

PACS6914 CONFLICT-RESOLVING MEDIA

Postgraduate Program in Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney

Sydney Summer School

Lecturers: Associate Professor Jake Lynch: Director, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies
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Time: 10.00 am – 4.30 pm daily

Dates: Monday February 15 to Friday February 19, 2010

Location: Room 107, Mackie Building and Room 232 (Computer lab), Education Building

Approximate daily timetable:

10:00-11:00 Session 1

11:00-11:15 Coffee

11:15-12:30 Session 2

12:30-13:15 Lunch

13:15-14:00 Group work

14:00-14:45 Feedback

14:45-15:00 Coffee, moving rooms

15:00-16:30 Session 3

1. Course aims

The course aims to help participants to:

- Analyse critically the reporting of conflicts and to identify War Journalism and Peace Journalism;
- Understand the potential impact and influence of different patterns of media response on readers and audience members, and on the actions and motivations of parties to conflict;
- Consider how to devise and implement a range of possible media interventions to enhance the prospects for achieving peace with justice, including techniques for writing Peace Journalism;
- Acquire and develop ideas for promoting media accountability and democracy.

2. Course methods

Participants will do this by:

- Learning new modes of analysis for media texts by applying evaluative criteria based on the main research findings from Peace and Conflict Studies;
- Considering and comparing different theories and claims about the media's role in conflict and peace;
- Critically examining their own responses to media representations of conflict, in light of research findings;
- Experimenting with a range of techniques for creating and analysing journalistic texts;
- Considering issues arising from media interventions in conflicts and conflict zones.

During the course, mornings will generally be spent in class on formal teaching, group discussion and a variety of short interactive exercises.

At the end of the morning session, at 12:30, a **research exercise** may be set, usually for completion by 14:00 and discussion in class.

In such cases, participants will have the 45-minute lunch break plus an extra 45 minutes working time to consider, discuss and carry out this exercise. Lecturers will be available for consultation and visiting the groups after the lunch break.

Exercises will be carried out, at different times, in small groups, individually or in pairs.

3. Overall objectives for the course group:

That during the five days together, each participant will:

- Find, successfully identify and analyse examples of War Journalism and Peace Journalism;
- Experience and discuss their own personal responses to media representations of conflict;
- Develop an awareness of the potential for enhancing – and harming – the prospects for peace with justice by various forms of media intervention;
- Reflect on his or her own role in bringing about change in the media in the interests of peace with justice;
- Leave the course equipped with skills and ideas to work for peace with justice in a media context, whether as a journalist, a development worker or as a global citizen.

4. Style and process

The style of the course is flexible and highly participative, using a range of active learning approaches as well as formal teaching where appropriate. There will be a considerable amount of group work as well as individual study. Participants are expected to come prepared to contribute, and will be assessed on their participation as well as their final written work (see closing section for details of course assessment).

5. Reading

Essential reading for the course is *Peace Journalism* by Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick, and *Debates in Peace Journalism* by Jake Lynch. Other readings will be given out in class. Supplementary readings are available in Fisher Library and/or the CPACS Resource Centre, or on line.

Day one, Monday, February 15

Introduction to peace journalism; diagnosing war journalism and peace journalism. What are we led or left to infer, by representations of conflict, about what is at stake, about the actions and motivations of the parties and about what is likely to happen next? What decisions by editors and reporters expand – or shrink – opportunities to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict? ‘Operationalising’ the peace journalism model by deriving evaluative criteria for content analysis.

Exercise: Select a report of a conflict, either in a newspaper or by browsing the internet. How much War Journalism does it contain? What (if any) elements of Peace Journalism?

Readings

- Lynch, Jake, 2008: 'What's so great about Peace Journalism?' Chapter 6 of *Debates in Peace Journalism* – Peace Journalism 'operationalised' in the context of coverage of the 'Iran nuclear crisis' in UK press.
- Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, 2005: *Peace Journalism*, Stroud: Hawthorn Press, Prologue and Chapter One.

