CULP 220-01
Diplomacy and Culture
Summer 2020
Monday- Thursday July 6-August 7, 3:15-5:45 PM
Online via Zoom
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“Politics demonizes...culture humanizes..” Wole Soyinka, Nigerian writer and Nobel Prize winner

This course will study the impact of arts, culture and media on international relations through an examination of the role of artists and cultural leaders in places around the world in the midst of change and/or conflict. Through our study of different situations and environments, we will consider how artists and cultural leaders and the products they create both reflect and change their societies. We will see how artists, cultural leaders, and cultural movements fight some of the greatest challenges of our time: authoritarianism, injustice, poverty, conflict, sectarianism, and violent extremism.

The intersection of culture and politics is at the core of this course. At this moment, when COVID-19 is transforming the world as we know it, that will also mean looking at ‘soft power’, ie the power to serve as an example and to influence and persuade, and how that power has been impacted by recent events.

As the 24-hour news cycle, social media, citizen journalism, and the rise of non-state (good and bad) actors, not to mention COVID-19, upend traditional power structures, cultural diplomacy and “soft power” play increasingly important roles in diplomacy and foreign policy.
Topics to be studied range from how jazz and rock n’ roll impacted the break up of the Soviet Union, to role of culture in recovering from conflict in Afghanistan and Cambodia, the role of culture in countering violent extremism in West Africa, to the role of culture in the Arab Spring and other anti-authoritarian movements around the world. In addition to examining the role of culture and cultural leaders in situations of socio-political transformation, conflict, and peacebuilding, we will also look at more traditional definitions of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. We will study both “high” and “popular” culture, from classical dance to hip hop, and traditional to “digital” diplomacy.

By the end of the course, students should have a good understanding of the potential and actual value of culture within the context of many of today’s foreign policy challenges.

Work for the course will include group/team assignments, debates, and scenarios, as well as more traditional writing assignments such as a policy brief. Students will be asked to watch online performances and discussion, in addition to doing readings. The final project can be written or creative, or a combination of the two.

Teaching and learning online present distinctive challenges. Keeping that in mind, I will engage the students in a variety of group projects and discussions. Just as is true of effective cultural diplomacy, the course will strive to be creative, flexible, and opportunistic.

I welcome comments and suggestions from the students about assignments, approaches, and ‘best practices’ in online teaching.

Depending on its availability (still tbd for the summer) students may have the opportunity to participate in the Soliya online connect program.

Class Format, Assignments and Grading

Both the content and the assignments of the course will encompass culture and policy. That is to say that students will be asked to view performances, films, television programs, and policy discussions, and you will also be assigned readings in books, journals, and the press.
Class format will vary from Professor or student-led discussions or readings or assignments to debates and scenarios on different topics related to the readings, events, or culture and conflict topics. Guest speakers and artists from around the world also will join us via Zoom.

Recognizing the intense schedule of the class, students will be given opportunities during class time to meet in small groups to prepare group assignments.

Contributions to class discussion are an essential component of the course, and also will be considered in computing the final grade. It is essential that we all contribute to cultivating an environment of profound mutual respect, and active listening. All are expected to contribute generously and also to be aware of making space for other voices to be heard and received ("Step up"/"Step back"). The quality and depth of your respectful engagement of each other as listeners will be central to your participation grade.

Papers and/or creative projects (film, video, website, performance) will be required for the major assignments. There will not be exams.

**Regular Canvas Posts**

On a regular basis you will be asked to post an entry on Canvas in response to a given prompt (typically in relation to readings or performances we are engaging with – and/or relevant unfolding events of the world). Part of your assignments will be to read and comment on each other’s posts in advance of class. This is a vital part of your regular assignments and will directly inform and enrich the discussions in class.

**Midterm Policy Brief**

You will be asked to write a two page policy brief in the format commonly used in the State Department and other agencies. You will be given a choice of topics. The goal of the policy paper is to analyze a problem and propose solution(s) to it. You are not expected to do outside research, but rather to use your knowledge from class readings and speakers.

