are responsible for preparing ahead of time so as to provide considered, informed, and active contributions to the discussion.

Initial Paper (paper one):

The following written assignment will be due on the first day of class and will be utilized for class discussion on that or a following day. Students should write an essay of 10-15 double-spaced pages of text (in APA format with separate title page, abstract page, and reference section). The essay should be rhetorical in nature (i.e., a carefully constructed argument should be designed to persuade the reader to accept an advocated point of view). Each student should come to class prepared to act as a guest presenter (see below), ready to discuss his or her paper in a 30-45-minute oral presentation. A handout on APA format is available on the Canvas course site via the syllabus link. Papers should address and cover *each* of the points laid out below.

- Students will select one of the featured **Media, War & Conflict (MW&C) articles provided on Canvas** (first come first serve), supplemented by other relevant sources to identify a theory, model, or methodology used by the author of the article, and begin their paper by reviewing the topic, the featured theory and/or methodology used (e.g., content analysis, personal narratives, strategic narratives, user generated content, metaphor, framing analysis, audience targeting, visual framing, contextual cuing, etc.), with a description of how it relates to their interest in WP&M (i.e., when, how, and in which contexts does it apply).
- Students should provide a brief critique of the author's theory/methodology based on other existing sources gathered from the academic literature (peer-reviewed journals, edited scholarly texts).
- You do not necessarily have to agree with the author/methodology reviewed, you may choose to take a critical approach. In any case, you will need to buttress your position with research reported in the course readings, related literature, and along with your own analysis and experience.
- War, peace, and media are often characterized as especially contentious subjects, so you should anticipate and address exceptions or possible objections to the author's and/or your own positions.
- To illustrate your points, you may use examples from your own life, either that you have experienced, or that you have observed in others, as they relate to the issues discussed.
- Formulate five discussion questions about the article/topic/theory and or methodology for use in your presentation (see below).

- You will submit a copy of this paper to the *Paper One Discussion folder* on Canvas prior to the first day of class so your colleagues may read it before the class meeting in which your paper and topic will be discussed. Your colleagues are expected to review your paper before attending your guest lecture presentation (see below) and contribute to an informed discussion of your topic.

Reflections

Each day, beginning with the first day of class, you will prepare a brief, one-page (maximum) reflection, speculation, comment, or question concerning an aspect of the most recent class discussion and/or relevant reading. You may take one or more concept(s) from the discussion and relate them to an incident you have either read about, experienced, or observed in your own everyday life. Your reflections must be no more than one double-spaced page in length (see attached sample). Reflections must be submitted to the appropriate *Canvas Discussion folder* no later than two hours prior to the beginning of each class.

Guest Presentation

As mentioned above, each student will act as a guest presenter, and give a 30-40-minute PPT-assisted oral presentation of their assigned article. Prepare to lead the class discussion by delving into relevant areas beyond the article itself. You should highlight important aspects the topic/theory/methodology featured within your article with images and visual aids, provide information on the empirical evidence (or lack thereof) supporting the author’s position, and discuss key conceptual debates and criticisms in the literature, and in your mind.

Final Paper (paper two):

Using TMT as your explanatory framework for understanding the nature of WP&M, you will write a final 15-25-page paper on one of the remaining featured articles provided on Canvas, or on an approved WP&M scholarly article of your choosing. This paper must apply TMT as a means of addressing how people’s (a) potential existential anxiety, (b) cultural worldviews, (c) sense of self-esteem, and (d) close personal and professional relationships bare on the nature, causes, and/or consequences of issues within WP&M relevant to the nations and warriors fighting the wars or enjoying the peace, as represented in the media. Due 16 days after the last class (i.e., Monday August 23, 2021)

Tentative Final Exam:

If necessary, a final exam in the form of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions will be given at the final class meeting. The exam will cover content from the texts, supplemental readings, and class discussions. **If students demonstrate their engagement with the material—through their participation in lively, informed discussion during class—there will be no need for a final exam** (in which case, all remaining assignments will count proportionally higher—see grade criteria below).

| Assignment | Due Date | % of Grade | % w/o final |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Written Assignment | First class session | 15% | 20% |
| Reflections | 1 hour before each class | 15% | 15% |
| Oral Presentations | During class sessions | 20% | 25% |
| Class Discussion | During class sessions | 15% | 15% |
| Final Paper | 3 weeks after final class | 15% | 25% |
| Final Exam (if necessary) | Last class session | 20% | NA |

Grading:

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

Notice: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

Sample Reflection:

Darren Linvill, Comm 6970, 4/16/2020

Reflection #2; Terror Management Theory

Generally, I agree with the basic premises of TMT. Having our own mortality as a salient concept puts humankind in a very unique position. I am quite sure the idea of our own mortality does have a overwhelming affect on our actions and motivation. For instance, if I knew I did not need to worry about my growth as a student and my impending graduation as a prerequisite to getting a job that will put money in my pocket and food on my table for the remainder of my life, I doubt very much I would be very concerned with writing this reaction right now. It is just as likely I would be sitting on a beach in the sunny South Pacific taking lots of hallucinogenic drugs and swimming with tiger sharks. Okay, maybe that is a bad example, but the point is I certainly wouldn't be greatly worried about the future and whether or not I am prepared for it without the fear of my own mortality.

