Course Syllabus

Cultural diplomacy and cultural boycott

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Course description

Public and cultural diplomacy are phenomena of increasing importance in contemporary international politics where symbolic topics, and non-state actors framing them, play major role. In general, public and cultural diplomacy are considered tools of “soft power”, a seemingly nonconflictual ground of cultivation of understanding through information and shared experience. However, the reality is more complex and mechanisms shaping the outcome of public and cultural diplomacy are very diverse. The impact of cultural diplomacy can be analyzed only through careful examination of motivations of each of the actors engaged in the process. The same is valid for cultural boycotts. This course deals with dynamics of promoting and inhibiting flows of culture in international relations, and motivations of a multitude of actors behind them.

Method of Instruction

Before each lecture, the participants are presented with a short text by the instructor presenting key concepts related to the week’s topic. Additional 2 academic papers on the matter will be provided. During the course, participants will choose 2 topics and write 2 short papers responding to instructor’s question while using data and arguments from the readings.

The course is concluded by an oral interview of each student with the tutor, examining the gained knowledge with focus on 3 topics selected by the student.

Course Objectives

- accumulate in-depth knowledge of the role of arts and culture in international relations
- learn about cultural boycotts of 20th and 21st century
- enhance independent thinking and ability to formulate arguments based on solid evidence
- appropriate academic writing skills

Course topics
1: Arts and culture in international relations – basic concepts


2: Arts and culture in international relations as bridgebuilders


3: Arts, culture, and conflict in international relations


4: Propaganda and censorship


5: National identity and cultural diplomacy – the case of Israel


**6: The battle over framing – cultural diplomacy and cultural boycotts**


**7: Citizens diplomacy and boycotts as transnational movements**


**8 and 9: What is the difference? Motivations, strategies, and goals of cultural boycotts – Israel vs. South Africa**

L. J. Haricome. Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies to Study the Effects of an Academic Boycott on Academics in South Africa. *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 63(4), 508-527.


