



Course Overview

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JOUR 200 - FALL 2017 Syllabus

Enabled: Statistics Tracking

JOUR 200 - FALL 2017 Syllabus

INFORMATION IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL NOISE

Information in the Age of Digital Noise is an active exploration of the importance of information trust in our society. We will examine the aspects of critical thinking that allow a person know where to find credible sources of information, understand how to verify the information and how to use the information to debunk falsity. Students will develop personal strategies for expanding their information literacy as they examine the use of subject and objective information sharing in an ever accelerating flow of digital noise.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Objectives

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Appreciate the importance of factual accuracy and source reliability as factors affecting media credibility.
- Describe the likely reasons for disseminating false information from the perspectives of source, publication and audience.
- Explain how fact checking techniques can prove or disprove information.
- List examples of frequently biased information sources and define strategies for preventing further use of such sources.

- Demonstrate methods of spotting face information in print, online and broadcast media.
- Apply professional and personal ethical standards to information gathering and publication.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Voice Thread Subscription

Top Hat Subscription

Online access with sufficient bandwidth to consume streamed video presentations

Policies

Students with disabilities

You are responsible for your own level of learning and participation in this class. That means if you do not understand any course material, assignments or readings, it is your responsibility to bring your questions to the attention of the instructor. I can't help you if you don't let me know you need help. You each have valuable ideas to contribute to the learning process. You should always feel free to ask questions or add your comments to the course discussions.

Diversity of ideas and attitudes

Because this course is about the ways people share ideas – and how differences of opinion may affect the truthfulness of their statements, a major portion of each week's work will be spent looking at and discussing ways to determine factual accuracy and source credibility. Some of our conversations may not meet the same standards of taste or attitudes you personally hold, but because of their place in the examination of information sharing methods and processes, they deserve attention. You are encouraged, and expected, to actively participate in our discussion of all ideas expressed in the class and should feel free to share your feelings about them.

Likewise, you should be tolerant of the attitudes and opinions of others, giving them the same courtesy of free expression you would expect for yourself. We will only learn from each other if we are all willing to listen to and appreciate the opinions and ideas of others.

Participation and attendance

This course is being taught using hybrid learning strategies. This means we will meet in face-to-face class time on Mondays at 12:30 pm. Please be in place at that time.

Your attendance at each Monday class meeting is required!

If you anticipate a valid absence, you must notify me by email, preferably BEFORE the class meeting. Be sure to put "JOUR 200 ABSENCE " in the subject line of the email message.

You may call my cell number 410 818-4227 at any time before 10 p.m. to inform me of a pending absence or for other course-related matters that can't be handled through email or in person. If I don't answer, please leave a message.

Do not assume you will be allowed to make up assignments missed during an unexcused absence.

We will not meet face-to-face on Wednesday, except for the first week of the semester. Your class-related work on Wednesdays will instead include online participation in topical discussions using Voice Thread, and your preparation for the next Monday face-to-face meeting. We will discuss this hybrid learning process during the first week of classes.

Class attendance on Monday will be taken in class through the use of Top Hat software. You are expected to have a subscription to this service and should receive an invitation to sign up. Many of you may already subscribe to this service for other courses. We will also use Top Hat for random quizzes and active participation in class discussions.

New material will be posted on Blackboard by **about 1 pm each Wednesday**, as noted in the course schedule. This will guide your preparation for our next face-to-face class meeting and describe the Voice Thread discussion assignment for the week (if applicable). Your punctual attention to this new material will give you the greatest opportunity to study and learn. New information may also be posted through announcements sent by email or on this website.

You are expected to view the videos posted as well as read the listed chapters and linked material by the date indicated on the course schedule. Traffic data on the video site is recorded. A failure to attend to this course material will seriously hurt your learning in the course and have a negative impact on your discussions.

Class Schedule

In the Learning Units area in the Blackboard sidebar you will find sections for Units A, B, and C. These three units make up the course content. Within each unit folder, you will find a weekly folder with information about topics to be covered, homework, Voice Thread and Case Study assignments.

The Class Schedule is subject to change as course progress dictates.

