

University of Connecticut Fall 2020

Propaganda, Disinformation, and Hate Speech

HRTS/ANTH 3230 & ANTH 5305

Instructor: Professor Richard A. Wilson

Email: Richard.Wilson@uconn.edu

TA: Danielle J. Nadeau

Email: Danielle.J.Nadeau@uconn.edu

Office Hour: 3-4PM Wednesdays

Wilson: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/meet/raw03003>

Or, alternate weeks

Nadeau: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/meet/djn19001>

Propaganda is an age-old phenomenon that has been analyzed at least since Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the 4th Century BCE, but there is something new about the immediacy and scale of speech on social media in the current global context. Hate speech and disinformation are increasingly prevalent online and they have reshaped our global politics, culture and public discourse. Drawing on recent social science research and legal scholarship, this course examines the effects of disinformation and hate speech on individual moral decision-making as well as wider politics and culture. We will also examine First Amendment and international law of incitement and true threat, and evaluate the measures taken by social media companies, the courts, and governmental agencies to regulate speech online.

Course Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Evaluate the social science and law literature about free speech, online hate speech and disinformation, and in particular analyze the evidence for a causal relationship between hate speech and hate crimes.
- Critique the content moderation policies and procedures of social media companies.
- Evaluate the theories and methods used in social science studies of hate speech and propaganda.
- Apply the First Amendment law of incitement, true threat, and hate speech to case studies drawn from the new online environment.
- Articulate a position with respect to current debates and areas of contention such that they leave the course with a clearly articulated position on the balance between hate speech and free speech.
- Develop and apply specialized knowledge in one topical area of propaganda, disinformation, or hate speech in their final term paper.

Course Format

This is a 14-week course, starting on September 1st and ending on December 8th. This course is taught through a distance learning format that combines asynchronous elements with a one-hour seminar discussion on Blackboard Collaborate each Tuesday from 2-3PM. You will post original thoughts in your Discussion Group as indicated in the requirements section below.

Course Requirements and Grading

The requirements for this course are three-fold.

First, there is a midterm exam as indicated on the course schedule, comprised of both short and long essay questions. You will have five days to complete the exam, at home and you may use only the written materials in the course, including the readings and other documents available through the HuskyCT Website. I will provide a list of appropriate sources you may refer to. **No other online sources may be used or other research outside these documents.** You may not show the exam to others and you must work alone for both the exams and the weekly discussion posts and responses. SafeAssign will be employed through the assignment to check on any plagiarism. You will be on your own, and the exam is given on the “honor” system. Exams must be assembled as **Word documents** (not PDF’s) and submitted directly through HuskyCT.

The second set of assignments you will need to attend to are the weekly discussions. The weekly discussion posts will be posted online as part of discussion groups you will be assigned to. Each week you will post five original answers to the discussion questions posed to your group. Initial postings are due each week, every Friday by 5PM. In addition, you must post two responses to other posts from different members in your group, by Monday night of each week, again by 5PM. As the discussion groups are the main interactive method used by this course, you have from Friday through Monday of each week to read and comment on other posts from your group. Each weekly discussion will be closed after 5PM on the Monday of each weekly module and will be graded the following Monday. Therefore, in order to keep the discussion groups moving, **no late postings for each week’s discussion will be accepted.**

Finally, a 15-page term research paper is required. The paper may be on a subject of your choosing but clearly and closely related to the material and concepts discussed within the course:

- a) Each student will prepare a research-based term paper on a topic from the syllabus. You may use one of the discussion board questions or craft another question, BUT ONLY if the question has my written approval in an email in advance.
- b) Procedure:

