University Seminar 1301 Fall 2017
Thinking Critically about Fake News
CRN: 12944

Course Meeting Times: TR 10:30 pm to 11:50 pm
Location: Bell Hall 130A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Peer Leader</th>
<th>Librarian</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
<td>Kristina Barron, M.S.</td>
<td>Ana Gutierrez Zubiate</td>
<td>Robert Klapthor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office</strong></td>
<td>Bell Hall 100</td>
<td>UGLC 212</td>
<td>LIB 228</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Office Hours</strong></td>
<td>TR 9:00 – 10:00 am</td>
<td>T 12:00 to 2:00 pm</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kibarron@utep.edu">kibarron@utep.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:apgutierrez3@miners.utep.edu">apgutierrez3@miners.utep.edu</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phone</strong></td>
<td>(915) 747-8027, 0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>(915) 747-5040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme:** Thinking Critically about Fake News

**Description:** This course is designed to help students acclimate to their new role as college students. The skills they will learn in this course can be applied to all other courses taken throughout their college career. The central theme of this course revolves around thinking critically about scientific journalism and its impact on the student personally, professionally, and in their community. We will explore how to evaluate sources and how to identify cognitive biases that lead to pitfalls in human logic.

**This syllabus is subject to change without notice not including changes that may significantly alter grading procedures**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the common cognitive biases that lead people to accept information that may not be entirely true.
2. Identify if a science news article can/should be trusted.
3. Know the difference between trusted and untrustworthy source material.
4. Create and understand the difference between the different levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy questions.
5. Create and apply study guides for exams.
6. Know how to more efficiently manage their time.
7. Identify the strengths they currently possess that will allow them to succeed at the university level.
8. Understand how to better manage their personal finances.
9. Come up with an effective research strategy they can apply to later coursework.
10. Have practiced effective speech and communication techniques.
11. Understand how to set SMART goals.
12. Work in groups more effectively.
Course Textbook and required materials:

*Borders: Crossing into Your Future* 7th Edition: Electronic or Paper copy
1 notebook for your Leadership and Reflection assignments

**UNIV 1301 Description and Goals**

In UNIV 1301, entering students will build on their talents, skills, and experiences to successfully transition to UTEP. UNIV 1301 will support students’ academic excellence, leadership development, and campus and community engagement, paving the way to success in their educational and professional pursuits.

1. Students will develop and apply elements of leadership through effective individual participation and meaningful team collaboration to empower them to be agents of change.
   - Students will assess and reflect on their strengths and leadership skill development.
   - Students will engage in active learning through individual, team, and class activities that develop their leadership skills.
   - Students will learn more about collaboration, roles, and facilitation skills through faculty instruction and student practice.
   - Students will develop effective interpersonal communication skills to include listening, sharing diverse perspectives, and soliciting others’ viewpoints.
   - Students will improve their interpersonal conflict resolution (management) strategies.

2. Students will examine the roles and responsibilities crucial for their success in college and beyond.
   - Students will examine personal and social transition issues affecting college success.
   - Students will become familiar with the importance of participating in high-impact practices identified in the UTEP Edge.
   - Students will engage in at least one academic and one professional goal-setting activity or exercise.
   - Students will develop a plan of study by participating in appropriate academic advising.
   - Students will demonstrate knowledge of the rules of academic integrity and will practice acceptable academic behavior.
   - Students will become familiar with major UTEP academic policies and requirements in order to remain in good academic standing and graduate in a timely manner.
• Students will demonstrate regular use of university communication systems, such as email, bulletin broadcasts, websites, and Mobile Campus.

3. Students will identify, assess, and build on their strengths and experiences to develop academic and transitional strategies necessary for success in their academic, career, and life goals.

