

## Lesson Plan for WW1 Poster Analysis

- 1) If you have never short introduction to propaganda:

*Origin: congregatio de propaganda fide (congregation for propagation of the faith), title of a committee of Roman Catholic cardinals responsible for foreign missions, which was founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV. In the early 20th century „propaganda“ was used to refer to information or the distribution of information that was used to promote a particular political cause or point of view.*

*(source: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/propaganda>)*

- 2) *(I usually discuss the following points with students, first I let them brainstorm for a bit and then we discuss the individual aspects and I write them on the blackboard)*

Propaganda posters are always based on a specific context, including (but not limited to) values, (racial, class, cultural) stereotypes, ideology, conceptualisation of history, gender roles, enemy images which contrast with self-perception, political issues, social problems etc.

→ propaganda posters contain information about a specific culture/nation/society/group

→ in order to understand the wealth of information that is conveyed in a propaganda poster, we need to know as much as possible about the context in which it was made and used, i.e. not only the cultural context like values, beliefs, stereotypes, prominent slogans, speeches, debates and dominant discourses but also who created the poster or ordered it to be created (government, political party, etc.), when the poster was made, why it was made, where was it used, who was supposed to see it, its intended message, what reaction it was supposed to trigger in the audience...

- 3) Have the students discuss all the questions they should try to answer about their poster (write it on the blackboard so that the students can look at the points during the poster analysis). These can include (but are not limited to):

- What's the message of the poster?
- How does the poster speak to the audience? (what reaction is it supposed to trigger?)
- What was the social, economic, political and cultural background of the target audience?
- How does it relate to the historical context? (social, economic, political and cultural context in which poster was used)
- What colours are used? (how do they influence perception, what is highlighted, what is dark, are colours used symbolically, i.e. red for socialism, yellow for Japan...)
- What symbols are used? (allegories, stereotypes, national/class/religious symbols...)
- What slogans are used? (which words are highlighted, are these parts of popular slogans or speeches...)
- How are heroes and villains portrayed? (who is the hero, why is he the hero, what are heroic attributes according to the poster)
- How are gender roles portrayed?
- Are enemies dehumanised in the poster? How is that done?
- What people are portrayed? (are there famous people like politicians, members of a political party or followers of an ideology, stereotypical portrayals, ...)
- What is not shown? Why? (what information is left out/ignored)
- Usage (where, when, how), artist, audience, content (symbols, references, colour, concepts, descriptions, stereotypes), production process
- What was the intended effect?

- 3) Have groups select posters from <http://www.ww1propaganda.com> and let them analyse one poster in detail in groups or pairs (if the students have no access to a laptop, you can also print out posters from the website and give them to the students). Have them email you their picture (or upload it onto a shared server).

- 4) Have each group present their analysis while the rest of the class can see the poster. Always let other students voice their ideas and contribute to discussion once the group has finished with their analysis.