- i. *After October 1st*: students may wish to discuss their ideas for the topic of their final paper with me. Until then, I recommend that you focus on your learning experience in the course.
 - ii. November 3rd @ 5PM: Proposed question posted via Blackboard Assignments.
 - iii. November 10th @ 5PM: You must submit an abstract (maximum 200 words), 1-page outline, and a bibliography. These must be approved before you write your paper. 10 points of the possible 100 will be assigned to the prompt delivery of the abstract and bibliography. If for some reason you do not submit the abstract and bibliography, the best you can receive on final submission of the paper is a 90.
 - iv. November 24th @ 5PM: An electronic draft of your paper submitted (in .docx or .txt) on Blackboard Assignment. We will reply with comments by Friday December 4th.
 - v. **Tuesday December 15th, 2020 @ 5pm: Students must submit their final term paper on Blackboard**
- c) Format:
- i. The paper should be analytical – not purely descriptive. Students are advised to use scholarly sources and primary source materials and to develop their argument in relation to one of the major themes in the course. Preferably, the paper will apply general ideas to a particular country, situation, or set of cases.
 - ii. Papers should be approximately 15 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins), excluding footnotes and bibliography.
 - iii. At least 8 sources must be included. Web based sources are only allowed when from published journals, published articles, or published books. No general information websites such as Wikipedia may be used.

Summary of Course Grading:

Course Components	Weight
HuskyCT Collaborate Seminar Preparedness and Participation	10%
Discussion Board Posts and Responses	30%
Midterm Exam	20%
Term Paper (Abstract, Annotated Bibliography/Literature Review, Rough Draft, Presentation, Final Paper)	40%

Grading Scale:

Grade	Letter Grade	GPA
93-100	A	4.0
90-92	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.3
83-86	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.3
73-76	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.7
67-69	D+	1.3
63-66	D	1.0
60-62	D-	0.7
<60	F	0.0

Due Dates and Late Policy

All course due dates are identified above. Deadlines are based on Eastern Standard Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submittal times accordingly. *The instructor reserves the right to change dates as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated in an appropriate manner.*

Late Policy: All graded elements are due according to the course syllabus that is published

and available on HuskyCT. **Please take particular note that the weekly discussion questions that require postings will not be accepted late.** The mid-term exam will be available online for an indicated period of time and due as specified in the course schedule. **Late exams submissions will not be accepted.** The final research paper will be due as specified and the grade will be reduced by one third for every day it is late. For example, if a paper grade would have been an A, but was turned in one day late it would be recorded as an A-. A paper that would have been graded as a B - but was turned in two days late would receive a C. Extensions for any assignments will only be granted for documented medical issues.

Feedback and Grades

I will make every effort to provide feedback and grades for exams within one week. To keep track of your performance in the course, refer to My Grades in HuskyCT.

Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to published standards and UConn academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. This section provides a brief overview to important standards, policies and resources:

Student Code

You are responsible for acting in accordance with the [University of Connecticut's Student Code](#) Review and become familiar with these expectations. In particular, make sure you have read the section that applies to you on Academic Integrity:

- [Academic Integrity in Undergraduate Education and Research](#)
- [Academic Integrity in Graduate Education and Research](#)

Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously at the University of Connecticut. As a student, it is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism. If you need more information about the subject of plagiarism, use the following resources:

- [Plagiarism: How to Recognize it and How to Avoid It](#)
 - [Instructional Module about Plagiarism](#)
 - [University of Connecticut Libraries' Student Instruction](#) (includes research, citing and writing resources)

Copyright

Copyrighted materials within the course are only for the use of students enrolled in the course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated.

Netiquette and Communication

At all times, course communication with fellow students and the instructor are to be

professional and courteous. It is expected that you proofread all your written communication, including discussion posts, assignment submissions, and mail messages. If you are new to online learning or need a netiquette refresher, please look at this guide titled, [The Core Rules of Netiquette](#).

Adding or Dropping a Course

If you should decide to add or drop a course, there are official procedures to follow:

- Matriculated students should add or drop a course through the [Student Administration System](#).
- Non-degree students should refer to [Non-Degree Add/Drop Information](#) located on the registrar's website.

