

JOUR 302 INFOMANIA: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

TIME: 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
DAYS: Tues./Th.
DATES: Aug. 22-Dec. 7, 2017
ROOM: Stauffer-Flint 206
INSTRUCTOR: Keri Meinking
OFFICE HOURS: 12:15 to 1:15 p.m., Tues. and Th.
EMAIL: k670m780@ku.edu

BOOK: Don MacLeod, *How to find out anything: From extreme Google searches to scouring government documents, a guide to uncovering anything about everyone and everything* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2012).

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a course about *practicing* the skills of finding, evaluating, and concisely presenting information, which are the foundation of anything you do as a journalist or a strategic communications professional. The goal of this course is to *practice* a healthy skepticism about the credibility of information you find, so you only choose the most credible sources for articles, blog posts, reports, or campaigns you produce in your careers. Your credibility is essential to your success in your future career, but you are only as credible as your sources.

PREMISE: Think of yourself as a *practicing* consultant to a news or strategic communications organization. Your final project will be to present your expertise about a topic to this organization, recommending information and sources the organization should pursue, and identifying information and sources it should avoid. Assignments during the semester are designed to help you *practice* finding information about your topic, evaluating its credibility, and effectively presenting it.

COURSE GOALS:

Remember that the goals of this class are: (1) to find sources of information, and (2) to evaluate the credibility of these sources.

This class satisfies Goal 1, Outcome 1 of the KU Core: "Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to analyze and evaluate assumptions, claims, evidence, arguments, and forms of expression; select and apply appropriate interpretive tools."

COURSE OBJECTIVES (TO HELP MEET THOSE GOALS):

By the end of this course, you will have *practiced* your skills to be better able to:

- clearly and comprehensively explain issues
- take appropriate evidence from sources, then evaluate, interpret, and synthesize it
- analyze own and others' assumptions
- draw logical conclusions about credibility that reflect an informed evaluation

ATTENDANCE: You are allowed two absences. **I will not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. Please do not email me telling me why you are absent. Please do not bring doctor's notes.** Beginning with your second absence, each absence reduces your final grade by three points. If you have three absences and end the semester with a 94% (A), your final course grade will be an 88% (B).

GRADING and ASSIGNMENTS: 90-100% (A), 80-89% (B), 70-79% (C), 60-69% (D), below 60% - F

Credibility, Reliability, and Assumptions writings	3 at 50 points each = 150 points
Credibility, Reliability, and Assumptions presentations	3 at 50 points each = 150 points
News posts related to research topic	10 at 10 points each = 100 points
Assignments and in-class work	100 points
Final presentation	50 points
Final project	150 points
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TOTAL:	700 points

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

Credibility, Reliability and Assumptions writings and presentations:

You will evaluate the credibility and reliability of sources you found in your research. While focusing on the elements of credibility and reliability, evaluate the following elements of the source: currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose. You need to have an introduction paragraph, one paragraph for each of the five elements, and a conclusion paragraph.

News posts: For these assignments, you will draw on the news aggregators you set up at the beginning of the semester to summarize news relating to your topic. Your summaries will be brief and insightful, linking readers to the original news stories or other pertinent web pages.

Final research proposal and presentation: At the end of the semester, you will compile all of the information you collect about your topic into a compelling presentation. You will post it in the Discussion Board and make a short in-class presentation during the final exam timeslot. You have to be here to get credit for the presentation.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts, and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you will fail the course, and you may be expelled from the School of Journalism. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor.

Here is the School's official policy statement: The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence. The KU University Senate defines plagiarism as "knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge." The University defines fabrication and falsification as "unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise."

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: The KU office of Disability Resources coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted Disability Resources, please do so as soon as possible. The office is located in 22 Strong Hall; the phone number is 864-2620.

Information about services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu>. Please also contact me privately with regard to your needs in this course.

Credibility and Assumptions Evaluation Papers

Instructions: Find a source related to your topic, and answer all the questions on the test below. Use your ideas from answering those questions to write a seven-paragraph evaluation of the source. The test questions, the structure for the seven-paragraph evaluation, and assessment measures are outlined below.

The Test

Use the following list to help you write a seven-paragraph evaluation of sources. To help yourself develop and organize ideas for the written evaluation, you may wish to answer the questions as appropriate, and then rank each of the five parts (currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose) from 1 to 10 (1 = unreliable, 10 = very reliable) to help you determine the source's credibility.

Currency: *the timeliness of the information*.....

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Is the information current or out-of date for your topic? Is it important that the information be current for your specific topic?
- Are the links functional?

Relevance: *the importance of the information for your needs*.....

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before choosing this one?
- Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?

Authority: *the source of the information*.....

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- Are the author's credentials (education, training, or experience) or organizational affiliations given?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given?
- What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
- If the author is unnamed, can you take extra steps to find information about this author? What steps did you take?

Accuracy and Assumptions: *the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content*.....

- Where does the information come from? What sources did the author use?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

Purpose: *the reason the information exists*.....

- What is the purpose of the information?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

Structure of Seven-Paragraph Written Evaluations

Paragraph 1: Introduction with attention-getter and previewing main points

Paragraph 2: Evaluate currency of source.

Paragraph 3: Evaluate relevance of source.

Paragraph 4: Evaluate authority of source.

Paragraph 5: Evaluate accuracy of source.

Paragraph 6: Evaluate purpose of source.

