INLS 690: Misinformation and Society
Mondays 2:30pm – 5:15pm
Manning 208

Professor: Francesca Tripodi, PhD (she/her/hers)
Office: Manning 202
Office Hours: Wednesdays 8:30 – 11:30am
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If you are having trouble learning for any reason, please come and see me or the Dean of Students.

Course Description
How do we know what we think we know? This course will examine the concept of mis-dis-mal-information over time - what it is, when it occurs, and how ideas of "truth" and "facts" are connected to the social construction of knowledge more generally. Readings and assignments will consider the sociotechnical dimensions of misinformation, examining how/why false narratives are created, believed, shared, and used for political gain. Finally, we will study the democratic implications of problematic content with an emphasis on understanding the ideological nature of falsehoods. Through a contextualization of misinformation, we will work toward proposing possible solutions for how we might fix or combat an ever-present and evolving problem.

Course Objectives - By the end of this course you will be able to:
1. Understanding existing academic contributions in the field of media manipulation – key authors, central arguments, gaps in the literature.
2. Interpret, analyze, and critique academic and journalistic arguments related to misinformation.
3. Identify and differentiate between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation.
4. Build a comprehensive misinformation campaign.
5. Design a resource guide aimed a curbing the spread of misinformation.

Class engagement & expectations
On the first day of class, we will set our classroom expectations as a community. You will need a computer and an internet connection capable for Zoom should we need to meet remotely. Most of this class hinges on your weekly participation in classroom discussion, reading posts, and reading responses. I do not assign a text to help with costs and all materials are organized for you in Sakai – in turn, I expect you to do the reading and come prepared. You are expected to attend class – more than one *unexcused* absences will result in a LP, if you miss more than two classes you will fail the course.

Evaluation
The most frequent grade for graduate classes is P (Pass). P represents work and effort that meets all stated requirements. "H" grades are reserved for exceptional work and are very rare. There are 180 total points available across all course assignments. Course grade ranges are as follows based on UNC Registrar policy for graduate-level courses:

      H (Exceptional work that goes beyond the expectations for the course): 171-180points
      P (Work that meets all expectations of the course at an acceptable level): 144-170points
      L (Work that represents substandard performance in significant ways): 126-143points
      F (Deficient performance unworthy of graduate credit): <126 points

At the graduate level, grades are superfluous. The point of coursework is to learn and cultivate professional relationships. I do not "round up," change, or justify final grades – please don't ask.

Student Support
Please utilize me as a resource if you are having difficulty with the material or there are outside circumstances impeding your ability to learn. **You should also know that I am a mandatory reporter if you choose to confide in me**.

Mental Health: CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go

to their website: https://caps.unc.edu/ or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. *(source: Student Safety and Wellness Proposal for EPC, Sep 2018)*

Accommodations: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: https://ars.unc.edu or email ars@unc.edu.

Title IX: Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

Diversity & Inclusion
My intention as an educator is to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all learners. I work hard to include course materials and activities that promote diversity but SILS (and most disciplines in the academy) were founded by those from a privileged background. As a cisgender, straight, white, able-bodied woman, my standpoint may exclude important points of view. It is also possible that I will make unintentional mistakes. If this happens, please come and speak to me directly. I promise to acknowledge your concerns as valid and learn from critiques. Likewise, I'm always looking for new scholarship by women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and non-Western thinkers – please share resources you think would be useful. Suggestions and improvements are encouraged and appreciated.

Email Policy
It's very difficult to explain course material via email. If you need help with course content or assignments, the first step is to come to office hours (Wednesdays from 8:30 – 11:30). Unless you have an emergency that requires immediate assistance, I request that students only e-mail me to set up 1:1 meetings outside of office hours (via Zoom). I also love emails that share interesting information (videos, news as it relates to class) or if you have a concern you think I should know about. In-person office hours are reserved for vaccinated students and masks are required. If you are not comfortable meeting in person or choose not to vaccinate, I'm happy to meet via Zoom.