You must officially drop a course to avoid receiving an "F" on your permanent transcript. Simply discontinuing class or informing the instructor you want to drop does not constitute an official drop of the course. For more information, refer to the:

- [Undergraduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)

Academic Calendar

The University's [Academic Calendar](#) contains important semester dates.

Academic Support Resources

[Technology and Academic Help](#) provides a guide to technical and academic assistance.

Students with Disabilities

Students needing special accommodations should work with the University's [Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\)](#). You may contact CSD by calling (860) 486-2020 or by emailing csd@uconn.edu. If your request for accommodation is approved, CSD will send an accommodation letter directly to your instructor(s) so that special arrangements can be made. (Note: Student requests for accommodation must be filed each semester.) Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government." (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from <http://www.blackboard.com/platforms/learn/resources/accessibility.aspx>)

Software Requirements and Technical Help

- You will need to download the latest version of [Microsoft Silverlight](#)
- Word processing software
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)

This course is facilitated online using the learning management platform, [HuskyCT](#). If you have difficulty accessing HuskyCT, contact UITS. From within the course, select the Student Help link at the top of the page.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files.
- Familiarity with Collaborate

University students are expected to demonstrate competency in Computer Technology. Explore the [Computer Technology Competencies](#) page for more information.

Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the [Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness](#) (OIRE). Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.

.....

The Course Content

Textbooks (ordered for UConn Barnes and Noble)

- Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (2018) *Propaganda and Persuasion*. 7th Ed.
- Richard Perloff (2012) *The Dynamics of Persuasion*. 6th Ed.

The course material is divided into three sections:

Part 1: What Are We Talking About? Background and Theory: weeks 1-6

Part 2: Contemporary Speech Issues: weeks 7-9

Part 3: Regulating Speech Through Legal and Non-Legal Means: weeks 10-14

Class	Media	Readings
<i>Part 1: What Are We Talking About? Background and Theory</i>		
1. The World of Propaganda, Disinformation, and Hate Speech <i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Sept 8</i>	Video: Andrew Marantz, " Inside the bizarre world of internet trolls and propagandists ," TED2019 (14:28), April 2019	Richard A. Wilson, Incitement on Trial: Prosecuting International Speech Crimes , Chapter 1, <i>only pp. 1-24</i> Andrew Marantz, " Free Speech is Killing Us ", NY Times (Oct. 4, 2019)
2. What is Propaganda? <i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Sept 15</i>	Video: Camille Langston, " How to Use Rhetoric to Get What You Want ," TED (4:10), 2016	Jowett & O'Donnell, Chapter 1, <i>only pp. 1-46</i>
3. Propaganda in Action <i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Sept 22</i>		Jowett & O'Donnell, Chapters 7-8, <i>only pp. 285-329</i>
4. Fear and Emotions <i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Sept 29</i>	Article and Videos: Jeremy B. Merrill & Olivia Goldhill, " These are the political ads Cambridge Analytica designed for you ," Quartz, 2020.	Perloff, Chapters 3 and 10, Attitudes, <i>only pp. 83-107; pp. 385-410</i>
5. "Who Says It:" Source Factors in Persuasion; The Elaboration Likelihood Model <i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Oct 6</i>	Video: " Experiment 20: the women who defied a controversial experiment ," Kathryn Millard (13:34), Mar. 11, 2018, <i>do readings before watching the video</i>	Perloff, Chapter 7, <i>only pp. 231-240</i> Perloff, Chapter 8, <i>only pp. 277-325</i> Dr. Stephen Gibson & Professor Kathryn Millard, " The women who defied the Milgram Experiment ," The British Academy (Mar. 9, 2018)
6. Fundamentals of the Message <i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Oct 13</i>	Podcast: " Why don't we care about facts? " BBC The Inquiry (23:00), Feb. 26, 2020	Perloff, Chapter 9, <i>only pp. 332-377</i>
By Friday October 16 th 5PM	<i>Mid-Term Exam on Topics 1-6</i>	Exam will be posted on HuskyCT at 9AM on Monday October 12th
<i>Part 2: Contemporary Speech Issues</i>		
7. Disinformation: Deepfakes and Public Manipulation <i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Oct 20</i>	Video: Danielle Citron, " How deepfakes undermine truth and threaten democracy ," TED2019 (13:09), July 2019 See CBS News reading for videos.	Alice Marwick & Rebecca Lewis, Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online , (May 15, 2017), <i>only pp. 1-49</i> . Danielle Citron, Deep Fakes: A Looming Challenge for Privacy, Democracy, and National Security , Cal. L. Rev. (Dec. 2019), <i>only pp. 1755-1758; 1788-1804</i>