**DUE: Monday July 20th**
Final Paper or Project

From the early meetings of the class you are encouraged to begin proactively thinking about your final research project (critical and/or creative). This project may take a variety of forms but should in some way reflect, extend, challenge and engage issues that surface in the course curriculum.

The strongest projects will emerge from your own interests and passions. By **July 23** students will present their final project topic and approach orally in class, and in writing with a preliminary bibliography or list of sources.

Each project must define a central critical question with which it is engaging. Projects may blend the critical and creative, the artistic and the activist. They may take the form of a final research paper (approx. 10 pages) that addresses a critical question or explores some aspect or the intersection of culture and politics (not necessarily a topic discussed in the course), or, alternatively, students may individually or in groups develop their own artistic or activist project to present to the class. If you choose this option, you will also need to do a short critical reflective paper about the process (2-3 pages). Students may also choose to do field work or embodied research and to engage the work of other artists, citizens and/or sites of practice. I will be happy to work with you as you hone and shape your topic and your research approach. All students will do a final presentation/performance during one of the final class periods. Final papers and all additional written work will be due by Monday **August 17th**.

Grading

The following is a general guideline for how your grade will be weighted. It is not an exact science. Poor attendance, lateness, and inconsistency with your research (ie falling behind on reading or written work etc.) will harm your grade.

Class Participation and leadership (including timely attendance, preparedness generous support of and engagement with others’ work.)  

25%

Canvas Posts

20%
Midterm Policy Brief (draft and final version) 25 

Final Project (Creative or Critical - in-class presentation and written version) 30%

Assignments:
Under normal circumstances, attending live cultural events would be one of the course requirements. Since that likely will not be possible, I have increased the number of films that are required viewing (listed under dates required). Whenever possible, I have tried to make these available for free. If that is not possible, then for a nominal cost. I may also assign live performances and/or discussions as these are scheduled.

Required Reading: Books (selected parts)


Halasa, Malu and Omareen, Zaher, Syria Speaks: Art and Culture from the Frontline, paperback and kindle, 2014


Electronic Sources

Required:


Chang, Jeff, “It’s a Hip Hop World”, *Foreign Policy*, Oct.12, 2009,

http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/culturaldiplomacy

Djitteye El Hadj, “Land of peace” blogsite;

Fernandes, Sujatha, “The Day the Music Died in Mali”, *New York Times*, May 20, 2013,
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/20/opinion/the-day-the-music-died-in-mali.html?_r=0

Gillespie, Nick and Welch, Matt, “How Dallas Won the Cold War”,
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/25/AR2008042503103_pf.html;

Glader, Paul, “How a Cold War DJ Showed the Power of Rock n’ Roll”,
*Forbes*, August 26, 2016,

Harris, Emily, “‘Arab Idol’ Unites Palestinians in Jubilant Celebration”,
NPR, June 22, 2013,

Havel, Vaclav, “The Power of the Powerless”,

Walter Laqueur, “Save Public Diplomacy” Foreign Affairs (file on Canvas

McKay, Emad, “This Breeze Did Not Arise in the West “ (Social media and Arab Spring), IPS, http://ipsnews.net/print.asp?idnews=106299.


Simonyi, Andras “What Springsteen and Colbert Can Teach the Next
President about American Power”, *Huffington Post*, 09.28.2016, 

Skelton, Rose, “Can Musical Mali Play On?”, 

*Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy*, “Art as Political Expression”, 
http://timep.org/art-political-expression/

**Talks, interviews, podcasts, and Videos (Required)**

Chimanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story”, 

Michel Martin, *Tell Me More*, “Tupac Encouraged the Arab Spring”, 
http://www.npr.org/2013/03/20/174839318/tupac-encouraged-the-arab-spring.