Academic Honesty
Academic honesty and trustworthiness are important to all of us as individuals and are encouraged and promoted by the honor system. More information is available at http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html. The web site identified above contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. We encourage your full participation and observance of this important aspect of the University.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS
- Participation and Attendance (10 points) - The structure of this course is meant to engage and stimulate you. We will have no formal lectures, so the success of the class depends on active engagement. I expect everyone (not only those leading discussion for the week) to come to class ready to discuss the assigned readings. I recognize that participation comes in many forms so active listening, talking, sharing posts before class are all welcome. Missing more than two classes will result in a failing grade.
- Discussion Facilitation (15 points) - Once during the semester you will be assigned to lead discussion with another classmate or two. Discussants should come prepared with questions to spur discussion, an activity designed to facilitate conversation, and an understanding of the key arguments from the reading. Slides are highly discouraged.
- Devil's Advocate (15 points) – Once during the semester you will be assigned the "devils advocate" alongside your classmates. Devil's advocates should come prepared with counterarguments and skepticism. Remember come ready to critique *ideas* and *arguments*, not people.

- Misinformation Campaign (25points) – At the end of the semester a group of your choosing will present a concerned misinformation campaign to the class. Groups should be five people and will be assigned randomly if there are no working preferences. Details posted in Sakai.
- Counter Project (15 points) – Your same group will try to "thwart" the misinformation campaign by another group. Details posted in Sakai.
- Final Paper or Research Guide (20 points) – Due on December 3 – details posted in Sakai.

Course Schedule (subject to change based on unforeseeable circumstances or events)

Week	Focus + Readings	Assignments
Week One August 23	**Welcome to class** • Create our norms/classroom expectations • Get to know one another	
Week Two August 30	**Social Construction of Reality** 1. Bednar, P. p., & Welch, C. c. (2008). Bias, misinformation and the Paradox of Neutrality. *Informing Science, 11*85-106. 2. Berger & Luckman (selections on Sakai) 3. Hargittai, Eszter. (2007). The Social, Political, Economic, and Cultural Dimensions of Search Engines: An Introduction. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12: 769-777. 4. Gunter, J. (2015). Should the National Library of Medicine index anti-choice journals? Retrieved from https://drjengunter.wordpress.com/2015/12/30/should-the-national-library-of-medicine-index-anti-choice-journals/	
Week Three September 6	*University Holiday – No classes held* **Why keywords matter** 1. Zavadski, Andrei and Florian Toepfl. (2018). Querying the Internet as a mnemonic practice: how search engines mediate four types of past events in Russia. *Media Culture & Society* 42(2). 2. Hargittai, E and Young. (2012). Searching for a "Plan B": Young Adults' Strategies for Finding Information about Emergency Contraception Online. *Policy & Internet* 4(2) 3. Allam, A. Schultz, P.J, Nakamoto, K. (2014). The Impact of Search Engine Selection and Sorting Criteria on Vaccination Beliefs and Attitudes: Two Experiments Manipulating Google Output. *Journal of Medical Internet Research.*	Using a search engine of your choice do two separate searches: 1. Vaccine 2. Immunization Post to forums what you searched, if the returns were different and why that matters? Draw

		on the reading in your discussion.
Week Four September 13	**Defining Misinformation** 1. Freelon, D., & Wells, C. (2020). Disinformation as political communication. *PoliticalCommunication*, *37*(2), 145–156. 2. Farkas, J., & Schou, J. (2018). Fake news as a floating signifier: Hegemony, antagonism and the politics of falsehood. *Javnost - The Public, 25*(3), 298–314. 3. Jack, C. (2017). Lexicon of lies: Terms for problematic information. Data & SocietyResearch Institute. 4. Marwick, A., & Lewis, R. (2017). Media manipulation and disinformation online. Data &Society Research Institute 5. Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan. (2018). Thinking about "Information Disorder": formats for misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information. *Journalism, "Fake News," & Disinformation. UNESCO*	**Discussion Leaders – Group 1** Aubrie Wood Kyle Ashburn Constance Roberts **Devil's Advocate – Group 4**
Week Five September 20	**The historical (racist/sexist/homophobic) legacy of misinformation** 1. Mejia, R., Beckermann, K., & Sullivan, C. (2018). White lies: A racial history of the (post)truth. Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, 15(2), 109–126. 2. Almeida, S. (2015). Race-based epistemologies: The role of race and dominance in knowledge production. Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's & Gender Studies, 13, 79-105. 3. Daniels, J. (2009). Cloaked websites: propaganda, cyber-racism and epistemology in the digital era. *New Media and Society.* 11(5): 659-683	**Discussion Leaders – Group 2** Zoe Bergmire-Sweat Mary Tibbits Mya Mccoy **Devil's Advocate – Group 5**