Technology

As this is a fully hybrid (face-to-face and online) course, you will be required to have access to all technology required for viewing online lectures, for completion of assignments, and participation in online discussions. This class requires the use of computers capable of running, up-to-date web browsers. Firefox, Chrome or Safari are recommended for all class work. Broadband access to the Internet is assumed and required.

You will need to purchase a subscription to Top Hat software (approximately \$29 for the term). You will also have access to Voice Thread through KU. Other software may include elements of the Microsoft Office Suite.

KU Libraries and the School of Journalism provide computer labs and facilities for course work. You should make yourself familiar with the location and availability of those computer facilities.

Not having adequate access to the required technology is not an excuse for missing deadlines or poor work. If you are unable to provide your own computing technology, you will need to find a public source, or drop the course.

KU Blackboard

The majority of materials for this course will be accessed via using Blackboard. If you are not familiar with its operation, please let me know.

Deadlines

This course has frequent deadlines throughout the term!

All course work must be completed by assigned deadlines. Any work submitted after the assignment deadline will receive a grade deduction of 10 percent per day, unless a deadline extension is granted by the professor prior to the original deadline.

Do not plan to submit everything on the last day. A grade of INCOMPLETE will be assigned only in accordance with University of Kansas policy.

NOTICE !!! All three modules and related case studies and discussions must be completed in assigned sequence. They will not be accepted out of sequence.

If this is not possible due to serious illness, you are expected to inform me of the reason for your absence as soon as possible. I will be happy to work with you to make up work missed during an excused absence.

Originality

You will always be expected to use your own imagination, images, and information. The highest levels of ethical conduct and integrity expected of working professionals apply to you in this course. Please review the relevant policies as shown below under the Learn More label. You will always be expected to use your own imagination, images, and information. Assignments completed with material from copyrighted sources will require appropriate attribution and/or permission for use.

J-School Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification – Adopted May 7, 2004

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor(s) of this course.

The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.

Plagiarism – Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper recognition of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification – Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Special learning needs

The University of Kansas is committed to helping all students learn. If you have a special need that may affect your learning, please contact me as soon as possible. Please be aware that 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 this office, please do so as soon as possible. Information about services can be found at <http://www.disability.ku.edu/~disability/>. Or you can visit the office on the first floor of Strong Hall. The phone number is: 785-864-2620. Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course.

Inclement weather

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW). Because this class is completely online, this will only affect deadlines scheduled for days when the campus is closed. If such instance occurs, I will notify the class by email to revise the deadline.

Copying or sharing course materials

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the instructor's property. Sharing of video and audio recordings of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited. Unless the instructor gives explicit permission, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Email

All students are REQUIRED to regularly check their KU (name@ku.edu) email account.

Class information will be frequently sent to this account. If you use another account, please be sure your KU account is set to forward email to that non-KU account. I will not attempt to chase you to email accounts other than your official KU email. Not being aware of course material because of failure to use your @ku.edu email account is not an accepted excuse.

I have my email program set to filter JOUR 200 messages to a priority folder. When sending email to me, please always put "JOUR 200 – your topic here " in the subject line.

I will make every effort to reply to your email as quickly as possible within 24-hours of its receipt. Do not expect immediate replies to emails after 10 p.m. or before 9 a.m. I check email regularly on the weekend but do not assume replies will be as immediate as during the workweek.

You may communicate by email with me about anything related to the course except grade revisions. I will not discuss anything related to grade changes online. If you want to discuss a review of a graded assignment or test, you may arrange an office appointment with me.

Vacations, Travel, etc.

You are expected to participate in each scheduled class day of the course. Because travel may be part of your plans for Fall Break and Thanksgiving, be sure it does not cause you to miss class activities. Leaving early for these breaks is not a valid excuse for missing assigned coursework.

Concealed carry of weapons

Individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns are solely responsible to do so in a safe and secure manner in strict conformity with state and federal laws and KU weapons policy. Safety measures outlined in the KU weapons policy specify that a concealed handgun:

- Must be under the constant control of the carrier.
- Must be out of view, concealed either on the body of the carrier, or backpack, purse, or bag that remains under the carrier's custody and control.
- Must be in a holster that covers the trigger area and secures any external hammer in an uncocked position
- Must have the safety on, and have no round in the chamber

Tests and Quizzes

Instructors are allowed by Kansas Board of Regents policy, to require backpacks, purses and other bags be placed in a specific location during exams and quizzes, and as such those items may not be under the constant control of the individual. Students who choose to carry a concealed handgun in a purse, backpack, or bag must review and plan each day accordingly, and are responsible for making alternate arrangements as necessary.

