

Scholar of Global Distinction Program

Course

Critical Thinking HUM 130

Author

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Course Description

This course introduces the use of critical thinking in the context of human conflict. Emphasis is placed on evaluating information, problem-solving, cross-cultural perspectives, and resolving controversies and dilemmas. Upon completion, the students should be able to demonstrate orally and in writing the use of critical thinking skills in the analysis of appropriate texts. This course has been approved to satisfy the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement general education core requirement in humanities/fine arts.

Number of Students Enrolled in Course:

25

Module Description

Human Rights--Journalism: Fighting to Present Facts

This module will examine how journalists are fighting to ensure facts are correctly and accurately being communicated even amidst violent legal threats, particularly in Southeast Asia, the Philippines, with Maria Ressa.

Student Global Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the module, students will be able to

1. Define human rights
2. Identify the role of responsible journalists, specifically in Southeast Asia, to communicate accurate information
3. Distinguish between facts and propaganda
4. Examine the violence and attempts to silence Philippine journalists who simply question situations
5. Analyze attacks on Philippine journalists, especially female journalist Maria Ressa, as a human rights issue

Global Learning Activities:

Activity 1

Assess students' knowledge about how journalists cover and write news stories.

Objective: By the end of the activity, students will be able to discern the characteristics of a responsible news journalist regardless of whether the news is posted in print or using social media.

Procedure: In a discussion forum, students are first to respond to the following questions: (a) What are the duties of a news reporter? What do you expect one to do to convey a news story for you to read? (b) Then students will read the two articles, "How Asian Leaders Are Riding the 'Fake News' Mantra" and "The Changing Face of Fake News." They will discuss the differences between the information being communicated in print, online, and social media platforms. What is common in their presentation of the facts and what is different? What tone is the information being conveyed in the two sources?

Using their own Facebook, Twitter, or other social media account, they will look up one of the articles read and answer questions: Are the articles the same? What is missing in the social media presentation versus the web/print version? They will consider the Facebook News page. Facebook states, "All news is content, but not all content is news." What is meant by that comment? Based on its own survey of users, Facebook states it "has divided publishers into four categories: general, topical, diverse, and local

news." Which category would the news article found on the social media site fit? Explain why?

Assessment: The forum will be evaluated based on student's initial response to the posed questions, depth of knowledge learned from the readings, ability to communicate one's thoughts succinctly and clearly, and engaging discussion with one's classmates. Students should demonstrate an understanding of how a journalist covers and presents a news story and/or writers an editorial piece. The forum will also assess students' understanding of the political situation within Southeast Asia as well as how certain subjects are reported within the region and to the world.

Follow-up: The faculty will conduct a lecture that specifically discusses presenting unbiased and objective news stories and being ethical journalists, putting these ideas into practice, and what is seen in our own community and national news stories. The faculty will also introduce the idea of propaganda and how it is being communicated on social media. Finally, the lecture will highlight the political dichotomy.

Activity 2

Define human rights and identify international journalists, specifically in Southeast Asia, who are targeted for writing articles that question governments and their actions.

Objective: By the end of the activity, students will be knowledgeable of Southeast Asian journalists who seek to combat misinformation within their countries as well as the violent threats and actions taken against them for doing so; additionally, students will define key human rights issues not just being raised in this area such as the Philippines, but more importantly, the rights of the journalists to be critical of their governments.


Procedure: Students will read publications including the United Nation's "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," "The Guardians and the War on the Truth," "Independent Broadcaster ABS-CBN Shut Down by Philippine Government in 'Crushing Blow' to Press Freedom," and "New Naralif under Attack."

Assessment: Focusing on Southeast Asia, students will complete a worksheet that highlights key declarations of human rights and link those to the global issues and journalists' ideas being expressed within the Time magazine article. Additionally, they will examine data pertaining to journalists who have been imprisoned, killed, or missing using the Committee to Project Journalists webpage. The worksheet should demonstrate a student's logical thinking of how human rights issues affect the journalism profession.

Follow-up: The faculty will move discussion from global journalists to one--Maria Ressa of the Philippines. The lecture will be an overview of Asia, the Philippines, and the presidency of President Duterte and his war on drugs campaign.

Activity 3

Discuss acts being taken against journalist and Rappler CEO Maria Ressa in the Philippines.



Objective: By the end of the activity, students will have read an article by Ressa and her journalist team and become familiar with her writing style and presentation of information; next, students will have read of the term “deaths under investigation” or DUIs to consider how a Philippine journalist is to report accurate information using the information provided or omitted.