		<p>Elections and Democracy in the Digital Age, Protecting Electoral Integrity in the Digital Age: The Report of the Kofi Annan Commission on Elections and Democracy in the Digital Age, only pp. 55-66 (Jan. 2020)</p> <p>Jason Silverstein, "Bots account for nearly half of Twitter accounts spreading coronavirus misinformation, researchers say" [Read short article and watch "Twitter tackles COVID-19 misinformation" (7:58) and "How to fight misinformation about coronavirus" (8:37) videos], CBS News (May 21, 2020)</p>
<p>8. Are there Any Harms in Hate Speech?</p> <p><i>Seminar discussion:</i> 2-3pm on Oct 27</p>		<p>Müller, Karsten and Schwarz, Carlo, Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime (Nov. 2019)</p> <p>Kunnal Relia et al., Race, Ethnicity and National Origin-based Discrimination in Social Media and Hate Crimes Across 100 U.S. Cities, (Jan. 21, 2019)</p>
<p>9. Hate Speech and Social Media Companies' Guidelines</p> <p><i>Seminar discussion:</i> 2-3pm on Nov 3</p>	<p>Podcast/Video/Transcript: "Constitutional Free Speech Principles Can Save Social Media Companies from Themselves," intelligence² Debates, Mar. 4, 2019. Required: Please watch, read the transcript, or listen to 0:00-31:00. Optional: 31:00-77:00.</p>	<p>Andrew Sellars Defining Hate Speech, Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University (Dec. 2016), only pp. 1-31</p> <p>Facebook: Community Standards (Including COVID-19 Community Standard Updates and Protections)</p> <p>Twitter: Hateful Conduct Policy</p> <p>Lata Nott & Brian Peters, Free Expression on Social Media, Freedom Forum Institute (use as reference guide)</p>
<p>Part 3: Regulating Speech Through Legal and Non-Legal Means</p>		
<p>10. Content Moderation and Section 230</p> <p><i>Seminar discussion:</i> 2-3pm on Nov 10</p>	<p>Podcast: "Deplatformed: Social Media Censorship and the First Amendment," Make No Law: The First Amendment Podcast (27:00), Aug. 28, 2019 (Warning, brief explicit content)</p>	<p>Kate Klonick, The New Governors: The People, Rules, and Processes Governing Online Speech, 131 Harv. L. Rev. 1598 (2018), only pp. 1630-1662</p>