NPR, “What’s Better for Afghanistan’s Future: Buddha Tours or a Copper Mine?” 
http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/08/30/435570591/whats-better-for-afghanistans-future-buddha-tours-or-a-copper-mine

Cynthia Schneider, “The Surprising Spread of Idol TV”, TED talk, 

NPR “What a Failed Hip Hop Experiment Can Teach Us about the Future of US-Cuba Relations”, Dec.22, 2014, 
Course Outline

Weeks/Dates

1 7/07  Introduction
**Assignments:** FOR 07/08: Listen to TED talk by Chimanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story,” [http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html);
**Prepare presentations of readings for class on 07/08.**
Soft Power during the age of Corona—who, where, why?
Samantha Power and “The Moral Imagination” : similarities and differences. Can you think of examples of “the moral imagination” at work now or in the recent past?
**GROUP DISCUSSION:** what is the relationship between “the moral imagination” and soft power?

7/08  Discussions/Presentations of Readings; Culture and the Cold War, “Books are Weapons” (Dr. Zhivago)
Canvas post on dissent and cultural diplomacy

7/09  Cold War/ Civil Rights: jazz, rock, film, literature, theatre, educational conferences
**Assignments** for 7/13: “Performing One Another” interviews, transcripts; post transcript selections on CANVAS.
**WATCH by 07/13 : Dr. Zhivago** (Amazon Prime, Itunes, Youtube, etc.)
**READ by 7/14 ”; DEMOS “Cultural Diplomacy”**.
[https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Cultural_diplomacy_-_web.pdf](https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Cultural_diplomacy_-_web.pdf). British

2  7/13 PERFORMING ONE ANOTHER presentations and discussion. Class Discussion: Why Dr. Zhivago?

**Assignments:** Preparation for in class debates on CIA and Culture during the Cold War, and Integration of USIA into State Department; Finish reading DEMOS “Cultural Diplomacy”,
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/25/AR2008042503103_pf.html; Richmond, Cultural Exchange and the Cold War,

7/14 In class debates on Cold War Culture and the CIA; USIA being integrated in the State Department was a positive development.

**Assignments:** Glader, “How a Cold War DJ Showed the Power of Rock n’ Roll”, *Forbes*, August 26, 2016,
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/what-colbert-and-springsteen-can-teach_b_12236550.html;

WATCH: *Free to Rock* (rent on Amazon, or do free trial with Topic);

7/15 GUEST SPEAKER: Doug Yeager, Executive Producer *Free to Rock*
Discussion of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and soft power.

**Assignments:** CANVAS post on Best and Worst Practices from Cold War; Watch film *Bowling for Columbine*, [https://watchdocumentaries.com/bowling-for-columbine/](https://watchdocumentaries.com/bowling-for-columbine/)

**7/16** Discussion of best and worst practices in public and cultural diplomacy; Public Diplomacy scenario involving *Bowling for Columbine*

**Assignments:** Midterm Policy Brief DUE Monday July 20th; Watch *Moving Stories* (about Battery Dance Company), [https://www.amazon.com/Moving-Stories-Tadej-Brdnik/dp/B07ZR16BY8](https://www.amazon.com/Moving-Stories-Tadej-Brdnik/dp/B07ZR16BY8) (free with Amazon Prime)

**3 7/20** MIDTERM POLICY BRIEF DUE TODAY


**7/21** Culture and Resistance: Hip Hop Diplomacy

Breeze Did Not Arise in the West “ (Social media and Arab Spring), IPS, http://ipsnews.net/print.asp?idnews=106299

7/22 Culture and Resistance: Egypt and the Arab Spring Guest Speaker: Khaled Abol Naga

7/23 Culture and Resistance: Syria GUEST Speakers: Reem al Sayeh, Honey al Sayed. Discuss Final Project topics

7/24 CULTURE AND RESISTANCE: Pakistan. GUEST SPEAKER: Zeb Bangash
Assignments: Watch The Missing Picture, The Killing Fields (both on Canvas Sharestream video), and The Flute Player (on Kanopy, via Georgetown ID). Canvas post comparing the three films.

