

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 Europe

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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 an extended weekend excursion to Berlin.

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 Courses (N.N.) – six 90 min sessions each (Week 1 & 2)
- Excursion / Study Trip to Berlin (Layne, Tripodi, Battke) – three nights (at the end of Week 2)
- Approx. two guest inputs by Tübingen faculty (Week 3 and 4); late afternoon or evening

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 Knowledge As Power <i>Systems of power shape how knowledge is produced, circulated, and controlled in society</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-15:00</u> German Courses (beginner OR advanced) (Tba.)	
Thu, June 26	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions How Fascism Works <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	<u>13:30-15:00</u> German Courses (beginner OR advanced) (Tba.)	
Fri, June 27	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions The Origins of Totalitarianism <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 War and Propaganda <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>	GUEST INPUT UT Faculty (Guest Lecture/Roundtable Discussion/Workshop ...) TBC
Sat, June 28	<u>9:00-11:30</u> Excursion Guided Walking Tour of Tübingen		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> Course Sessions <i>The Origins of Race</i> <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> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-15:00</u> German Courses (beginner OR advanced) (Tba.)	
Tue, July 1	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <i>Critical Race Theory</i> <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> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-16:30</u> Course Sessions <i>Black Reconstruction in America</i> <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>	
Wed, July 2	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <i>Racial Legacies of Post-Truth</i> <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>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-15:00</u> German Courses (beginner OR advanced) (Tba.)	
Thu, July 3	<u>All Day</u> Study Trip to BERLIN Separate schedule will be made available			
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>13:30-15:00</u> T-IES Course / Workshop <i>Jan Battke</i>	
Tue, July 8	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <i>Social Construction of Reality</i> <i>What we think of as reality is not a neutral, objective, fact. It is socially constructed through human interactions and collective agreement</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-16:30</u> Course Sessions <i>Philosophy of History</i> <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>	
Wed, July 9	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <i>Searching for Alternative Facts</i> <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> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-15:00</u> T-IES Course / Workshop <i>Jan Battke</i>	
Thu, July 10	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <i>Monuments & Museums</i> <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> Lunch Break	GUEST INPUT UT Faculty (Guest Lecture/Roundtable Discussion/Workshop ...)	
Fri, July 11	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions <i>The OpEd Project</i> <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> Lunch Break	FREE	
Sat, July 12	<u>9:00-11:30</u> Excursion <i>Tübingen Castle Museum</i>	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> Course Sessions Screening <i>I, TOO (2022)</i> Group Discussion + Op-ed Workshop	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-15:00</u> T-IES Course / Workshop Jan Battke	
Tue, July 15	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions Screening <i>Homecoming (1941)</i> Group Discussion + Op-ed Workshop	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	GUEST INPUT UT Faculty (Guest Lecture/Roundtable Discussion/Workshop ...) TBC OR Field work for Jan's course	
Wed, July 16	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions Screening <i>Little Tokyo USA (1942)</i> Final Meetings for Disinformation Campaigns Due: Op-ed Assignment	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	<u>13:30-15:00</u> T-IES Course / Workshop Jan Battke	
Thu, July 17	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions Presentations <i>Students Present Disinformation Campaigns to Class for Final Feedback</i> Due: Peer Evaluation of Disinformation Campaign	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	FREE	
Fri, July 18	<u>9:00-12:00</u> Course Sessions Final Presentations <i>Start of Conference on the Weaponization of Knowledge</i>	<u>12:00-13:30</u> Lunch Break	<u>17:00-19:00</u> Grand Farewell Tba.	
Sat, July 19	Check-Out and Departure			