	4. Bishop, R. (2000). To protect and serve: The "guard dog" function of journalism in coverage of the Japanese-American Internment. J*ournalism & Communication Monographs, 2*(2): 64–104. 5. Cheng, J.F. (2020). AIDS, women of color feminisms, queer and trans of color critiques, and the crises of knowledge production. In Cheng, J.F, Juhasz, A., & Shahani, N. (Eds.), *AIDS and the Distribution of Crises* (pp. 76-92). Duke University Press.	**Misinformation Groups**: Email Prof. Tripodi by September 26 who you would like to work with. Students in need of a group will be randomly placed. **Groups should be 5 people**
Week Six September 27	**Disinformation in Global Context** 1. Mare, A., Mabweazara, H. M., & Moyo, D. (2019). "Fake news" and cyber-propaganda in sub- Saharan Africa: Recentering the research agenda. African Journalism Studies 40(4), 1-12. 2. Madrid-Morales, D., Wasserman, H., Gondwe, G., Ndlovu, K., Sikanku, E., Tully, M., Umejei, E., & Uzuegbunam, C. (2021). Motivations for sharing misinformation: A comparative study in six Sub- Saharan African countries. International Journal Of Communication, 15, 20. 3. Han, R. (2015). Defending the authoritarian regime online: China's "voluntary fifty-cent army." The China Quarterly, (224), 1006-1025. 4. Haque, M. M., Yousuf, M., Alam, A. S., Saha, P., Ahmed, S. I., & Hassan, N. (2020). Combating misinformation in Bangladesh: Roles and responsibilities as perceived by journalists, fact- checkers, and users. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 4(CSCW2), 1–32. 5. Ong, J. C. (2021, January 12). Southeast Asia's disinformation crisis: Where the state is the biggest bad actor and regulation is a bad word. Items: Insights from the social sciences. Social Science Research Council. TO LISTEN: https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/articles/breaking-bongo	**Discussion Leaders – Group 3** William Browne Jesse Bethany Claire Macomson **Devil's advocate – Group 7**

Week Seven October 4	**Disinformation and Identity Claims** 1. Kreiss, D., Lawrence, R. G., & McGregor, S. C. (2020). Political identity ownership: Symbolic contests to rep resent members of the public. Social Media + Society 6(2), 1-5. 2. Rojecki, A., & Meraz, S. (2016). Rumors and factitious informational blends: The role of the web in speculative politics. New Media & Society, 18(1), 25-43. 3. Alamo-Pastrana, C., & Hoynes, W. (2018). Racialization of news: Constructing and challenging professional journalism as "white media". Humanity & Society, 44(1), 67-91. 4. Polletta, F., & Callahan, J. (2017). Deep stories, nostalgia narratives, and fake news: Storytelling in the Trump era. American Journal of Cultural Sociology, 5(3), 392–408. 5. Phillips, W., & Milner, R. (2021). The devil's in the deep frames. In You are here: A field guide for navigating polarized speech, conspiracy theories and our polluted information landscape. MIT Press, 17-48.	**Discussion Leaders – Group 4** Helen Sharma Zachary Boyce Ashley Hull **Devil's Advocate – Group 2**
Week Eight October 11	**Leveraging Disinformation** 1. Freelon, D., Bossetta, M., Wells, C., Lukito, J., Xia, Y., & Adams, K. (2020). Black trolls matter: Racial and ideological asymmetries in social media disinformation. Social Science Computer Review. 2. Nkonde, M., Rodriguez, M. Y., Cortana, L., Mukogosi, J. K., King, S., Serrato, R., Martinez, N., Drummer, M., Lewis, A., & Malik, M. M. (2021). Disinformation creep : ADOS and the strategic weaponization of breaking news. Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review 1(7). 3. Flores-Yeffal, N. Y., Vidales, G., & Martinez, G. (2019). #Wakeup America, #Illegalsarecriminals: The role of the cyber public sphere in the perpetuation of the Latino cyber-moral panic in the US. Information, Communication & Society, 22(3), 402–419.	**Discussion Leaders – Group 5** Cal Salant Will Su Adam Hudnut- Beumler **Devil's Advocate – Group 6**