I do have one critique of Terror Management Theory, however. I believe it should broaden it's conceptualization of the "self-preservation" to objects, ideas, or others that the self holds dear. Human beings are capable of remarkable actions that fly in the face of their own mortality when what they know or what they love is threatened. Mothers and Fathers die for their children, patriots die for their country, even some altruists die for complete strangers. Though, granted, in almost any instance I'm sure any parent, patriot, or altruist would prefer to live, they still put themselves in dangerous situations for a cause that they see as higher than their own life. If Terror Management Theory could broaden to include these actions I would find it a fuller more conclusive theory.

POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution's policy regarding "I" (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any "I" (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on "financial aid probation." If the "I" grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student's Financial Aid may be suspended making the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc...in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc...; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at <http://studentconduct.ou.edu/>

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth-Related Issues

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html>.

Title IX Resources

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no-contact orders, scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at smo@ou.edu or (405) 325-2215 (8-5), or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 615 -0013 (24/7) to report an incident. To learn more about Title IX, please visit the Institutional Equity Office's website at <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo.html>

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: <http://www.goou.ou.edu/>

INSTRUCTOR VITA

Claude H. Miller, Ph.D.

Education

- 2000 Ph.D. The University of Arizona, Major: Communication; Minor: Psychology
- 1986 M.A. American University, Major: Film & Video
- 1978 B.A. The University of Florida, Major: Photography

Department of Communication, University of Oklahoma, Norman, 2002 - Present

- Professor, Director of Graduate Studies 2017 - present
- Advanced Programs Professor, 2003 - present

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- COMM 5013 Introduction to Graduate Studies
- COMM 5113 Nonverbal Communication
- COMM 5213 Interpersonal Communication
- COMM 5353 Conflict Management
- COMM 5453 Social Influence
- COMM 6970 Seminar in Relational Communication
- COMM 6970 Seminar in Social Influence

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

Current program of research includes human affective responses to influences messages in various contexts applying emotion, motivation, and social influence theories to topics within health, crisis, and disaster-related contexts.

Representative Publications and Presentations

- Ma, H., & Miller, C. H. (2020). Trapped in a double bind: Chinese overseas student anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health Communication*.
- Miller, C. H., & Massey, Z. B. Terror management theory perspectives on interpersonal and social influence. (2020) In H. D. O'Hair & M. J. O'Hair (Eds.), *Handbook of applied communication research*. NY: Wiley
- Miller, C. H., Massey, Z. B., & Ma, H. Psychological reactance and persuasive message design. (2020) In H. D. O'Hair & M. J. O'Hair (Eds.), *Handbook of applied communication research*. NY: Wiley
- Miller, C. H., & Massey, Z. B. (2019). Meaning-making, communication, and terror management processes. In C. Routledge & M. Vess (Eds.), *Handbook of terror management theory*. San Diego: Elsevier (pp. 577-611).
- Miller, C. H., Dunbar, N. E., Jensen, M. L., Massey, Z., Lee, Y.-H., Nicholls, S. B., Anderson, C., Adams, A. S., Elizondo Cecena, F. J., Thompson, W., & Wilson, S. N. (2019). Training law enforcement officers to identify reliable deception cues with an interactive digital game. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning*, 9, (3), 1-23.
- Adame, B., & Miller, C. H. (2018). Risk perception and earthquake preparedness motivation: Predicting responses to a Cascadia Subduction Zone catastrophic event. In V. Fletcher & J. Lovejoy (Eds.), *The really big one: Risk, health, and environmental communication*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield (pp. 49-86).
- Massey, Z. & Miller, C. H. (2018). Case studies on interethnic conflict: A theoretical integration. *International Journal of International Relations*, 66, 130-147.
- Miller, C. H., & Cortes Quantip, R. J. (2017). Anger in health and risk messaging. In R. Perrott (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of health and risk message design and processing*, New York: Oxford (pp. 117-128).

Representative Honors and Awards Received

- 2000 Top Student Paper, Information Systems Division, ICA
- 2001 Gerald R. Miller Outstanding Dissertation Award, NCA
- 2004 Top Three Paper, Communication & Social Cognition Division, NCA
- 2016 Kinney-Sugg Outstanding Professor Award, OU College of Arts and Sciences