• Students will reflect on their responsibility for and contribution to their own learning.
• Students will work to improve their oral, written, and electronic communication skills.
• Students will work to improve their academic success strategies such as note-taking, annotation, active reading, test taking, time management, and stress management.
• Students will become familiar with learning management systems such as Blackboard.
• Students will examine their academic, career, and life goals by participating in at least one self-assessment activity about their interests, abilities, and values.
• Students will participate in at least one activity, exercise, or information session to become familiar with the steps, including post-graduate education, required to prepare for a career.

4. Students will engage in research and critical thinking activities that demonstrate their ability to effectively integrate their learning within, across, and beyond academic settings.

• Students will engage in critical thinking and problem-solving through individual, team, and class activities.
• Students will demonstrate the ability to develop an effective research strategy based on the specifications of the research assignment.
• Students will engage in library and database research.
• Students will locate and critically evaluate the reliability, validity, and accuracy of sources.
• Students will develop a project that involves critical evaluation and effective integration of sources.
• Students will demonstrate the ethical use of sources such as accurate paraphrasing, quotations, and citations.
• Students will reflect on how the research process applies to their learning within, across, and beyond academic settings.
5. Students will engage in campus and community activities to increase their sense of academic and social belonging.

- Students will begin to build networks of faculty, staff, and peers to create a supportive and positive learning environment.
- Students will attend/participate in a minimum of two social, cultural, and intellectual events at UTEP.
- Students will become aware of and use selected academic and student support resources.
- Students will meet one-on-one in person or virtually at least twice with the instructional team to discuss and receive feedback about their academic progress and transition to UTEP.
- Students will meet in person or virtually with at least two other faculty or staff members important to their academic progress such as their academic advisor, their other professors, teaching assistants and/or tutors.
- Students will become familiar with the university’s student organizations.

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance to every class is compulsory. Failure to attend 3 or more classes will result in being dropped from the course. This includes medical emergencies, doctor’s appointments, family emergencies, etc. As always, nothing is ever black and white, and there are options available to you if you find yourself close to the 3 absence mark. Always speak to your instructor if you anticipate an absence or if you are absent. Exceptions to this rule are at the instructor’s discretion ONLY, and will require some sort of documented “proof” in order to be excused (See below). The student will still be responsible for any and all assignments regardless of excused or unexcused absence.

**Excused Absences for University-Recognized Activities [From the university catalog]**

“Students who will be absent while representing the University in officially recognized University activities (sports, band, professional conferences, etc.) must notify the Dean of Students not less than ten (10) days prior to the absence. The Dean of Students will provide the student with a letter of excuse for the professors. It is the student’s responsibility to give the letter to the professors prior to the official recognized activity. Students following these procedures will be permitted to make up both assignments and examinations in consultation with faculty.”

**Absence for Religious Holy Days [From the university catalog]**

“Religious holy day means a day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. Section 51.911 of the Texas Education Code and 19 Texas Administrative Code 4.4 related to absences by students for observance of religious holy days states that the institution shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection cannot be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within
a reasonable time after the absence. The student must provide written notice to the instructor of each course that he or she will be absent for a religious holy day not less than 10 days prior to the absence. If a student and an instructor disagree about the nature of the absence being for the observance of a religious holy day as defined therein, or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor can request a ruling from the Provost or the Provost’s designee. The student and the instructor shall abide by the decision of the Provost or designee.”

**Military Leave [From the university catalog]**

“Section 51.9111, Texas Education Code, and 19 Texas Administrative Code 4.9 provides that students be excused from scheduled classes or other required activities if the student is called to and participates in active military service for a reasonably brief period and that the student shall be allowed to complete an assignment or exam within a reasonable time after the absence. The excused absence is permitted only if the student will not miss more than 25% of the total number of class meetings or the contact-hour equivalent (not including the final examination period) for the specific course or courses in which the student is enrolled at the beginning of the period of active military service.

Students called to active military service must provide a copy of their military orders to the instructor of each course. Further information is available under Complete Withdrawal Due to Active Military Service.”

**Absence from Examinations [From university catalog]**

“A student absent from a test during the semester is graded zero (0) unless another policy is set by the instructor.”