Paragraph 7: Conclusion with summary of main points and additional closing device

Assessment Measures of the Seven-Paragraph Written Evaluation

KU Core Educational Goal #1: Build core skills of critical thinking

Learning Outcome 1: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to: *Analyze and evaluate assumptions, claims, evidence, arguments, and forms of expression; select and apply appropriate interpretive tools.*

	Exceeds Expectations 5	Expected 4	Satisfactory 3.5	Unacceptable 1
Explanation of Issues	All five elements are explained clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	All five elements are stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions, but ideas could have been developed more thoroughly.	All five elements are stated but description is somewhat ambiguous, not thoroughly explored, and/or not effectively explained.	All five elements are stated without clarification or description, or some of the elements are missing.
Evaluating Source Credibility <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is interpreted and evaluated enough to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is interpreted and evaluated to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is interpreted and evaluated, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken mostly as fact, with little questioning.	Information is minimally interpreted and/or evaluated. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, with no questioning.
Evaluating the influence of context and assumptions	<i>Thoroughly analyzes</i> and evaluate own and others' assumptions.	<i>Identifies</i> own and others' assumptions.	<i>Identifies</i> others' assumptions with more awareness than one's own (or vice versa).	<i>Begins to identify</i> some assumptions when positions are presented.
Conclusions	Conclusions drawn are logical and reflect student's <i>strongly</i> informed evaluation through use of valid reasoning.	Conclusions drawn are logical and reflect student's <i>somewhat</i> informed evaluation through use of valid reasoning.	Conclusions drawn are logical and reflect student's <i>somewhat</i> informed evaluation through use of <i>somewhat</i> valid reasoning.	Conclusions drawn are illogical and show a lack of informed evaluation through use of valid reasoning.

Credibility and Assumptions Evaluation Presentations

Instructions: Find a source related to your topic, and answer all the questions on the test below. Use your ideas from answering those questions to prepare a seven-point presentation evaluating the source. The test questions, the structure for the seven-point presentation, and assessment measures are outlined below.

The Test

Use the following list to help you write a seven-paragraph evaluation of sources. To help yourself develop and organize ideas for the written evaluation, you may wish to answer the questions as appropriate, and then rank each of the five parts (currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose) from 1 to 10 (1 = unreliable, 10 = very reliable) to help you determine the source's credibility.

Currency: *the timeliness of the information*.....

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Is the information current or out-of date for your topic? Is it important that the information be current for your specific topic?
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Relevance: *the importance of the information for your needs*.....

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
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- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
- If the author is unnamed, can you take extra steps to find information about this author? What steps did you take?

Accuracy: *the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content*.....

- Where does the information come from? What sources did the author use?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

Purpose: *the reason the information exists*.....

- What is the purpose of the information?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

Structure of Seven-Point Presentation of Evaluation

Point 1: Introduction with attention-getter and previewing main points

Point 2: Evaluate currency of source.

Point 3: Evaluate relevance of source.

Point 4: Evaluate authority of source.

Point 5: Evaluate accuracy of source.

Point 6: Evaluate purpose of source.

Point 7: Conclusion with summary of main points and additional closing device

Assessment Measures of the Seven-Paragraph Presentation Evaluation

KU Core Educational Goal #1: Build core skills of critical thinking

Learning Outcome 1: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to: *Analyze and evaluate assumptions, claims, evidence, arguments, and forms of expression; select and apply appropriate interpretive tools.*

	Exceeds Expectations 5	Expected 4	Satisfactory 3.5	Unacceptable 1
Explanation of Issues	All five elements are explained clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	All five elements are stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions, but ideas should be developed more thoroughly.	All five elements are stated but description is somewhat ambiguous, not thoroughly explored, and/or not effectively explained.	All five elements are stated without clarification or description, or some of the elements are missing.
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Evaluating the influence of context and assumptions	<i>Thoroughly analyzes</i> and evaluate own and others' assumptions.	<i>Identifies</i> own and others' assumptions.	<i>Identifies</i> others' assumptions with more awareness than one's own (or vice versa).	<i>Begins to identify</i> some assumptions when positions are presented.
Conclusions	Conclusions drawn are logical and reflect student's <i>strongly</i> informed evaluation through use of valid reasoning.	Conclusions drawn are logical and reflect student's <i>somewhat</i> informed evaluation through use of valid reasoning.	Conclusions drawn are logical and reflect student's <i>somewhat</i> informed evaluation through use of <i>somewhat</i> valid reasoning.	Conclusions drawn are illogical and show a lack of informed evaluation through use of valid reasoning.
Eye Contact	Holds attention of entire audience with use of direct eye contact, seldom looking at notes.	Shows consistent use of direct eye contact with audience, but still returns to notes.	Displays minimal eye contact with audience, while reading mostly from notes.	No eye contact with audience, as entire presentation is read from notes.
Elocution	Student uses clear voice so that all audience members can hear presentation.	Student's voice is clear, and most audience members can hear presentation.	Student's voice volume is low, and some audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student mumbles, and speaks to quietly for a majority of students to hear.

RUBRIC – FINAL PRESENTATION

Name: _____

Standard	1	3	5	7
Content	Student does not have grasp of information. Many statements are vague or unsupported.	Student is uncomfortable with information or leaves out important details.	Student is at ease with topic and presents accurate information.	Student demonstrates full grasp of the topic, presenting complete and accurate information.
Organization	Overall organizational structure is disjointed and make content difficult to understand.	Overall structure is inconsistent; conclusion is undeveloped; and/or transitions are ineffective	Organization is generally clear and logical; structure is present.	Organization enhances central ideas; sequence and structure are strong presentation is easy to follow.
Delivery	Use of eye contact, language, and body language is inappropriate.	Use of eye contact, language, and body language cause potential confusion.	Use of eye contact, language, body language support the message.	Use of eye contact, language, and body language add greatly to the message.
Fielding questions	1 Student cannot answer questions about subject.	2 Student is able to answer only rudimentary questions, does so without explanation.	3 Student is at ease with answers to most questions, but fails to elaborate.	4 Student answers all class questions with explanations and elaboration.
			Total Points	/25