



## Fake News: The Classroom Struggle Between Facts & Opinion

**Number of Credits:** 1\*

**Course Instructors:** Miriam Woods and Jordan Mix

**Course Description:** As educators, it is a core responsibility that students are provided the skills necessary to formulate perspectives based on valid and reliable information. The values and underlying messages conveyed via news media, social media, and informational resources can shape the political and cultural views of our students. As political interest groups, 24-hour news cycles, and the “social media universe” push and promote specific information and messages, it is imperative that educators help our students understand the difference between facts and opinions and learn how find credible sources of information.

In this class, participants will understand the difference between facts and opinions and the ways our students struggle to differentiate between the two. We will analyze how we learn information from media and other resources and how that can shape conceptual understanding for our students. Participants will also learn about the ways to identify bias and evaluate sources, with attention focused on the ways we can ensure the perspectives from marginalized populations are heard. The course ends with an analysis of media and information literacy and strategies for engaging students in civil discourse in the classroom. The culminating assignment for the course is the development of an implementation plan for participants to take new learning back to their schools and classrooms.

**Learning Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Differentiate between facts, opinions, and valid arguments
- Communicate the various ways students find information (news, textbooks, internet, social media, etc.) and how that impacts classroom conversations and comprehension
- Identify best practices for identifying bias, evaluating credible sources, and utilize sources from various perspectives
- Analyze strategies for engaging students in civil discourse and information literacy skills.
- Develop an implementation plan to take new learns back to the classroom.

**Resources:** No texts are required to purchase in order to complete this course

- The mission of Iowa Safe Schools is to provide safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments for all students. Staff of the Iowa Safe Schools are experts in the fields of bullying prevention and intervention, developing positive school climate, and advocating for underrepresented and marginalized populations. GSAs are shown to be a best practice for increasing awareness of discriminatory school policies, reducing bullying, reducing deaths by suicide, and ensuring students feel safe and support in their schools and communities.
- Education Week. (2017). Survey: Teachers Talk Politics to Students, Despite Divisive Atmosphere. Retrieved July 31, 2019, from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/04/05/survey-national-politics-causing-classroom-divisions.html>

*This study explains the difficulty that educators feel when discussing politically charged topics in the classroom. The survey results linked an increase in bullying incidents and uncivil discourse in the classroom to the 2016 election cycle. Almost half (44 percent) of educators surveyed felt they were adequately trained to discuss controversial issues in a civic manner.*

- Agarwal-Rangnath, R. (2013). **Social Studies, Literacy, and Social Justice in the Common Core Classroom: A Guide for Teachers.** ISBN: 9780807754085.

*This book provides a framework (grades 3-8) to help educators literacy and social students for social studies. This text frames the lessons with the Language Arts Common Core Standards while also making it*

*applicable for the daily realities of the classroom. Each chapter explains how teachers can restructure, reshape, and work with mandated curriculum materials to teach from a critical perspective. The book also discusses how to meet Common Core Standards by teaching language arts and social studies as complementary subjects.*

**\*Course Requirements:** To receive full credit for the course, participants must complete ALL assignments and respond to specific questions outlined in each assignment. Failure to complete all assignments will result in a disqualification in the course and a failing grade.

**Other Course Information:**

**Getting Started**

- After registering for the course, you will be sent an email with the website address, password and course key you need to access your online course, along with login instructions.
- Access each assignment through the course home page. All assignments will be submitted through the Moodle platform on each respective assignment page.
- Please save a backup copy of all course assignments and completed work.

**Participation**

- You are not required to be present (i.e. online) specific days or times. You will work at your own pace. The course is structured in 3 Weekly Units, however all assignments will not be due until the final day of the course.
- All responses will be posted online. Large documents, files, photographs or PowerPoint presentations may be attached as part of your response by using the “Submit A File” option.
- You may work collaboratively and submit similar responses on all assignments except for quizzes which must be done individually.

**INTASC Standards that are addressed in this course:**

- 2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
- 3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- 4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students’ development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.
- 5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- 6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
- 7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
- 9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professional in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
- 10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students’ learning and well-being.

**Check the Iowa Teaching Standards that are addressed in this course:**

X	1. Enhance Student Achievement		5. Monitoring Student Learning
	2. Content Knowledge	X	6. Classroom Management
X	3. Planning and Preparation	X	7. Professional Growth
X	4. Instructional Strategies	X	8. Professional Responsibilities

