



UKRAINE INVASION

CONNECTIONS TO THE COURSE

The invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces is a catastrophic event that will massively impact how we view and understand the world. Journalism (related to **human sciences**) is the first draft of **history**, so which media sources will form the basis of our future knowledge, and which ones will be dismissed as peddling fake news? How can we ensure that individual **knowers** are accessing the truth about what's going on? How is **technology** being used to provide both reliable and misleading information - and how do we avoid being manipulated by the latter? How do **political** perspectives shape the way we understand events?

RELATED KEY CONCEPTS

Does the invasion support the old adage that “the first casualty of war is **truth**”? How are opposing sides using **evidence** differently - or simply concealing it? How do **power** structures interfere with the way events are **explained** and **justified**?

INVESTIGATING THIS ISSUE VIA MEDIA SOURCES

A [BBC](#) article, looking at the very different version of the Ukrainian invasion being broadcast on Russian state TV. The historian EH Carr once said, ‘Study the historian before you study the facts’. If we apply this to Russian state TV - and look at the source of the information, before we even consider what they are saying - what insights do we gain? How does power corrupt our ability to tell the truth? Is ‘independent reporting’ always more reliable? How important is it to have an objective understanding of historical context in order to understand contemporary events? Can the truth exist in societies where the media is subject to oppression and fear? *Key terms: Fake, Manipulations, Emotive language, True information, Independent reporting*



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A [History Today](#) article, looking at how the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is as much about the past as it is about the present. What does the article reveal about the close relationship between the two countries, and does that help clarify what's going on? How far back do we need to go to understand a conflict? Does history only ever serve as a way of justifying contemporary agendas and points-of-view, or can it be used to provide an objective view of the present? Finally, what does Emerson mean when he says, "history can be a kind of territory" - and how does this relate to both the current crisis, and other conflicts going on around the world? **Key terms:** *Perceptions of history, Gospel truth, Historical perspective, Narrative, Contested, Justify, Emotional resonance, Legitimacy*

A [Vox](#) podcast and article, considering whether Putin will be able to continue manufacturing reality as the loss of life in the Ukraine caused by his invasion mounts. This is a great interview with Peter Pomerantsev, dealing with some very deep psychological issues related to the nature of power. If you can, listen to the podcast for a fuller account of the discussion. First of all, what is 'strategic ambiguity', and how effective is it as a method of controlling information? How does the concept of a 'grievance narrative' help us to understand what's going on? Finally, the article identifies 'true power' - what is this, and what are its implications in terms of our ability to access the truth? **Key terms:** *Manufacture reality, Grievance narrative, Strategic ambiguity, Propaganda, Confuse and disorient, True power*

A [Telegraph](#) article, looking at how 'false flag' operations have been created in the current Ukraine Crisis. How has the footage of 'false-flag' operations been debunked? Who is the intended audience of the film clips, and why are they likely to be duped? How (/should) can we remain balanced and objective when it comes to the kind of event now affecting Europe and the world? See also the [Guardian's](#) coverage of this story (for once, these two diametrically opposed media sources seem in agreement!). **Key terms:** *Propaganda, Disinformation, Metadata, Debunked*



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An [Atlantic](#) article, which looks at the way in which the invasion has revealed that many of our political and historical assumptions about Europe and the world were completely misguided and inaccurate. Anne Applebaum is a highly respected journalist and historian, and here offers us a clear analysis of the paradigm shift in Europe as a result of the invasion. How has it changed the way Europeans see themselves, and the political structures that hold them together? In what way has a dissonance between academic realities and actual realities been revealed? How do political crises change our 'collective imagination' about ourselves? What does this event highlight about where we should seek out our information about the world? *Key terms: Assumptions, Shifts, Illusions, Definition of itself, Collective imagination, Alternative information*

A [Wired](#) article, looking at the use of TikTok during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. How does the article summarize the essential characteristics of each big social media platform - and what are the implications of each of these in terms of their ability to provide us with information about the Russian invasion? Why has TikTok become such a popular platform by people sharing accounts of what's going on? What are the pros and cons of relying on the platform to find out the truth - consider the comparative rate at which fake and reliable news travels on social media? How has TikTok tried to ensure it conveys objective information, and how successful has it been? Why does scale present problems for social media platforms such as TikTok? *Key terms Visual, Instant, Firehose, Fact-checking, Distorted news, Collectively, Weaponized*