Supplementary readings

- *The First Casualty*, Phillip Knightley, Prion, London, 2000, especially Chapter 16 – gives a unique history and flavour of struggles to control the news agenda in times of war. CPACS Resource Centre and Fisher Library.
- 'War or Peace Journalism? Asian newspaper coverage of conflicts', by Seow Ting Lee and Crispin C Maslog, *Journal of Communication*, vol 55 no 2, June 2005, pp 311-329 – Peace Journalism 'operationalised' as a set of analytical criteria by two communications scholars.

Day two, Tuesday, February 16

Typical media representations of conflict compared with research findings from Peace and Conflict Studies. Re-conceiving and re-sourcing war journalism as peace journalism. Meanings and definitions of conflict, violence and peace, and their significance in discussions of journalism about conflict. Media effects, framing and reception theory. What is propaganda and how does it work? Cognitive responses to war journalism and peace journalism.

Exercise: Go back to your story of yesterday. Using whatever means you can think of – including internet research – find at least three alternative sources. How might the use of these sources help to re-frame the story as Peace Journalism?

Readings

- Lynch, Jake, 2008: 'Active and passive peace journalism', Chapter 7 of *Debates in Peace Journalism* – how issues in journalistic representation relate to concepts from conflict and peace in reporting conflict in the Philippines.
- Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, 2005: *Peace Journalism*, Stroud: Hawthorn Press, Chapters Two and Three.
- Hall, Stuart, 1997: *Representation and the Media*, Media Education Foundation Transcript.

Supplementary reading:

- Entman, Robert, 1993: 'Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', *Journal of Communication*, vol. 43 Issue 4, pp 51-8.
- Kempf, Wilhelm, 2005: 'Two experiments focussing on de-escalation oriented coverage of post-war conflicts', *Conflict and Communication Online*, vol 4 no 2.

Day three, Wednesday, February 17

Philosophical debates over peace journalism, and journalistic objectivity. Why is news the way it is? Structure and agency – what are the influences on the content of news? How can change in media representations be brought about? From within the news industry? From without? The phenomenon of media activism, and a typology. The public sphere, system and lifeworld.

Exercise: Find an example of journalism about conflict. Is it objective? What has made it the way it is? What are the economic and political factors affecting its content? How could it change?

Readings

Lynch, Jake, 2008: 'Peace journalism and its discontents', Chapter 1 of *Debates in Peace Journalism – issues of objectivity and representation in reporting conflicts*.

Supplementary reading:

- Loyn, David, 2007: Good journalism or peace journalism? *Conflict and Communication Online*, vol. 6 no. 2.
- Hanitzsch, Thomas, 2007: Situating Peace Journalism in Journalism Studies: a critical appraisal. *Conflict and Communication Online*, vol. 6 no. 2.
- Tehranian, Majid, 2002: Peace journalism: Negotiating Global Media Ethics. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, vol 7, no 2, pp 58-83.
- Hackett, Robert A., 2006: Is Peace Journalism possible? Three frameworks for assessing structure and agency in news media, *Conflict and Communication Online*, vol. 5 no. 2.
- Lynch, Jake, 2008: 'The 'Islam problem' in news journalism and the scope for media activism', Chapter 8 of *Debates in Peace Journalism*.

- *Sustaining Democracy? The Politics of Objectivity* by Robert A Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao especially chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 – consideration of linguistic and communications theory with analytical and historical account of the development of the media industry. In Fisher Library.
- *War Stories*, Mark Pedelty, Routledge, New York, 1995 – how economic and political imperatives penetrate and influence the working life of foreign correspondents. Two chapters in course readers from before 2005, in CPACS Resource Centre.

Day four, Thursday, February 18

Doing Peace Journalism – producing a peace journalism report of a violent incident in conflict.

Exercise: Working individually, produce a full Peace Journalism report of a violent incident in a conflict. Start from an example of War Journalism. Take it in turns to play the role of source, and journalist. Using your new material, re-write the story. Be prepared to read your story out to the whole class!

Reading

Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, 2005: *Peace Journalism*, Stroud: Hawthorn Press, Chapter Six.

Finding articles:

Some of the exercises involve finding articles. You can do so using Factiva, a database of Australian newspapers available through the University of Sydney library website (electronic resources section).

You can also, of course, search any of the large number of websites offered by news organizations worldwide.

