



**BERJAYA SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA ARTS**

**FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS**

**FINAL ASSESSMENT**

Course Code & Name : **COM2123 PROPAGANDA & PUBLIC OPINION**  
Semester & Year : January - April 2020  
Lecturer/Examiner : Ms Amalina Mustaffa  
Start of Exam & Time : 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020 / 10.00 am  
End of Exam & Time : 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020 / 10.00 am

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE EXAM**

This take-home exam will require you to answer all **2 (TWO)** questions below. Your answer must be clear and concise, must not exceed a maximum of 1000 words using 1.5 spaced. Reference is not needed for this take home test. In order to facilitate blind grading of the exams, do not put your name anywhere on your exam paper. Instead, you should put your student ID number in the upper left hand corner.

Note that this exam is to be completed independently, without discussion with other students or individuals. Please limit your sources and references to class and tutorial materials only (i.e. anything that has appeared on lecture slides, discussions during lecture, or in the weekly readings/ tutorial videos only).

## **GRADING GUIDELINES**

Below are grading guidelines used to assess the short essays. These do not comprise a formal rubric. Rather, these are core essay elements that the examiner will keep in mind when grading the essays.

### **1. Technical elements**

**a. Clarity of writing:** Well-developed essays are clear and can be followed with ease. Students use an appropriate level of technical language.

**b. Mechanics & formatting:** Well-developed essays have no (or minimal) errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. They conform to the guidelines laid out in the assignment instructions (i.e. word counts etc.).

### **2. Substantive elements**

a. Well-developed essays have a well-articulated statement that is relevant to the assignment (for example, the answer to the question is stated unambiguously).

b. Well-developed essays build a logical and relevant argument. Students use supporting evidence from the readings to support key assertions in their argument.

c. Well-developed essays present original, measured, concrete, and compelling ideas. They make accurate use of supporting and/or course materials and ideas. They integrate and synthesize information across lectures. They show good understanding of concepts and correct use of terminology and necessary elaboration.

**Question 1:**

Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.E) was particularly adept at using sophisticated propaganda techniques throughout his rise to power and during his move to assert totalitarian power. Initially, he used stories of his military exploits abroad, combined with actual terror tactics at home, to put fear into the populace. One prime communication channel for conveying these messages was coins; they were widely used to boast of victories or to show the emperors in various guises such as warlord, god, or protector of the empire. Coins were the one social document that the Romans were certain would be seen by the widest possible range of subjects under their control. He deliberately picked fights with various Gallic tribes, whom he could easily defeat, and then sent home serialized accounts of his exploits ghosted for him by a semiprofessional writer, Gaius Oppius. Caesar’s book, *Gallic Wars*, has been called “the most potent propaganda ever written” (Thomson, 1999, p. 107). (A)

Caesar also made maximum use of the spectacle, spending lavishly on massive triumphal processions—more than four processions in a month at one point—each representing a victory in the civil war and each different from the other. The cumulative effect of all this pomp and show of power helped create an atmosphere that enhanced Julius Caesar’s reputation and seemed to justify his careful hints that he was descended from the goddess Venus. It was no accident that he chose the phrase “I came, I saw, I conquered,” which in Latin is reduced to the alliterating and rhyming words *Veni, Vidi, Vici*. (B)

Julius Caesar was a master propagandist, equaled only by Napoleon and Hitler in his understanding of meaningful symbols and in his ability to understand instinctively the psychological needs of his audience. He understood the need to use such symbols of power and sophistication as a means of converting subject populations to the Roman way of life. This was far less expensive than maintaining elaborate garrisons of legionnaires and induced obedience to the new regime through cooperation and identification, rather than subjugation. Significantly, subject peoples were often granted the right to become Roman citizens under certain circumstances, thus increasing personal identification with the conqueror. (C)

Caesar created his own legends out of ordinary events, and by making himself seem supernatural, he was able to set in motion the psychological changes in the minds of the Roman people that would lead away from republicanism and toward the acceptance of monarchical rule and the imperial goals. It is not surprising that, throughout history, evocations of the Caesarist image have been repeated by those who aspire to leave their mark on the world. Thus, not only Charlemagne, Napoleon, Mussolini, and Hitler have invested themselves in Caesarist trappings, but so has almost every parvenu monarchy in Europe. Whether the image of the imperial eagle, the armored breastplate, the man-god on the white horse, or the powerful orator, the propagandistic legacy of the Roman Empire is still much in evidence in our own world. (D)

The passage above is heavily wrapped around various ways scholars have defined and explained propaganda. As a researcher, you are asked to address the definitions that can be found in the passage. Consider providing a clear and concise explanation to the definitions and technical words used when

attempting all questions (i.e., the definition can be taken from the lecture slides). However always use your own words to further explain the definition.

- a. Which of the paragraphs can be referred to propaganda as news management and spin?
- b. Why is propaganda also commonly defined as organized persuasion? Pick one paragraph that objectively relate to that and explain why.
- c. Which of the paragraphs are suitable to illustrate how Julius Caesar shaped the perceptions of his audience?

Include the following in your answer:

- i. Definitions that are related to each question.
- ii. Sentences/Instances in the paragraphs that can be used as examples/evidence for each question.
- iii. Reasons to support your answer.

## Question 2:

Propaganda is often used in psychological warfare. We have spent some time in class discussing a historical period watching a documentary called The Malayan Emergency (available on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJy6aG45CvE&t=1330s>) when the British, while occupying Malaya used propaganda in the attempt of combatting the communists before 1957. For example, in 1948, the first identity card was issued during the emergency. The 1948 Regulations were later expanded through the Emergency Ordinance 1948. The National Register of Malayan was introduced by the British to tackle a group of Malayan communists called *Min Yuen*. The people of Malaya aged 12 and above were persuaded to register themselves and would be given an identity card with their picture and thumb print on it; those without an identity card would become an instant suspect. However, the *Min Yuen* fought back by killing the team of civil servants who worked for the Malayan National Registration. We also noted in class that a successful propagandist is able to discern the basic beliefs, needs or fear of the audience and to play upon those.

How would you describe the above propaganda? Your argument must address the following:

- a. Demonstrate one form of propaganda used by the British in the passage.
- b. Illustrate **FIVE(5)** responses to the British persuasion on this event.
- c. Apply one propaganda model to illustrate the work of *Min Yuen*.
- d. How would you describe the underlined sentence in your argument?