FYS 019: Fake News and Its Impact On Society

First-Year Seminar 019
CRN 6964
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Course objectives
Every first-year student at Drake University takes a First-Year Seminar (FYS). This course helps to serve as your introduction to college-level academic work. Each FYS has its own theme, which serves as the focus of the reading and writing assignments. This seminar will explore different forms of fake or satirical news and its impact on society. Specifically, we will aim to explore times that fake or satirical news influenced some sort of change in society. Each student will focus on a topic that interest them, then explore that topic in the realm of fake or satirical news.

The objectives for this course are to:
• Sharpen your written and verbal communication skills
• Practice critical thinking and apply toward review of fake or satirical news
• Acquire, analyze, interpret, and integrate information related to themes of fake or satirical news and its impact on society.

Required readings
The Stewart/Colbert Effect: Essays on the Real Impacts of Fake News by Amarnath Amarisingam

The Onion and Philosophy: Fake News Story True, Alleges Indignant Area Professor (Popular Culture and Philosophy) by Sharon M. Kaye

How to contact me
I am staff at Drake University, therefore I won’t have traditional office hours. The best way to reach me is by email, which I monitor throughout the day and night. I won’t have set office hours, but I am available to meet and discuss the class with students as needed. Occasionally, I will need to contact you about a class-related activity or a change in schedule, so please check your Drake e-mail regularly. If we need to meet then we may have a Google chat or hangout.

Writing Assignments
Each FYS is to provide a writing-intensive experience for new Drake students, with written assignments totaling at least 20 pages in length. There are four major writing assignments, including the final paper, in this course, as well as some shorter exercises.
Your papers should be neatly typed, double-spaced, with standard margins and font types/sizes. Each instructor is different, but I prefer that you submit your assignments to me electronically before the start of class.

Research
This semester, we will have a research librarian from Cowles Library visit our classroom. He or she will introduce you to the references and resources available in the library and online via the Cowles website. We will also have a resource scavenger hunt assignment later in the semester, which will take place in the library. You will be expected to do supplemental research in an individual session at the library to enhance the arguments in your essays.

Writing Workshop
If you want additional help outside of class, or if you wish to strengthen your skills, I strongly encourage you to make an appointment for a tutoring session at the Writing Workshop in Howard Hall. Please consult this website for scheduling information: http://artsci.drake.edu/writersworkshop/wwshop.html

Participation
Three components will make up your participation grade. The points you can earn for participation is the point equivalent of one paper. This requires not only that you come to class, but that you participate. Additionally, all non-graded assignments will factor into your participation grade.

Class discussion
This course heavily relies on classroom discussion. This shouldn’t scare you – discussing fake news will be fun! This course is not a lecture course and requires class discussion from every student in order for you to learn. With each assigned reading, please take notes on what you get out of the reading. Write down all questions you have that will be useful for discussion. We will have in-class activities throughout the semester that will require participation. The class discussion part of your participation grade will be based on active, insightful participation in class discussions and activities.

Campus involvement
Part of your participation grade this semester will require you to attend two events on campus this semester. Part of being an engaged citizen (who knows the difference between “real” and “fake” news) means staying informed. I strongly encourage that one of these events be the Bucksbaum Lecture on October 27 at 7 p.m. in the Knapp Center. The speaker is Peter Neufeld, who is the co-founder of The Innocence Project, which seeks to exonerate wrongly convicted inmates through DNA testing. If you cannot attend this event, please choose another on campus. I have started a discussion thread on Blackboard listing events on campus that are appropriate options. If you question whether or not an event qualifies, just ask me.

Your proof to me that you attended these events will be a one-page, double-spaced reflection on the event and what impact it had on you, on Drake University, and on society.
One page is a very small space to have such a broad conversation. This will teach you how to develop an “elevator speech” on a topic or issue. How will you know if the event is worth attending? Ask yourself if you will be able to speak to what impact this event had.

Social media
Are you on Twitter? Facebook? Access to these social media platforms will be essential to researching fake news articles and their impact. We will use #FYS19 to share fake news articles on Twitter. You be required to tweet once a week as part of your participation grade. If you’re not on Twitter you can set up a private account and send me screenshots or drafts of tweets each week.

You will have an opportunity to assess your participation grade at mid-term.