Afternoon:

**“Towards an Ethics of Global Media —
Truthfulness, Hospitality, Care”**

**Nick Couldry, Professor of Media and Communications,
Goldsmiths, University of London**

Date: Thursday 18th February 2010

Time: 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Venue: Woolley Common Room

Abstract

This talk will ask: what philosophical resources are available to think about the wider normative frameworks about the ethics of media as they operate on scales up and including the global? The talk will draw on my book *Listening Beyond the Echoes: Media, Ethics and Agency in an Uncertain Age* (Paradigm Books 2006). Such debate is very much needed since media are crucial in representing to us a common world, yet this is a world where we know there is little agreement on normative frameworks. A framework in which the questions for exploration in a global media ethics can be delineated does not exist in any textbook on journalistic ethics or journalistic code.

By ‘global’, I do not mean that universal ethical principles are readily available on a global scale, only that we should discuss media ethics in terms that can take account of the ability of media messages to be globally circulated, however local their intended audience. I will take, as a starting-point, the tradition of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, specifically Bernard Williams’ argument in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (1985) that modern moral complexity requires the more flexible framework of ethical rather than moral philosophy, although we need to move beyond the obvious restrictions of original Aristotelian ethics. It is necessary to relate the general question ‘how should we live together through media?’ to what are plausibly the aims of media as a human practice, following the general method of Alisdair MacIntyre (*After Virtue* 1980). From there, I suggest, three specific dispositions or communicative virtues follow in relation to journalistic practice: the directly truth-related virtues of accuracy and sincerity or authenticity (Williams *Truth and Truthfulness* (2002)); and a third virtue which Roger Silverstone (*Media and Morality* 2006) called hospitality, but which I prefer, following the recent work of Paul Ricoeur (*Reflections on the Just* 2007) on ‘linguistic hospitality’, to understand as more akin related to an ethics of care.

The talk will end by considering the obvious gap between philosophical abstractions and the decreasing resources available for news production, not least in the international news sector. Does this condemn philosophical approaches to media ethics to irrelevance, or is it precisely the abstraction of such approaches that allows them to *interrupt* the increasingly difficult ethical situation of working journalists?

Day five, Friday, February 19

Psychological responses to war journalism and peace journalism. Media interventions in conflict – a typology and a continuum? Journalist training, intended-outcome media, using media tools in conflict resolution. Becoming media-savvy – understanding journalistic conventions and practices for use in media campaigning on issues in conflict and peace. Recording a television interview!

Exercise: Prepare, in groups, for an as-live television interview. This will be recorded and played back to the whole class! Allot the following roles: spokesperson for your campaign; opponent and two or more 'real people'. Prepare a press release and decide how to 'sell' your story.

Review of assignment tasks. Feedback and discussion.

Reading

- Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, 2007: *Becoming Media-savvy*.
- McGoldrick, Annabel, 2008: 'The effects of news media on the psyche – differential audience responses to War Journalism and Peace Journalism', *Peace and Policy* Edition 13.

Supplementary reading:

- Lynch, Jake, 2008: 'Modernisation or participatory development: the emerging divide in journalist training in conflict-affected societies', Chapter 3 of *Debates in Peace Journalism*.
- *The Power of Media – a guide for Peacebuilders*, ECCP/ECCG/IMPACS – a recent digest of arguments for and about media intervention, a proposal for a way of classifying them as part of a 'continuum' and some case studies. Bound copy in CPACS Resource Centre; contents can also be accessed at http://www.gppac.org/documents/Media_book_nieuw/a_b_contents.htm
- *Use and Abuse of Media in Vulnerable Societies*, USIP special report, Mark Frohardt and Jonathan Temin, at <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr110.html> - prospects for media interventions to prevent violence.
- *Why Templates for Media Development do not work in Crisis States*, James Putzel and Joost van der Zwan, London School of Economics, at www.crisisstates.com/download/publicity/crisis_report_low.res.pdf
- *Working with Conflict*, Fisher et al, Responding to Conflict/Zed books, London, pp 70-72 – how to assess the likely impact of an intervention in a conflict zone.
- DfID manual, *Working with Media in Conflict* – discussion of criteria employed by one major international donor when deciding whether to fund media projects in conflict zones. Contents available at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/chad-media.pdf>

ASSESSMENT

There are three assessment tasks in this unit. Written assignments must be submitted by close of business on Monday March 15.

