

FAKE NEWS & MISINFORMATION

Course Schedule: Monday to Friday (5 days / 40 hours)

Course Overview:

The COVID-19 pandemic situation highlighted the problem of fake and misleading news sources, especially within the context of online social networks. While using misinformation strategically is not new to social and political discourse, the complexity of the Internet media environment has increased the difficulty of evaluating information quality. This course will examine the phenomenon of “fake news” from sociological and historical perspectives, and will explore analytical strategies for evaluating and verifying media sources.

Course Goals:

Upon successful completion of this course, trainees will be able to:

- Identify sources of false or misleading information on a variety of media platforms
- Evaluate news and other information outlets for bias
- Verify information claims using online tools
- Describe how news items are created and disseminated across different types of media and social networks

Reflective Writing Assignments

Each day, the instructor will pose a question related to the course materials assigned. Trainees will discuss it in groups and prepare a short response, which will be discussed during the workshops [afternoons] to help direct and focus the course discussions. Trainees should also include any questions they have about the daily’s reading in these responses.

Attendance

This class is conducted in a workshop format and contains a large discussion component. Attendance and participation is therefore critical to success in the course. Attendance will be taken at each class.

Final work

The final paper will ask you to identify a potentially false news story, attempt to verify or disprove its content, and to trace its publication history. The final paper will be approximately 3 pages - Microsoft Word - Calibri font - 11 point font size - and is due on the last day of the course. Full details will be explained during the first meeting.

Course Outline:

All course readings and materials are given during the first meeting. Please see the daily modules for required readings and assignments.

The general course outline is as follows. However, this schedule may be modified to fit changing needs of the class or to address other topics of interest.



Day 1: Information Evaluation Skills & Practices
Day 2: Misinformation Outlets and the “Fake News Cycle”
Day 3: Social Media & the Misinformation Ecosystem
Day 4: Information Verification Strategies
Day 5: Engaged Digital Citizenship & Final Projects

08:00 – 12:00 Lectures

13:00 – 17:00 Workshops