

Workshop Title: Seeking Reliable Sources in an Age of Fake News

Summary: The idea of “fake news” has gotten a lot of attention since Donald Trump began using the term in criticizing media outlets he dislikes. But the term is often misused, or applied inaccurately. In this workshop, students will learn how to recognize degrees of inauthenticity in the news, and they will consider and discuss instances of fake news as opposed to opinion, satire and other forms.

Locations: Could be in a classroom or in the library but requires online access.

Term: Fall

Specific Knowledge Outcomes:

- Students will develop a sense of “news literacy”
- Students will be able to pursue constructive strategies for dealing with false or misleading information
- Students will gain insight into the difference between fake news and opposing viewpoints

Activity: Have the class read the article “As Fake News Spreads Lies, More Readers Shrug at Truth” by Sabrina Tavernise (The New York Times, December 7, 2016).

<http://0-www.lexisnexis.com/library.bennington.edu/lnacui2api/api/version1/getDocCui?lni=5MBF-31G1-DXY4-X3C0&csi=270944,270077,11059,8411&hl=t&hv=t&hnsd=f&hns=t&hgn=t&oc=00240&perma=true>

The librarian offers a primer in media literacy with a focus on fake news and its variations. Then students break into small groups. Students are asked to consider the following questions:

- What does the phrase “fake news” mean?
- Have you ever been fooled by or unwittingly shared a fake or inaccurate news story?
- Where do we draw the line between free speech and regulation of social media?

Each group is given a URL, and asked to identify what category the content occupies. Groups return to share their findings.

List of URLs:

<http://greatamericandaily.com/barack-obamas-deep-state-caught-trying-to-fix-the-election/>

<http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2018/04/momentum-builds-to-appoint-second-special-counsel-to-investigate-hillary-clintons-ties-to-steele-dossier/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/feb/27/marijuana-legal-homeless-denver-colorado>

<https://www.theonion.com/planned-parenthood-opens-8-billion-abortionplex-1819572640>

<https://patriotics.blog/2017/08/15/pimpotus-trump-models-and-russias-human-traffickers/>

<https://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2018/03/economist-explains-4>

<https://www.exopolitics.org/qanon-reveals-vatican-rothschild-reptilian-connection-behind-the-deep-state/>