



Honors 3375.02: Honors Dialogues Seminar

FAKE NEWS: History, Politics, Media

CRN 84114

Mondays, 3:00-5:50 | Lee Drain 204

Office hours: by appointment with instructors

Course Instructors

Dr. Siham Bouamer (sbouamer@shsu.edu) | she/her pronouns

Dr. Ching-In Chen (ching-in@shsu.edu) | they/them pronouns

Dr. Patrick Lewis (pjl001@shsu.edu) | he/him pronouns

Dr. Jeff Littlejohn (littlejohn@shsu.edu) | he/him pronouns

Dr. Ervin Malakaj (emalakaj@shsu.edu) | he/him pronouns

Course Description

Fake news recently received extended attention for shaping public opinion, national and international policy, and for fueling long-lasting racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and xenophobic tendencies among international publics. This course will examine the capitalist and ideological networks of influence behind such media outlets. It will look back in history to examine the rise, transformation, and influence of media cultures, and will position students to think deeply and critically about processes of mediation (the transmission and retransmission of information) and their impact on democracy.

Course Requirements/Grade Distribution

Attendance & Participation	25%
2 Course Portfolios	50%
Poster/Panel Presentation	25%

Grading Scale

A+ (98-100%);	A (93-97);	A- (90-92);
B+ (88-89);	B (83-87);	B- (80-82);
C+ (78-79);	C (73-77);	C- (70-72);
D+ (68-69);	D (63-67);	D- (60-62);
F (below 60).		

Texts

- I. Daniel J. Levitin, *Weaponized Lies: How to Think Critically in the Post-Truth Era*. New York: Dutton, 2017.
- II. Additional materials available on BlackBoard.

Assignments

- I. *2 Course Portfolios*. You will keep a course portfolio for each half of the course. At a minimum, each of your portfolio entries should be 250 words. Moreover, your entries must demonstrate thorough knowledge of the text by speaking to the categories listed below.
 - a. The assignment needs to be typed and saved as a word file. It needs to be Times New Roman, 12 pt., double spaced.
 - b. List the name of author/director, etc. and title of text (film, podcast, essay, article, etc.)
 - c. Provide a brief overview of the thesis and argumentative points made in the text.
 - d. Provide your answer to this question: how does this text speak to the theme of the course?
- II. *Poster/Panel Presentation*. You are required to participate at the SHSU Undergraduate Research Symposium either through a poster or panel presentation. The presentation content will immediately be tied to some of the themes of our course. Your paper and/or poster is due Dec. 1 along with a completed application to the URS. (If you are graduating in December, you may omit the application to the symposium.)

Communication

You should regularly (i.e., daily) check your official SHSU email account for important announcements about our course. You should regularly check our BlackBoard site for updates and *regularly* review the assignment due dates. If you send us an email, please use the standard format for addressing faculty or standards employed in professional communication. Begin an email with a salutation such as "Dear Dr. Littlejohn/Malakaj: . . ." and close with "Best/Yours/Sincerely, . . ."

Inclusive Course

You will effectively engage in discussion on some of the most important topics of our time. Our classroom will be an inclusive and comfortable space that continues to challenge you intellectually. We will strive to foster such a space in our course. Most of all, *you* are required to contribute to the shaping of such an inclusive, comforting, and intellectually stimulating setting by honoring the diverse backgrounds, statuses, and experiences of your fellow students. Please communicate to us any concerns or needs that immediately relate to your learning.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. You can find more information about the university's academic dishonesty policy on the website of the Office of the Dean of Students:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/index.html>

You are expected to complete original work on your own in this class. If you enlist the help of others in completing your homework without prior consent of the instructor, you are breaching the academic integrity policy and will be reported to the university administration.

Accommodations

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then we encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office and to talk with me about how I can best accommodate your learning needs. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. Note: No accommodation can be made until you register with SSD, which is located in the Lee Drain North Annex building (next to Farrington), telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786. You can find more information about the office and its services online: www.shsu.edu/dept/disability

Religious Holidays Policy

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf>

Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. The visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

Course Dates

August 28 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Black Lives Matter in the News; Charlottesville story; North Korea: Inside and Out; Snopes or factitious
In-class: Factitious: fake news game: <http://factitious.augamestudio.com>

September 4 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Origins of the public sphere and the preconditions for fake news

Imagined communities and print industrialism: how communities use fake news to define themselves

READ: Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," *New German Critique* 3(1974): 49-55. (BB)

READ: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Introduction, Chapter 10* (BB)

September 11 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Media culture and the encoding/decoding of signs

Fake News: 9/11 and the War in Iraq

READ: Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," *Culture, Media, Language*, ed. Stuart Hall, et al. (London: Hutchinson, 1980), (BB)

FILM: [Bush's War](#), Part I (02:25:32), before class.

WRITE: Answer Bush's War questions (BB)

September 18 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Producing factual lies

READ: Daniel J. Levitin, *Weaponized Lies*, Section 1, 3-120

September 25 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Evaluating knowledge and troubled expertise

READ: Levitin, *Weaponized Lies*, Section 2, 123-180

October 2 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Lies and scientific discourse; Radiolab podcast on Fake News and scientific discovery:

IN CLASS LISTENING: <http://www.radiolab.org/story/breaking-news/>

READ: Levitin, *Weaponized Lies*, Section 3, 181-250

October 9 Chen, Littlejohn, and Malakaj

Fake News, border crossings, and activist creative intervention; Reading and visit by Xochitl-Julisa Bermejo. Bermejo's first book, *Posada: Offerings of Witness and Refuge*.

Public reading and discussion: **MEET IN AUSTIN HALL @3pm**

READ: Xochitl-Julisa Bermejo, *Posada: Offerings of Witness and Refuge*

October 16 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Fake news and religious liberty

READ: Religious Liberty: <http://studythepast.com/religiousliberty2017/>

October 23 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Producing spectacles: On Orson Welles and *War of the Worlds*; Dean Abbey Zink workshop on Fake News and 19th-century periodicals

READ: A. Brad Schwarz, *Broadcast Hysteria: Orson Welles's War of the Worlds and the Art of Fake News* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2016), Chapter 1, "Journalism and Showmanship," 13-28. (BB)

October 30 Bouamer, Littlejohn and Malakaj

Fake news and global postcoloniality: The control of popular opinion in Morocco under Mohammed VI: from repression to fake news.

READ: excerpts from Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangiers*

November 6 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Fake News about the Foundations of Texas history

READ: texts

November 13 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Fake News and Racial Violence in Texas

READ: texts

November 20 Lewis and Littlejohn

Fake News and Climate Change

READ: texts

November 27 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Fake News and Criminal Justice in Texas

READ: texts

December 4 Littlejohn and Malakaj

Wrap-Up discussion on Fake News and contemporary US political reality