The University does not provide appropriate secure storage for concealed handguns.

Individuals who violate the KU weapons policy may be asked to leave campus with the weapon and may face disciplinary action under the appropriate university code of conduct.

Your final grade for this course will be based on the calculation of grades for the following elements at the indicated weight for each element.

Specific details for each assessment will be provided at the time of assignment.

Case Studies - 35 percent of Semester Grade (Two x 10% and One x 15%)

You will complete a written case study at the end of each unit of the course. The first two case studies are each worth 10 percent of the semester grade and the third case study will be worth 15 percent of the semester grade. The third case study will be due not later than the start of our final exam period in December. It may be submitted any time after Thanksgiving Break, but you should take advantage of the weeks available to produce your best effort.

Discussion of Weekly Topics Using Voice Thread (VT) - 50 percent of Semester Grade (5% each x 10 VTs)

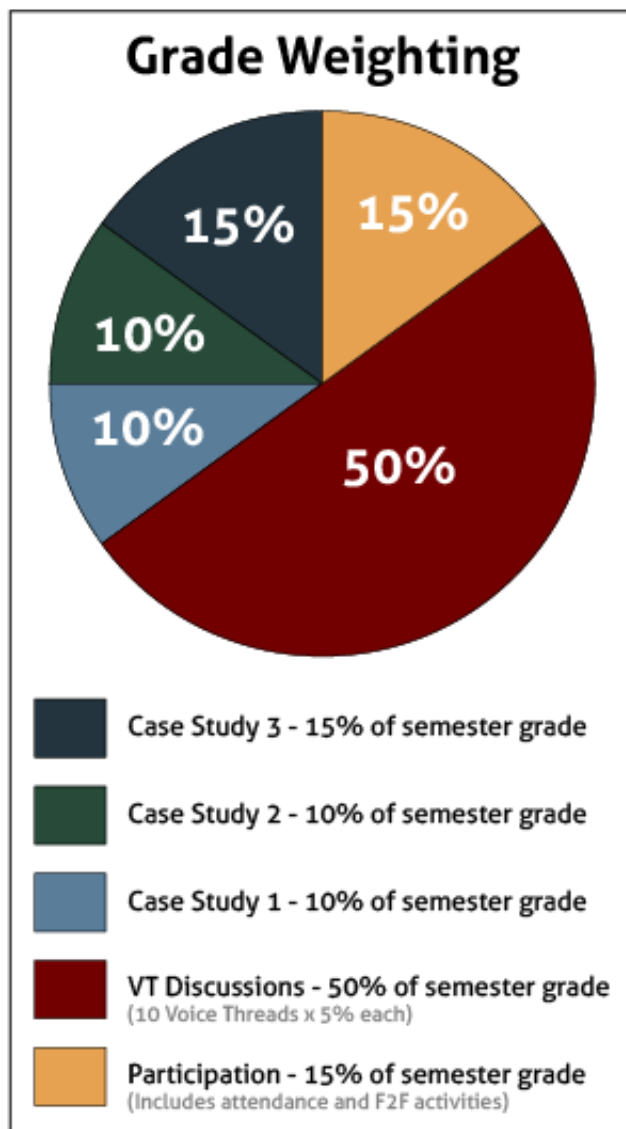
Each VT assignment will be worth 5 percent of your semester grade. You must complete both parts of the assignment, as described below, to receive any credit for the assignment. Failure to do so will result in a score of zero (0) for the assignment. Prof. Williams will post and make live the initial Voice Thread (VT) weekly discussion topic or media by noon Wednesday of the week it is due.

Due date shown in the Blackboard Grade book represents the date and time on Friday when all elements of the VT discussion are due.

