

INST 152-0103: Foundational Scholarship and Critical Inquiry in the Information Age

Course Information

Meeting location/days/times: ENG 0108, Tuesday/Thursday, 3:30-4:45pm

Contact and office hours:

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Catalog Description: Claims of “fake news” have recently become commonplace, but false, inaccurate, misleading, and poorly researched statements (unintentional or otherwise) are hardly new. This course reviews the state of “fake news,” mis- and dis-information, and post-truth in contemporary society. This course will require students to think critically about issues of mis- and dis-information, information and source evaluation, and to engage with real-world examples, and real world problems and solutions. This course also allows students to assume the role of an information professional, who is literate in analyzing, evaluating, and creating information ethically, and accurately.

Extended Description: The concept of ‘literacy’ derives from the Latin, *littera* – letters or characters that represent sound when spoken. Information professionals understand that data or characters create information when appropriately arranged. This suggests that literacy, understanding characters (or data), depends heavily on one’s ability to find, retrieve, analyze, evaluate, create, and disseminate information. Practicing this new literacy provides a foundation for any career, and for success in life as savvy consumers and creators of information and information sources. Assignments will give students ‘real-world’ experience in the literacy that is information.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Examine the quality and veracity of information in a range of contexts – personal, scholastic, and professional, as well as platforms, both physical and virtual.
2. Act as analysts to critically evaluate bodies of text for alignment with literacy standards relevant to the information discipline.
3. Through analysis, evaluation, and creation of myriad information types, the student will create a personal information profile to establish where they have authority.
4. In planning the creation of an authentic information product, students will apply their information literacy to the necessary research related to a ‘clients’ need.
5. The student will apply information literacy to critique, revise and refine authentic information products that have value for a ‘client’.
6. Using proper information literacy, students will demonstrate ethical product dissemination that effectively communicates a ‘clients’ need.

Key Objectives:

In this course, students will also: Identify ways which misinformation is spread; understand the broader social and societal implications of misinformation; engage in scholarly discussion with classmates and faculty.

Week/Dates	Module Topic	Assignments + Due Dates <i>*Weekly readings and assignments will be posted on ELMS</i>
Week 1: Aug. 27 + 30	Intro to Information, Facts & Truth	
Week 2: Sept. 4 + 7	Power, Privilege & Perception	Personal Essay, Due: Sept. 9
Week 3: Sept. 11 + 13	Information vs. News How People Process Information	
Week 4: Sept. 18 + 20	Barriers to Information Processing Effects of Misinformation	Submit case study topic, Due: Sept. 18
Week 5: Sept. 25 + 27	Real-World Information Issues	Real-World Problems with Social Information: Case Study Presentations, Due: Sept 27
Week 6: Oct. 2 + 4	Information Literacy Pt. 1a: Evaluating Information	
Week 7: Oct. 9 + 11	Information Literacy Pt. 1b: Methods of Evaluating Information	Fact-Finding Mission: Speech Edition, Due: Oct. 14
Week 8: Oct. 16 + 18	Policy, People & Ethics	Project proposal due Oct. 21
Week 9: Oct. 23 + 25	Information Literacy Pt. 2: Creation and Control	
Week 10: Oct. 30 + Nov. 1	Research Literacy	
Week 11: Nov. 6 + Nov. 8	The Information Marketplace	Annotated Bibliography Due Nov. 11
Week 12: Nov. 13 + Nov. 15	Information Literacy Pt. 3: Examining authority	Draft information product due on Nov. 18. Post your info product and critique 3 other classmates work between Nov. 18-Nov. 23.
Week 13: Nov. 20	Group Meetings with Instructor	
Week 14: Nov. 27 + Nov. 29	Review + in-class working week	
Week 15: Dec. 4 + 6	Project presentations	Final project presentations: Dec. 4 + 6

POLICIES ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Attendance and punctuality: It is important that you attend every class and show up on time. To do otherwise will negatively affect your grade, because you will be missing reporting and writing instruction, class discussions, quizzes and assignments. The dropped grade policy (as described in the grading section above) is designed to accommodate missed class assignments due to brief illness and emergencies. Please notify the instructor in advance, if possible, if you will be missing class due to illness or emergency, so that she can make arrangements to get notes to you.

Academic integrity: Along with certain rights, students have the responsibility to behave honorably in an academic environment. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Adhering to a high ethical standard is of special importance in journalism, where reliability and credibility are the cornerstones of the field. Therefore, the college has adopted a “zero tolerance” policy on academic dishonesty. Any abridgment of academic integrity standards in a College of Journalism course will be referred to the university’s Office of Student Conduct and the college’s associate deans. To ensure this is understood, all students are asked to sign an academic integrity pledge at the beginning of the semester that will cover all assignments in this course. Students found to have violated the university’s honor code may face sanctions, including a grade of XF for the course, suspension or expulsion from the university.

Religious holidays: There will be no tests or major assignments scheduled on religious holidays identified by the university. If you expect to miss a class during the semester due to a religious holiday, please notify the instructor in writing before the start of the second class, so she can get notes to you.

Inclement weather: If the university closes due to foul weather (snow, ice, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes) or other emergencies and class must be canceled, students will be advised of assignment adjustments by the instructor. We will likely use our class site to make these notifications and/or conduct a virtual class. Please check the university’s home page if in doubt about whether or not classes have been canceled on campus.

Students with disabilities: Students with a specific disability (permanent or temporary, physical or learning) needing special accommodation during the semester should make an appointment to meet with the instructor immediately after the first class. Students may be asked to provide the instructor accommodation forms given to them after testing by the Disability Support Service on campus, 301-405-0813.

For more on university course-related policies, please refer to The University’s Office of Undergraduate Studies: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courselatedpolicies.html>