

COURSE TITLE: FINDING TRUTH: Beyond Fake News and Media Bias

WA CLOCK HRS: 50

NO. OF CREDITS: 5 QUARTER CREDITS
[semester equivalent = 3.33 credits]

OREGON PDUs: 50

PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48: 50

INSTRUCTOR: Corey Davis
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

It's harder than ever to know where the truth can be found today in public media. Since the 2016 presidential election in the United States, both the political as well as social polarization in America has sunk to new lows. While this reflects historic social, political and ideational differences, the widening gulf in media reporting, including fake news, is a main contributor to the breakdown in finding the "truth" as bias pushes narratives on different sides further apart, each side claiming fact-based truth. Common ground and bipartisanship is all but lost. In this course for secondary teachers we will explore fake news and bias in all media platforms and its effects on public attitudes and actions. Participants will develop the tools, skills, and strategies to help students be able to break through the barriers of disinformation to find the truth within the agendas being pushed by governmental, and outside powers of influence. Our text, Fact vs. Fiction: Teaching Critical Thinking Skills in the Age of Fake News, is \$24 on amazon.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

- Explored the complexities of fake news in the 21st Century
- Developed an understanding of propaganda techniques used in media
- Explored the complexities of government use of media to control citizens
- Developed a skill set to guide students through the world of social media
- Learned how to educate students in media literacy

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

HOURS EARNED:

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION

REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%

CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

REQUIRED TEXT

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MATERIALS FEE

None.

ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

Assignment #1: COURSE FORUM: Introduction

Read the Introduction of Fact Vs. Fiction, and Chapter 1. Answer the questions at the end of the sections in the book. As you work through Fact Vs. Fiction, complete all interactions throughout the book, and at the end of each chapter. In 200+ words, discuss why you have decided to take this course. What are you hoping to obtain by the end of the course?

Assignment #2: Education and Role of Media Literacy

Read the article below, and respond to the following: How important is media to education in the 21st Century? What did John Dewey feel about media's role in education? What are the problems with using media in the classroom? Could social media be a valid source of information and, if so, how? Respond to at least one post in the forum. (450-500 words).

[Education and Role of Media in Education](#)

Assignment #3: Thinking Exponentially

Read Chapters 2&3, and in 500+ words respond to the following:

- What are the issues with confirmation bias as explained by Peter Watson?
- How did historical figures "strike when the iron is hot", and why is this important for consumers of information to understand?
- Why is it dangerous to deem all news as fake, so nothing is true?
- Discuss the importance of social media access to marginalized students through an equity lens.
- If there isn't equitable access to information, how does that challenge the idea of democracy, and what can be done about this?
- What strategies, or concepts can you implement in your class to better serve students in deciphering information in the 21st Century?
- Respond to at least one post in the forum

Assignment #4: The Propaganda Model

Read the article below, and respond to the following: What are the five news “filters” that make up the Propaganda Model? Which of these “filters” do you find most relevant, or important, and why? With the government and large corporations controlling what media is presented to citizens, how are we able to become informed when what is being shown can lead to citizens being misinformed? How applicable is the Propaganda Model in the 21st Century, and does it hold true? How does the Propaganda Model expand on the information you’ve covered in Fact Vs. Fiction? (500+ word response). Respond to at least one post in the forum.



[The Propaganda Model](#)

Assignment #5: How Do We Evaluate Information?

Read Chapter 4, as well as the article below. Answer the following in 450-500 words. What is the importance of researching the information obtained from media outlets? In what ways can we educate students in deciphering information as fact vs. opinion using social media? What tools can be used in the classroom to help students evaluate information from multiple sources?

[How Do We Evaluate Information?](#)

Assignment #6: How Real is Fake News?

Read, and complete the self-assessment in CH 5, and watch the video below, and use the following questions to guide you through your response in 500+ words.