Submission instructions:

You may hand in your work, in hard copy, with a CPACS assignment cover sheet, to the CPACS office, or post it in the posting box on the office door. Or you may submit by email to jake.lynch@usyd.edu.au
PLEASE create ONE document and save it as Your Name.doc

Attach to an email containing the following statement:

I certify that:

- I have read and understood the *University of Sydney Student Plagiarism: Coursework Policy and Procedure*;
- I understand that failure to comply with the *University of Sydney Student Plagiarism: Coursework Policy and Procedure* can lead to the University commencing proceedings against me for potential student misconduct under Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-law 1999* (as amended);
- This Work is substantially my own, and to the extent that any part of this Work is not my own, I have indicated that it is not my own by Acknowledging the Source of that part or those parts of the Work.

1. Participation in discussions and exercises set in class is worth 20%.
2. Plus TWO of the following THREE options (each 2,500 words and worth 40%):

- A practical conflict reporting exercise and commentary.
- Devise a peace journalism intervention project and commentary.
- Devise a media activism project, to work for peace with justice both through and on the media, with commentary.

You must write about a different conflict in each of the two options you choose.

Conflict reporting exercise:

Take a recent development in a major conflict story which, you feel, was reported in such a way as to over-value violent responses and under-value non-violent ones – ie as War Journalism.

Write a report on it, suitable for publication in a major broadsheet newspaper – of UP TO (not more than) 1,000 words. You should find your own sources, by finding and using quotes and/or information from documents or websites. (NB unlike in a newspaper article, we do need you to reference your sources please).

Write a commentary, of around 1,500 words, explaining your reasoning:

- Using examples, say how this development was reported at the time. Say what characteristics of the reporting make it War Journalism. Explain briefly how you would ‘operationalise’ the peace journalism model into evaluative criteria for content analysis on the coverage of this story.
- What effect might this pattern of reporting have on the cognitive and psychological responses of readers and/or audience members?
- What effect might this pattern of reporting have on the actions and motivations of (any) party or parties to the conflict? How might this effect be transmitted?
- How is your own report different from the way the story was reported at the time?
- What effect might your report, and more like it, have on the actions and motivations of (any) party or parties to the conflict? How might this effect be transmitted?
- Why are conflicts reported so often in the War Journalism style?
- Was the reporting at the time objective?
- Is your report objective?

Media intervention exercise:

Take an example of a conflict.

Devise a media intervention that would be effective in encouraging and bringing about more Peace Journalism in the media of any country involved in the conflict. It should be suitable for presentation as a development initiative to a major funding organisation and for implementation straight away. Write a proposal in around 1,000 words.

Write a commentary, of around 1,500 words, explaining your reasoning:

- What kind of War Journalism is going on? Explain briefly how you would ‘operationalise’ the peace journalism model into evaluative criteria for content analysis on the coverage of conflict in this country.
- What effect might this pattern of reporting have on the cognitive and psychological responses of readers and/or audience members?
- What effect might this pattern of reporting have on the actions and motivations of (any) party or parties to the conflict? How might this effect be transmitted?
- Why is the news the way it is at the moment? What structural (historical, economic, political) factors have made it that way? How would you counter-act them with your intervention?
- How would your idea help? How would change take place as a result of the intervention?
- How would your intervention affect those who are already working for peace?
- How would it affect those with an interest in exacerbating the conflict?

(NB as discussed in class, there are plentiful media interventions around the world which are non-journalistic. If you want to attempt one, please come and discuss it with us).

Media Activism exercise:

Consider a major conflict issue, prominently reported in Australian and/or international media. Devise a strategy to campaign effectively, THROUGH the media, for more Peace Journalism about this issue.

Write a press release and a BRIEF outline of the campaign, around 1,000 words between them. Write a commentary, of around 1,500 words, explaining your reasoning:

- What is wrong with the existing coverage of this story?
- In what senses can it be described as War Journalism? Explain briefly how you would ‘operationalise’ the peace journalism model into evaluative criteria for content analysis on the coverage of this story.
- What effect might this pattern of reporting have on the cognitive and psychological responses of readers and/or audience members?
- What effect might this pattern of reporting have on the actions and motivations of (any) party or parties to the conflict? How might this effect be transmitted?
- How would your campaign help to change the coverage?
- How would you ‘sell’ your campaign to the media? How would you make it fit in with the media’s needs and priorities?
- Why is the coverage the way it is at the moment? What structural factors help to make it that way? How would you counter-act them in your campaign?

