

Tübingen International & European Studies (T-IES) · UT-UNC Summer School

June 21 – July 19, 2025

**Weaponization of Knowledge: The Historical Legacy of Propaganda and Disinformation in the US and Abroad**

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Many of us have heard the phrase “knowledge is power.” The motto is said to have originated with Francis Bacon, a philosopher from the 16th and early 17th centuries famous for creating the scientific method. Thomas Jefferson was also fond of the concept, using it to underscore the idea that an informed citizenry is crucial for the success and stability of a democratic society. But what if we thought about the relationship between knowledge and power differently? In this class, we will explore *how those in power create knowledge* and understand how what counts as knowledge is used to maintain their political position. By learning sociological frameworks to question knowledge and reality, this class will then use that theory to study applied cases of weaponized knowledge throughout history in the United States and Germany. As students learn foundational concepts and visit museums related to the subject matter, they will develop an array of communication strategies for distinct situations and specific audiences. In doing so, this course can fulfill both the “[Ways of Knowing](#)” and “[Communication Beyond Carolina](#)” IDEAs requirements.

This course will also include a weekend excursion to Berlin to visit the [Stasi Museum](#) and the [Topography of Terror Documentation Center](#). Museum entry will need to be built into the tuition, however – students should be made aware of this extra expense before enrolling (flights to Berlin, hotel accommodations for two nights, per diem expenses, etc.)

Week 1 - The Origins

Week 2 – The Social Construction of Race

Week 3 – Reality and Memory

Week 4 - Applied Cases of Propaganda and Presentations

**Additional activities [?]**

- Orientation and Intercultural Workshop (Krauß-Wang, Battke)
- German Language Course(s) (N.N.) – eight 90 minute sessions (twice a week), after lunch break
- Excursion / Study Trip to Berlin (Layne, Tripodi, Battke) – three nights (at the end of Week 2)

WEEK 1	MORNING	NOON	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Sat, June 21	Arrival of both UNC and other students in Tübingen Check-In (Accommodations)			
Sun, June 22	Tba. (Probably (general) Tübingen tour)			
Mon, June 23	<u>10:00-12:00</u> Registration and Orientation; Introduction to the Program Tba.	<u>12:00-14:30</u> Time with Buddies		<u>17:00-19:00</u> Grand Opening of Summer School Tba.
Tue, June 24	<u>09:30-12:00</u> Intercultural Workshop and Getting to know each other (I) (Krauß-Wang)	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-15:00</u> Intercultural Workshop and Getting to know each other (II) (Krauß-Wang)	<u>19:00-open end</u> Quiz, Games ("Werewolf"), and Group Challenge (T-IES)
Wed, June 25	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <b>Knowledge As Power</b> <i>Systems of power shape how knowledge is produced, circulated, and controlled in society</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	FREE (OR 90 minutes of German)	
Thu, June 26	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <b>How Fascism Works</b> <i>Fascism is bound by recurring patterns and tactics that have been employed by fascist movements throughout history</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	FREE (OR 90 minutes of German)	
Fri, June 27	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <b>The Origins of Totalitarianism</b> <i>Totalitarian regimes consolidate power and control the masses through propaganda, manipulation of truth, and the activation of mass movements to shape public opinion</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-16:30</u> Course Sessions <b>War and Propaganda</b> <i>Throughout war, strategic media practices to shift ideological positions have been used. This week we will look at some of this content and present our own disinformation/propaganda campaigns</i>	
Sat, June 28	<u>9:00-11:30</u> Excursion <b>Guided Walking Tour of Tübingen</b>		FREE [OR Optional activity organized by T-IES?]	
Sun, June 29			FREE	

WEEK 2	MORNING	NOON	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Mon, June 30	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>The Origins of Race</i></b> <i>Epistemology (how we know what we know) is also connected to how racial thinking is central to historical, social, political, and economic function</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>	<b>FREE</b> (OR 90 minutes of German)	
Tue, July 1	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>Critical Race Theory</i></b> <i>Intersectionality exposes the connected nature of social categories and explores how privilege and discrimination are based on the combination of these identities. We will use this concept to consider how this applies to educational access and the legal strategies employed to protect desegregation of education</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>	<b>FREE</b> (OR 90 minutes of German)	
Wed, July 2	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>Black Reconstruction in America</i></b> <i>Prevailing narratives portray reconstruction as a failure and suggest that Black people were not ready for responsible citizenship. DuBois questions this logic, exposing how racism, political compromises, and economic exploitation, and the rise of Jim Crow segregation undermined racial equality</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>	<u>13:30-16:30</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>Racial Legacies of Post-Truth</i></b> <i>By looking at two cases in the US and how government handles drugs and housing, we can see how policies of our past present a better picture of our future than phrases like "post-truth"</i>	<b>FREE</b>
Thu, July 3	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>All Day</u>  <b>Study Trip to BERLIN</b>            Separate schedule will be made available</p>			
Fri, July 4				
Sat, July 5				
Sun, July 6				

WEEK 3	MORNING	NOON	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Mon, July 7	FREE [Group will be back from Berlin late on Sunday ...]		<u>13:30-16:30</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>Social Construction of Reality</i></b> <i>What we think of as reality is not a neutral, objective, fact. It is socially constructed through human interactions and collective agreement</i>	
Tue, July 8	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>Philosophy of History</i></b> <i>How we remember history is not as simple as we might think. The past is not an objective record and is influenced by the present</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>	FREE	
Wed, July 9	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>Searching for Alternative Facts</i></b> <i>The way we see the world shapes how we search for information online. The keywords and phrases we use are tied to systems of power</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>	FREE (OR 90 minutes of German)	
Thu, July 10	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>Monuments &amp; Museums</i></b> <i>Students examine two Pulitzer Center reporting projects that explore the symbolism of memorials, including Confederate monuments and streets named after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>	FREE (OR 90 minutes of German)	
Fri, July 11	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b><i>The OpEd Project</i></b> <i>Students start the process of writing an op-ed style piece on a subject of their choosing. Prof. Tripodi will guide students in this process to help with placement</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>	FREE	
Sat, July 12	<u>9:00-11:30</u> <b>Excursion</b> <b><i>Tübingen Castle Museum</i></b>	FREE [OR Optional activity organized by T-IES?]		
Sun, July 13	FREE			

WEEK 4	MORNING	NOON	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Mon, July 14	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b>Screening</b> <i>I, TOO (2022)</i>  Group Discussion + Op-ed Workshop	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>		<b>FREE</b> (OR 90 minutes of German)
Tue, July 15	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b>Screening</b> <i>Homecoming (1941)</i>  Group Discussion + Op-ed Workshop	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>		<b>FREE</b>
Wed, July 16	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b>Screening</b> <i>Little Tokyo USA (1942)</i>  Final Meetings for Disinformation Campaigns <b>Due: Op-ed Assignment</b>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>		<b>FREE</b> (OR 90 minutes of German)
Thu, July 17	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b>Presentations</b> <i>Students Present Disinformation Campaigns to Class for Final Feedback</i>  <b>Due: Peer Evaluation of Disinformation Campaign</b>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>		<b>FREE</b>
Fri, July 18	<u>9:00-12:00</u> <b>Course Sessions</b> <b>Final Presentations</b> <i>Start of Conference on the Weaponization of Knowledge</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> <b>Lunch Break</b>		<u>17:00-19:00</u> <b>Grand Farewell</b> Tba.
Sat, July 19	<b>Check-Out and Departure</b>			