- What role has the internet and social media played in our understanding of information?
- Give examples of how major companies and corporations such as Google and Facebook use their powers against citizens that they are meant to connect with?
- What are ways that we can prevent ourselves from falling into the trap of fake news?
- How can we live functional lives when we are being told how to function and think?
- What is the importance of being able to distinguish facts and opinions?
- How do our own biases influence the perceived credibility of what we view?
- Discuss the role of experts, and their importance to the world of information
- How did your self-assessment results from Chapter 5 compare to Dan Bellack’s TED Talk on fake news?
- Respond to at least one post in the forum.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/Xla2SFcGoZM?autoplay=1&controls=1&showinfo=0>

Assignment #7: News Reflection

Read Chapter 6. Watch the multiple major news stations (CNN, Fox, MSNBC, etc.) for a couple of days. Keep a log of what stories are being presented, whether they appear across all stations or not, and if there is an agenda of some sort involved. In 500+ words provide several examples of what you feel is accurate, factual reporting and others that are biased in one way or another. What features and signals indicate the use of an agenda? Did you find your own biases determining what information you felt was more factual than others? Respond to at least one post in the forum.

Assignment #8: Movie Review

Read Chapters 7 & 8, then pick a film from the bibliography. In 500+ words write a review of the film using the reading and the following questions to guide you.

- How does being able to control the narrative give certain groups power over the hearts and minds of citizens?
- What is the difficulty in questioning the narrative when the majority fall in line with it?
- Why is it so difficult for us to detect governmental, or outside influences in media?
- Why might we be more impacted by cinema than we are when it comes to mainstream media sources?
- Respond to at least one post in the forum.

Assignment #9: Cold War 2.0

Watch the episode of VICE on the current climate of the Cold War. In a 200-500 words respond to the following questions:

- How do governments use events to push their agenda(s) through media outlets?
- What is the significance of the Ukraine in the conflict between the United States and Russia through the lens of organized media outlets?
- Give examples of how the rhetoric used in both countries contribute to the relations
- between these two powers, and act as a way to promote citizen support for their government's position.
- Respond to one other post in the forum

Assignment #10: Wag the Dog

Read the article below, and in 450-500 words answer the following.

- Discuss the relevance of this article to what you have read in Chapter 3 on the use of propaganda, disinformation, and bias challenging
- In what ways does this article bring relevance to the Propaganda Model discussed in assignment #4?
- Give examples of where governmental reach over its citizens was pushed back in the USA in the last 30 years.
- Can you think of other examples through your life where our government, or others, have "wagged the dog"?
- Respond to at least one post in the forum.

[Wag the Dog](#)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

Assignment #11: Lesson Development (400 & 500 levels)

Complete **two** (2) of the following assignments:

Option A)

Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.

- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- In 500+ words, discuss what worked well, and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson. (The following is encouraged but not required):
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library located at <https://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>

AND/OR

Option B) Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)

- In 500+ words, discuss any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students. (The following is encouraged but not required):
- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog <https://www.hol.edu/blog> prior to writing your article.
- Please email a copy to Renee Leon (renee@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist.
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Subject line to read: (Course Name, Blog)

AND/OR

Option C)

Create an annotated bibliography focused on the topics learned in this class.

Assignment #12: (500 Level ONLY)

In addition to the 400 level assignment, choose **two** (2) of the following:

Option A)

Choose another book from the bibliography, and complete a 500+ word summary.

AND/OR

Option B)

Create a PowerPoint presentation for your staff, based on this course that focuses on perspectives or strategies you feel would be beneficial to your school. Save this as a PDF.

AND/OR

Option C)

Another assignment of your own design, with the instructor's prior approval.

C. INTEGRATION PAPER

Assignment #13: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER

(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
 2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
 3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
 4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
 5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?
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INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

COREY DAVIS, M.A.T., received his AA from Mt. Hood Community College, his BA from Wright State University, and his MAT from Concordia University. Corey has experience teaching Social Studies, specifically U.S. History and AP Human Geography at the high school level. He has served as an assistant baseball coach at his high school for the past 5 years, served on the AVID site team, and Equal Opportunity Schools site team as well. He has taken many of his continuing education courses through the Heritage Institute and is eager to help pay it forward.

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