## Assignment Checklist

Topic/Activity	In Class	Out of Class
<b>Getting to Know the Class; Additional Readings:</b> Take the time to get to know the class layout, read over the Help section, and review any other materials present in the class to get started. Take your time!		3 hrs
<b><u>Week 1 - Getting Started</u></b>		
<b>Introductions:</b> Take some time to introduce yourself and share what you hope to gain from the course.	1 hr	1 hr
<b>Discussion: Facts, Opinions, and Why They Matter:</b> In this lesson, participants will analyze the difference between facts and opinions. They will explore the extent to which our students can differentiate between the two. They will share their findings in a discussion post.	1 hr	2 hrs
<b>Discussion: How Do We Know What We Know?</b> In this lesson, participants will reflect on the ways they gather news and information through a discussion post. Participants will discuss common sources of information acquisition and how that impacts our understanding of the world.	1.5 hr	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: How What We Know Impacts the Classroom?</b> In this lesson, participants will reflect on how the media we use impacts our classrooms, including curriculum design, student research, and classroom conversations. Participants will share their understanding in a discussion post.	1.5 hr	3 hrs
<b><u>Week 2 - Diving Deeper</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: Discussion: Identifying Bias in Media:</b> Participants will examine biases present in popular news media today. Participants will share their reflections in a discussion post.	1.5 hr	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Evaluating the Reliability of Information –</b> Participants will explore strategies for students to evaluate the validity and reliability of informational resources as they learn and conduct research. Participants will share their understanding in a discussion post.	1.5 hr	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Understanding the Human Experience –</b> Participants will explore the ways in which voices from underrepresented populations are often disregarded in mass media and informational resources. Participants will read through strategies to infuse curriculum designed with multicultural education in mind.	1 hr	2 hrs
<b><u>Week 3 - Putting it to Work</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: Facts, Opinions, and Civil Dialogue –</b> In this lesson, participants will understand the importance of facilitating civil dialogue in the classroom and the ways students can practice formulate opinions based on factual information. Participants will share their understanding in a discussion post.	1 hr	2 hrs
<b>Discussion: What Is Media and Information Literacy –</b> In this lesson participants will explore what media and information literacy and the benchmarks students should be able to reach at each grade level pertaining to evaluating media and information. They will share their understanding in a discussion post.	1 hr	2 hrs
<b>Discussion: Fighting Fake News in the Classroom –</b> In this lesson, participants will analyze, research, and share about best practices in leveraging factual and credible sources of information in the classroom. Participants will share their findings in a discussion post.	2 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Final Assignment:</b> Participants will design and implementation plan that they will take back to their classrooms.	2 hrs	3 hrs
Total Class Time	15 hours	30 hours

**Coursework:** Participants can earn up to 75 points total for the course. The following table depicts the breakdown of points possible for the required coursework

Activity	Points
10 Discussion Posts (5 Points Each)	50
Final Implementation Plan/Paper	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

**Grading Scale – Graduate Credit**

100-90% (75 - 68 points)	A
89-80% (67 – 60 points)	B
79-70% (59 – 53 points)	C
69-60% (52 - 45 points)	D
59%-Below (<44 points)	F

**Grading Scale - License Renewal Credit**

100-80% (75 - 60 points)	P
79%-Below (<59 points)	NP

**Student Requirements** Students are required to:

- Participate in **ALL** discussion forums and quizzes
- Complete a final implementation plan

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** If you are a student with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this class, please see the instructor to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Statement of Plagiarism:** Academic dishonesty results in failure of this course. Give credit where credit is due. Use the APA Publication Manual to cite references when needed. Not crediting ideas or words of others is unacceptable scholarship as is submitting work that was done for a previous course or that is not your own origin in design or completion. Submit original assignments. Do not submit work for this course that you have done for other courses.

## Grading Rubrics for Individual Activities

**10 Discussions (50 points possible)** Discussion Forums are asynchronous ways to engage in class discussions. They require you to submit an answer to a question and respond to the posts of other peers. Because they are an integral part of sharing strategies, analyzing research, and sharing ideas, discussion forums in this course comprise a significant percentage of your final grade. It's highly recommended that you read and respond to more than the required two peer postings because greater participation will facilitate a greater depth of understanding. Additionally, it's important to make posts in a timely manner to benefit from peer responses.

<b>Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Makes connections to the other content and real-life that are supported by reference(s) and example(s)	1
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
<b>Assignment Specific Criteria</b>	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	1
<b>Participation (Responses to at least 2 peer posts)</b>	Responds to other posts (when available)	1
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		5

## Final Assignment (25 points possible)

The final assignment is a critical part of this course. Participants must complete a two-page final assignment. The paper is meant to be a reflection as well as a chance to state what you will use going forward. The rubric below will be used to grade the final assignment, but additional details will be provided within the course.

<b>Grading Rubric for Implementation Plan</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Highlights any new knowledge gained as a result of course.	5
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	5
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	3
	Discusses Overall Implications	2
<b>Assignment Specific Criteria</b>	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	2
<b>Mechanics</b>	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized, No or few grammar and spelling errors	2
<b>Implementation</b>	Clearly states ideas to use in the future	2
	States resources to be used	2
	Is realistic in their approach – understands limitations may exist	2
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		25