	4. Giglietto, F. L. Iannelli, A. Valeriani. L. Rossi. (2019). Fake news is the invention of a liar: How false information circulates within the hybrid news system. *Current Sociology Monograph* 67(4): 625-642 5. Tuters, M. and Hagen, S. (2019). (((They))) rule: Memetic antagonism and nebulous othering on 4chan. New Media and Society, 22(12): 2218-2237.	
Week Nine October 18	**What do we mean by "media literacy"?** 1. boyd, d. (2018, March 9). You think you want media literacy... do you? SXSWEdu keynote. Points: Data & Society blog. 2. Forster, M. F. (2015). Refining the definition of information literacy: the experience of contextual knowledge creation. *Journal Of Information Literacy*, *9*(1), 62-73. 3. Breakstone, J. M. Smith, P. Connors, T. Ortega, D. Kerr, and S. Wineburg. (2021). Lateral reading: College students learn to critically evaluate internet sources in an online course. 4. Gibson, A. and J. Martin. (2019) Re-situating Information Poverty: Information Marginalization and Parents of Individuals with Disabilities. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 70(5): 476-487 5. Fister, B. (2021, February 18). The librarian war against Qanon. The Atlantic.	**Discussion Leaders –** **Group 6** Chelsea Romero Sarah Bulger **Devil's Advocate -** **Group 3**
Week Ten October 25	**Will "the data" save us?** 1. Lee, C. T. Yang, G. Inchoco, G.M.Jones, A. Satyanarayan. Viral Visualizations: How Coronavirus Skeptics Use Orthodox Data Practices to Promote Unorthodox Science Online. In *CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '21), May 8-13, 2021.* 2. Anderson, CW.(2021) Fake News is not a Virus: On Platforms and Their	**Discussion Leaders –** **Group 7** Kelly Bullard Erica Roberts

	Effects. *Communication Theory* 31(1): 42-61	**Devil's Advocate – Group 1**
	3. Tripodi, F. (2021). ReOpen demands as public health threat: a sociotechnical framework for understanding the stickiness of misinformation. *Computer Math Organizational Theory*	
	4. Lazer DM, Pentland A et al (2020) Computational Social Science: Obstacles and Opportunities. *Science* 369: 1060-1062	
	5. **Chandra, P., & Pal, J. (2019). Rumors and collective sensemaking: Managing ambiguity in an informal marketplace. Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conf on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 1–12.**	
Week 11 November 1	**Case Study – Crime & Anti-Black Disinformation** 1. Gilliam, F. D., Iyengar, S., Simon, A., & Wright, O. (1996). Crime in black and white: The violent, scary world of local news. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 1*(3), 6–23 2. Duru, N. J. (2004). The Central Park Five, The Scottsboro Boys, and the myth of the bestial black man. *Cardozo Law Review, 25(4*), 1315-1365 3. Noble, S. (2014). Teaching Travyon: Race, media, and the politics of spectacle. *The Black Scholar 44*(1), 12-29.	
Week 12 November 8	**Class Presentations – Group 1 and Group 2**	
Week 13 November 15	**Class Presentations - Group 3 and Group 4**	
Week 14 November 22	**Counter Presentations – Group 1 and Group 2**	
Week 15 November 29	**Counter Presentations - Group 3 and Group 4**	

Final paper due: Friday, December 3