	<p>Podcast: "Blocks, Bans And Blame: Social Media Reckons With Itself," 1A (34:33), Dec. 20, 2017</p>	<p>Access Now Protecting free expression in the era of online content moderation (May 2019), <i>only pp. 1-14</i></p> <p>President's Executive Order on Preventing Online Censorship, May 28, 2020</p>
<p>11. First Amendment Law of Incitement & True Threat</p> <p><i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Nov 17</i></p>	<p>Video: "The 3 Rules of Hate Speech and the First Amendment," Eugene Volokh & Austin Bragg (3:42), Feb. 19, 2019</p> <p>Video: "Fake News and the First Amendment: Free Speech Rules," Eugene Volokh & Austin Bragg (4:45), Apr. 10, 2019</p> <p>Podcast: "President Twitter and the First Amendment," What Trump can teach us about Con Law (22:00), June 8, 2018</p>	<p>Charlie Savage, "Trump Can't Block Critics From His Twitter Account, Appeals Court Rules," NY Times (July 9, 2019)</p> <p>Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969), <i>read all</i></p> <p>R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul, 505 U.S. 377 (1992), <i>only pp. 379-396</i></p> <p>Virginia v. Black, 538 U.S. 343 (2003), <i>only pp. 343-368</i></p> <p><i>Suggested but not required:</i> Accurate and comprehensive case briefs as well as explanatory videos of Brandenburg, RAV, and Black are available at https://www.quimbee.com/. This is a subscription website, but you can sign up for a free trial to get access to the videos for 7 days. The case briefs can help guide your reading, but in no way substitute reading the opinion.</p>
<p>12. The Perils of Criminalizing Hate Speech</p> <p><i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Dec 1</i></p>		<p>Nadine Strossen, Hate: Why We Should Resist it with Free Speech, Not Censorship (May 2018), <i>only pp. 1-36</i></p> <p>Richard Ashby Wilson, Propaganda on Trial (Feb. 2017), <i>only pp .266-293</i></p> <p>New York Times, Facebook Fails to Appease Organizers of Ad Boycott, (2020)</p>

<p><i>THANKSGIVING</i></p>		<p><i>EXPRESS GRATITUDE</i> <i>EAT</i></p>
<p>13. Free Speech vs. Regulation: Can We Strike a Balance?</p> <p><i>Seminar discussion: 2-3pm on Dec 8</i></p>	<p>Podcast: "Ethiopia's new law banning online hate speech," BBC Digital Planet (<i>only 0:00-10:24</i>), Mar. 1, 2020</p>	<p>Richard Ashby Wilson and Molly Land (2020) "Hate Speech on Social Media: Towards a Context-Specific Content Moderation Policy." <i>Connecticut Law Review</i>, Vol. 52.</p> <p>David L. Hudson, Jr., "Free speech or censorship? Social media litigation is a hot legal battleground," ABA Journal (Apr. 1, 2019)</p> <p>"Free Speech" Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the "Electronic Frontier Foundation" website <p>"Moderation" Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the "Change the Terms" website • "Recommended Internet Company Corporate Policies and Terms of Service to Reduce Hateful Activities" <p>Elections and Democracy in the Digital Age, Protecting Electoral Integrity in the Digital Age: The Report of the Kofi Annan Commission on Elections and Democracy in the Digital Age, <i>focus on pp. 41-54</i> (Jan. 2020)</p>

If you feel confused/behind:

- Podcast: "[Episode 4: How to Amend the Constitution](#)," Civics 101: A Podcast (13:26), 2017
- Podcast: "[Episode 27: How a Case Gets to the Supreme Court](#)," Civics 101: A Podcast (13:32), 2017

- Podcast: "[Episode 56: The 1st Amendment - Freedom of Speech](#)," Civics 101: A Podcast (14:46), 2017
- Consider signing up for a 7-day free trial at <https://www.quimbee.com/> for help with caselaw

If you want more information:

- Podcast: "[Facts Aren't Enough: The Psychology Of False Beliefs](#)," NPR Hidden Brain (51:00), July 22, 2019
- Podcast: "[How the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda Radicalized Germany](#)," History Unplugged Podcast (40:00), Jan. 14, 2020
- Podcast: "[Fake News: An Origin Story](#)," NPR Hidden Brain (27:00), June 25, 2018
- Joshua Rothman, "[In the Age of AI, Is Seeing Still Believing?](#)" The New Yorker (Nov. 5, 2018)
- Edwards, Griffin Sims and Rushin, Stephen, [The Effect of President Trump's Election on Hate Crimes](#) (Jan. 2018)
- Binny Mathew et al., [Thou Shalt Not Hate: Countering Online Hate Speech](#), Proceedings of the Thirteenth International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media (ICWSM 20)