Grading
Attendance, in-class participation, and prompt submission of your assignments will factor into your final grade. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis, in the event of a personal emergency or similar situation.

Paper #1: 15%
Paper #2: 15%
Paper #3: 15%
Final Paper: 30%
Fake news scavenger hunt: 10%
Class Participation: 15%

Plagiarism
Drake University does not tolerate plagiarism, and plagiarism in this class may result in a variety of penalties: a grade of "0" on the assignment in question, failure of the entire course, or even suspension or expulsion from the university. (Please see the Arts and Sciences Handbook or the Drake Student Handbook for more information.)

Accommodations
If you have a disability and will require academic accommodations in this course, I would be happy to discuss your needs. Accommodations are coordinated through Student Disability Services. Please contact Michelle Laughlin, Director of Student Disability Services, at 281-1835 or michelle.laughlin@drake.edu.

Semester schedule and assignments
Please note that because of speakers, campus activities, and the unpredictable world of news, this schedule is subject to change. All graded assignments will still be due at some point. If there are any changes to the syllabus they will be clearly communicated.

Submit assignments electronically on Blackboard. We will strive to use as little paper in this class as possible. I will return assignments as a PDF with comments. I will post assignments on Blackboard as they are assigned. By the time you come to class, the assignments noted on each date should be completed.
**Week 1**
Sept. 1 - Questionnaire on Blackboard.
Sept. 3 – Qualtrics survey.
-Bring a fake news article to class, or post on Twitter.

**Week 2**
Sept. 8 – Visit to Cowles Library
-Reflection paper due
Sept. 10 – No class. Reflection papers will be returned to you with comments

**Week 3**
Sept. 15-Paper #1 draft due.
-Read through chapter 6 in *Onion* book
Sept. 17 – Discuss papers in class.

**Week 4**
Sept 22 – Final draft of Paper #1 due.
-Read chapters 7-9 in *Onion* book
Sept. 24 – Read *War of the Worlds* excerpt on e-reserve at Cowles library.

**Week 5**
Sept. 29 – Read chapters 10-14 of *Onion* book
Oct. 1 – First draft of paper #2 due.
-Read chapters 15-16 of *Onion* book

**Week 6**
Oct. 6 – Read chapters 17-19 of *Onion* book
Oct. 8. – Read chapters 20-22 of *Onion* book
-Onion postcards
-Idiocracy

**Week 7**
Oct. 13 – Final draft of paper #2 due
-Read through page 46 of *Stewart/Colbert*
Oct. 15 -Read pages 47-78 of *Stewart/Colbert*

**Week 8**
Oct. 20 – No class. Fall Break.
Oct. 22-Read pages 79-116 of *Stewart/Colbert*

**Week 9**
Oct. 27 – Read pages 117-148 of *Stewart/Colbert*
- Bucksbaum Lecture. 7 p.m. in Knapp Center.
Oct. 29 - Read pages 149-192 of *Stewart/Colbert*

**Week 10**
Nov. 3 - First draft of paper #3 due
Nov. 5 – Discuss topics for final paper.

**Week 11**
Nov. 10 –Fake or satirical news scavenger hunt.
Nov. 12 – No class. Work on paper #3

**Week 12**
Nov. 17 – Final draft of paper #3 due
Nov. 19 – Service project?

**Week 13**
Nov. 24 – First draft of final paper due
Nov. 26 – No class – Thanksgiving Break

**Week 14**
Dec. 1 – Review final papers in class
Dec. 3 – Workshop papers

**Week 15**
Dec. 8 – Workshop papers
Dec. 10 – Course evaluations. Review final papers.

**December 14: Final paper due before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14.**
Brief description of assignments
Please note that the full descriptions will be available in the “Assignments” section of Blackboard, made available throughout the semester.

Reflection Paper
Write in two pages or less your experiences with fake or satirical news thus far in your life.

Paper #1
Reflect on fake or satirical news articles from two different sources on the same topic. Identify why this satire appealed to you, how other audiences identified with the article, and what impact it had on society if any.

Paper #2
Write your own fake or satirical news article on a timely topic (a current event within the past 3 months).

Paper #3
Review a time fake or satirical news influenced some sort of change in society.

Paper #4
Define what you think is the impact of fake or satirical news on society, citing examples of times satire has influenced change in society.