4 7/27 RECOVERY FROM CONFLICT: Cambodia
By 7/29 Watch documentaries Afghan Star (https://tubitv.com/movies/462770/afghan_star); and Saving Mes Aynak (rent on Amazon, Itunes) (90 minutes each)

7/28 RECOVERY FROM CONFLICT: Mali and Timbuktu

7/29 RECOVERY FROM CONFLICT: Afghanistan. Debate/scenario on Mes Aynak; Debate/scenario on peace in Afghanistan

7/30 Who Has the Last Laugh? COMEDY AND CULTURE Guest Speakers: Nik Kowsar and Jane Condon
Assignments: Performing One Another interviews and transcripts for presentations on Tuesday 8/4. Prepare examples of Best and Worst practices in groups

5 8/3 Best and Worst Practices in Culture in Diplomacy; “Ask the Ambassador”
Assignments: Prepare Performing One Another; post on Canvas. Work on final oral presentation and paper/project.

8/4 Performing One Another (COVID 19 theme); Diplomacy and Culture in a coronavirus world
Assignments: Work on final oral presentation and paper/project.

8/5 Presentations of final paper/projects
Assignments: Work on final oral presentation and paper/project.

8/6 Presentations of final paper/projects
Assignments: Work on paper/projects. FINAL

FINAL PAPERS/PROJECTS DUE MONDAY AUGUST 17th

Recommended Reading (Potentially Useful for Final Papers or General Background)


Cogbill, James B., “Protection of Arts and Antiquities during Wartime: Examining the Past and Preparing for the Future”, Military Review, Jan.-Feb., 2008,
Djerejian, Edward P. “Changing Minds, Winning Peace”,
http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/23.htm, to be read with

http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ad/ad_v9_3/brj01.html

Chang, Jeff, “It’s a Hip Hop World, Foreign Policy, November/December 2007,
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2007/10/11/its_a_hip_hop_world


Esposito, John, Islam: the Straight Path, Oxford University Press, 1998 (or most recent edition)


http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06707t.pdf


Nick Gillespie and Matt Welch, “How Dallas Won the Cold War”,
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/25/AR2008042503103_pf.html;


Healy, Patrick, “Shakespeare in Slang and Serbian”,
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/05/theater/the-world-takes-on-shakespeare-at-london-festival.html

Hughes, Robert, American Visions: the Epic History of Art in America.

Huntington, Samuel P., “The Clash of Civilizations ” and “Comments”, Foreign Affairs, summer 1993 and September /October 1993


http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/10/19/revolution_in_a_box?print=yes&hidecomments=yes&page=full#


Levine, Mark, Heavy Metal Islam, 2008.

Kroes, Rob, If you’ve Seen One, You’ve Seen the Mall, University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Lynch, Marc, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today*, 2005


http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i55/1.pdf


Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Global Unease with Major World Powers, Rising Environmental Concern*,  


Simonyi, Andras, “Winning Back the Hearts and Minds of Russians”,
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andras-simonyi/winning-back-the-hearts-a_b_5844414.html


Zayani, Mohamed, ed. The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, Colo., 2005

**Recommended online sources:**


**BBC World Service Documentaries on Soft Power from China and India,**
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/documentaries/2010/04/100422_the_power_of_attraction_part_one.shtml;

http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p007k3x8 = China
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/documentaries/2010/05/100520_soft_power_part_two.shtml  India


Cohn, Jared and Ross, Alec interviewed by Eric Schmidt at Google, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4C6_uRGSqtM.


TED talks, www.TED.org/talks (see Shashi Tharoor, Emanuel Jal, Maz Gobrani, Evgeny Morozov, among others)

BLOGS (Recommended):

Foreign Policy  http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/
USC Center on Public Diplomacy Blog,  
http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/newswire/cpdblog_main

Other Potentially Useful Sites (not assignments, just for your reference):

US Department of State  
Department of Public Diplomacy,  http://www.state.gov/r/

Cultural Programs and Exchanges,  
http://www.state.gov/youthandeducation/
Cultural Heritage Center  http://eca.state.gov/cultural-heritage-center

Syria Deeply,  https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria

UNESCO  http://whc.unesco.org/

USC Center on Public Diplomacy  http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com
The Public Diplomacy Council and Institute,  http://pdi.gwu.edu/
George Washington University
MOST  Muslims on Screen and Television: A Cross Cultural Resource Center  www.mostresource.org