- How could you also work ON the media, in response to this campaign? What is there, in the stated undertakings of news organisations – guidelines, codes of practice etc – which, you feel, makes you entitled to expect them to cover it?

Students must pass both sections of the assessment for successful completion of the course. Failure to attend at least 80% of classes (four days out of five) without reasonable cause is grounds for failure.

Notes and hints

Participation

Participation in class discussions and exercises does not simply mean talking a lot! We will be looking for original insights and consideration towards others who wish to take part in whole-class discussions. We also welcome constructive criticism and counter-points to the perspective we ourselves put forward. The keynote is to offer contributions that help and expand the overall debate.

In small-group discussions and exercises, this is your chance to make your contribution if you do not feel as comfortable in speaking out before a large group. We will be visiting, chipping in and asking questions so please do not feel your work is not being noticed!

Media intervention and Media activism

How do they differ? In general – a ‘media intervention’ is a peace initiative in someone else’s country. Media activism takes place in your own country.

Do not assume that either of these is a ‘soft option’! You still have to show a working knowledge of War Journalism, theories about its likely or potential effects in a conflict, and about why it predominates in media coverage. Key questions – what is the media problem, how does that contribute to the conflict and how will your proposed intervention or activism campaign address the media problem?

Past experience has shown that assignments on media interventions, in particular, are only successful when submitted by someone with detailed knowledge of the media and conflict milieu in which they are proposing to intervene.

The cornerstone of a successful media activism campaign is something that will present a structural challenge to the way a conflict is reported. You need to show how it will change the reporting by

generating an ongoing stream of stories that are peace journalism-orientated and likely to be able to commend themselves to editors and reporters, given what we know about their existing needs and interests.

Reading

In your major assessment tasks, as a general principle, you will gain credit for showing you have understood, and can apply, the central ideas of the course. You will gain credit for showing you have read widely, in *Peace Journalism* and *Debates in Peace Journalism* and among other texts, and have used your reading intelligently to develop a critical understanding of key principles. ‘Showing you have read’ entails referencing – see CPACS writing guide.

LECTURER BIOGRAPHIES

Associate Professor Jake Lynch (PhD, City University, London) is Director of CPACS. Previously, he was a television presenter (news anchor) and reporter on BBC World, and Director of Reporting the World, which the *Observer* newspaper called, “the nearest thing to a journalism think-tank”. He was formerly the *Independent*’s Sydney correspondent and a Political Correspondent for Sky News. He has published several books, numerous book chapters and scholarly articles on peace and peace journalism. He is about to start work on a Linkage Project funded by the Australian Research Council, with partnership from the International Federation of Journalists and Act for Peace, on a Global Standard for Reporting Conflict. Jake chairs the Organising Committee of the International Peace Research Association conference in Sydney, 2010, he is an Executive member of the Sydney Peace Foundation and a member of the International Advisory Council of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research. He writes a weekly column on issues in conflict and media for the TRANSCEND Media Service www.transcend.org/tms

Annabel McGoldrick (MA, De Montfort University, UK) is an experienced international reporter and producer in television and radio news, most recently for SBS World News Australia. She is about to commence her PhD at CPACS with an Australian Postgraduate Award (Industry), part of the ARC Linkage Project led by Jake Lynch. She has published two books and several book chapters and scholarly articles on peace journalism. Annabel chaired the Reporting the World seminars in London for senior editors and reporters. She is a fully qualified psychotherapist, and a trainer for the UNFPA and the DART Center for Journalism and Trauma. She works as a therapist at the South Pacific Private Hospital and in private practice. Annabel previously served on the board of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, www.transnational.org

Together, they have developed and campaigned for peace journalism for many years. They have led professional training workshops for journalists and peace activists in countries including Indonesia, the Philippines, Nepal and the Caucasus, for clients including the British Council, the Council of Europe, DANIDA, SIDA, NORAD and the Australian Commonwealth Government.