Procedure: Students will watch the documentary, *A Thousand Cuts*, which addresses the Philippine political and economic structure, the president's war on drugs campaign. They will then read two articles by Maria Ressa's online publication, Rappler: “Timeline: The PNP's Use of the Term ‘Deaths under Investigation’” and “In Numbers: The Philippines' ‘War on Drugs’.” These two articles will assist students in examining and discrepancies in reported information regarding deaths related to the war on drugs.

Assessment: The class will be divided into teams for this week's discussion forum. After viewing the lesson and reading the articles, each group is to discuss the disinformation surrounding the reporting of the war on drugs campaign and then Ressa's response as well as Rappler's reporting on Duterte's campaign and presidency. Within the group, you are to note your observations and ask questions about what you have seen and read. A few questions that students may use to lead their discussion are include the following:

- Why are there discrepancies in the numbers of deaths being reported with the war on drugs?
- What could be reasons for the discrepancies?
- Which United Nations Human Rights violations may be applicable to this situation?
- Why would a journalist who reports correct information be considered a threat to the government? Does this country have a democratic government structure?
- What areas of the government would then be responsible for reporting correct information and working with journalists?
- What rules are being used to combat Ressa's reporting?
- What social media tactics are being used to combat Ressa as well as the online publication, Rappler?
- Have her human rights been violated?

Each group then assigns a person to report the group's consensus to the entire class in the major discussion forum.

Activity 4

Examine how Duterte's war on drugs and the treatment of the press violate one's human's rights. Students will reflect and address their perspectives on one of these two ideas.

Objective: By the end of the activity, students will understand Ressa's stance on journalistic ethics which dictate her actions.

Procedure: Students will watch the PBS/Frontline documentary *A Thousand Cuts* featuring Maria Ressa, read the article "Opinion: Journalists Face Escalating Violence Online. We Should Know" by Maria Ressa and Julie Posetti and review the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Following their viewing and completing their readings, students will generate a position regarding the core issue of human rights as expressed in these pieces.

Assessment: Students will write an essay that addresses one of two perspectives concerning human rights:

1. How Duterte's War on Drugs is a human rights violation or
2. How freedom of the press in the democratic country, is being attacked? How can they heal from the "thousand cuts" inflicted on its democracy and the presentation accurate information by journalists such as Maria Ressa?

Resources and references used in the creation of the module (e.g., books, articles, etc.)

Articles

Curato, Nicole, Jonathan Corpus Ong, and Rosa Tapsell. "The Changing Face of Fake News." *New Mandala*, 9 Aug. 2019,

<https://www.newmandala.org/disinformation/>

Data. *Committee to Protect Journalists*. Accessed 9 Feb. 2022.

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/1/22/how-asian-leaders-are-riding-the-fake-news-mantra>

"Independent Broadcaster ABS-CBN Shut Down by Philippine Government in 'Crushing Blow' to Press Freedom." *ABC News*, 5 May 2020,

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-06/philippines-news-outlet-closure-abs-cbn-duterte/12218416>

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"New Naratif under Attack." *New Naratif*, 2022, <https://newnaratif.com/new-naratif-under-attack/>

Quackenbush, Casey, et al. "Press Freedom Is under Attack across Southeast Asia. Meet the Journalists Fighting Back." *Time*, 21 June 2018,

<https://time.com/longform/press-freedom-southeast-asia/?jwsourc=cl>

Ressa, Maria. "Fighting the Virus of Lies." *Rappler*, 3 May 2021, <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/opinion-maria-ressa-unesco-world-press-freedom-prize-speech/>

Ressa, Maria and Julie Posetti. "Opinion: Woman Journalists Face Escalating Violence Online. We Should Know." *The Washington Post*, 3 May 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/05/03/maria-ressa-press-freedom-julie-posetti/>

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"Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Peace, Dignity, and Equality on a Healthy Planet, *United Nations*, Accessed 24, Nov. 2021, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

Vick, Karl. "The Guardians and the War on Truth." *Time*, Dec. 2018, <https://time.com/person-of-the-year-2018-the-guardians/>

Videos

A Thousand Cuts. Directed by Ramona S. Diaz, Frontline/PBS, 8 Jan. 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/a-thousand-cuts/>

"Journalism and Human Rights: Fighting Back against Disinformation." *YouTube*, uploaded by Yale University, Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, 2 Mar. 2020, <https://youtu.be/wbeHbUSPliE>