Each VT assignment will require the following:

- You will be expected to respond with your thoughts as a "Comment" to the discussion topic originated by Prof. Williams by 5 pm Wednesday (the day Prof. Williams makes the discussion live).
- You will also be required to "Comment" on the response of at least one of your group mates by 5 pm (Lawrence time) Friday of the week of the discussion.

Participation - 15 percent of Semester Grade (Includes F2F attendance, occasional in-class activities and random quizzes)



Attendance in each face-to-face (F2F) class meeting is required. Because this class is being taught using a hybrid approach to learning – F2F on Monday and online on Wednesday – you are expected to actively participate in each F2F session AND attend to online preparation and discussions.

Course Grading Scale -

Grades Scored Between	Will Equal
94 % and 100 %	A
90 % and Less Than 94%	A-
87 % and Less Than 90%	B+
84 % and Less Than 87%	B
80 % and Less Than 84%	B-
77 % and Less Than 80%	C+
74 % and Less Than 77%	C
70 % and Less Than 74%	C-
67 % and Less Than 70%	D+
64 % and Less Than 67%	D
60 % and Less Than 64%	D-
0 % and Less Than 60%	F

Top Hat

We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website:

<https://app.tophat.com/login/943358/?next=/e/943358>

Note: our Course Join Code is **943358**

Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: www.tophat.com/pricing.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (

WHAT IS TRUTH?

LIES, DAMN LIES, AND STATISTICS

CAN WE BELIEVE OUR EYES?

		Monday - Face-to-Face Class meets in Stauffer-Flint Room 101		Wednesday - Virtual Activities Class activities Online
Week 1	Aug. 21	Introductions, syllabus, course review ECLIPSE VIEWING (Be careful!)	Aug. 23	Using the tools of this hybrid class – Blackboard, Voice Thread, and Top Hat. How to succeed online.
Week 2	Aug. 28	What is Truth? Who makes that determination? Can there be rules and who will enforce them?	Aug. 30	Voice Thread Conversation #1 Prepare for 9/6:
Week 3	Sept. 4	Labor Day No Class	Sept. 6	Voice Thread Conversation #2 Prepare for 9/11:
Week 4	Sept. 11	Looking at the history of 9/11/01 and the stories that followed.	Sept. 13	Voice Thread Conversation #3 Prepare for 9/18:
Week 5	Sept. 18	Constitution Day	Sept. 20	Case Study 1 assignment discussed via Voice Thread Prepare for 9/25:
Week 6	Sept. 25	University-wide, Shared Class Assignment	Sept. 27	Case Study 1 - Due 5 pm Friday, Sept. 29
Week 7	Oct. 2	Fact Checking - Guest speaker: Lisa McLendon	Oct. 4	Voice Thread Conversation #4 Prepare for 10/9:
Week 8	Oct. 9	Propaganda - History, tools, techniques	Oct. 11	Voice Thread Conversation #5
Week 9	Oct. 16	Fall Break No Class	Oct. 18	Voice Thread Conversation #6 Prepare for 10/23
Week 10	Oct. 23	Making data tell the story you want, true or not.	Oct. 25	Case Study 2 assignment discussed via Voice Thread Prepare for 10/30:
Week 11	Oct. 30	Are there acceptable differences between “News” information and “Advertising, PR, Marketing” information?	Nov. 1	Case Study 2 - Due 5 pm Friday, Nov. 3
Week 12	Nov. 6	Does seeing really guarantee believability? How visuals influence our thinking	Nov. 8	Voice Thread Conversation #7 Prepare for 11/13:
Week 13	Nov. 13	Looking at the techniques for identifying manipulated images and false data visualizations	Nov. 15	Voice Thread Conversation #8 Prepare for 11/20:
Week 14	Nov. 20	Case Study 3 assignment discussed via Voice Thread No Face-to-Face class meeting today	Nov. 22	Thanksgiving Holiday No Class
Week 15	Nov. 27	Establishing your own standards for information sharing from a position of honesty and credibility.	Nov. 29	Voice Thread Conversation #9
Week 16	Dec. 4	Establishing your own standards for information sharing from a position of honesty and credibility.	Dec. 6	Voice Thread Conversation #10 Course review
Final	Dec. 15	Case Study 3 - Due 1 pm Friday Dec. 15 (or earlier)		This class does not give a final exam.