**Grading Policy**

- 250 points for Final Project
- 155 points for Attendance (5 per day)
- 155 points for Participation (5 per day)
- 150 points for PPT and Infographic
- 100 points for the One-on-One Conference (50 points for myself and 50 points for Peer Leader)
- 90 points for Semester Long Assignments (30 points each)
- 50 points MISC Assignments
- 50 points for completing the ESP Survey

1000 points total

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<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000-900</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>899-800</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>799-700</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>699-600</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>599-0</td>
<td>F</td>
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Remember: You **earn** your grade, I do not give you one.
Assignments:

Blackboard Discussions:

All discussion assignments begin on the Monday it is assigned at 8:00 AM, and will end on that Friday at 11:59 PM. For example, if the discussion is assigned for the week of September 18th, it will open on September 12th at 8:00 AM and will close on September 22nd at 11:59 PM. You will not be able to post after it closes.

Fake Science News Project:

The final project for this course will consist of evaluating a fake science news article and re-writing the article so that it is non-biased and accurate. This project will require students to create a research plan, a blog to track progress, and various meeting days at the library to learn how to evaluate sources and conduct research.

Daily Activities:

Each day will involve a short quiz to take attendance, a leadership activity, and a reflection activity before we begin the subject assigned for that day. Leadership activities may be done in groups or individually and are for a grade. Reflection activities will most likely be on the material covered the previous class period but may sometimes be done at the end of the day depending on the topic(s) covered in class.

ESP Student Feedback Survey:

You will be receive an invitation to your UTEP email to complete the ESP Student Feedback Survey online near the end of the semester. This is a required assignment. I will be notified when you have completed the survey, but your responses will not be viewable to me.

Semester long assignments:

There are 3 assignments that can be completed at any time during the semester.

1. You must attend 3 UTEP sponsored events/exhibits/sports games etc. and turn in “proof” that you attended. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, ticket stubs, pamphlets, signed flyers etc.

2. You must attend the office hours of at least 2 different professors (not including myself) and obtain their signature.

3. You must attend an Academic Advising session and bring me your advising form.

Policies:

1.1 Student Conduct: [From the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs]

“All students are expected and required to obey federal, state, and local laws, to comply with the Regents’ Rules and Regulations, with The University of Texas System and University rules and regulations, with directives issued by an administrative official of the U.T. System or The University of Texas at El Paso in the course of his or her authorized duties, and to observe standards of conduct appropriate for an academic institution.”
1.3.1 Scholastic Dishonesty: [From the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs]

“It is the official policy of the University that all suspected cases or acts of alleged scholastic dishonesty must be referred to the Office for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for investigation and appropriate disposition. It is contrary to University policy for a faculty member to assign a disciplinary grade such as an "F" or zero to an assignment, test, examination, or other course work as a sanction for admitted or suspected scholastic dishonesty in lieu of normally charging the student through the Office for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Similarly, students are prohibited from proposing and/or entering into an arrangement with a faculty member to receive a grade of "F" or any reduced grade in lieu of being charged with scholastic dishonesty. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.”

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UTEP Final Exam Policy [From the 2016-17 UTEP Undergraduate Catalog]:

“Exemption from final examinations cannot be given. Final examinations are scheduled to be two hours, forty-five (45) minutes in length and take place during the final examination period. It is the policy of the University not to administer a second final examination in a course. It is also University policy that students shall not have more than two final examinations in a single day. In the unlikely event that the examination schedule results in a student having three final examinations on a single day, the faculty member upon the request of the student shall reschedule the second of that student’s three examinations.”

Plagiarism: [From the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs]

"Plagiarism" means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own academic work offered for credit, or using work in a paper or assignment for which the student had received credit in another course without direct permission of all involved instructors.”

Students with Disabilities Policy:

If you have or suspect a disability and need an accommodation you should contact Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or at cass@utep.edu or go to Room 106 Union East Building. Accommodations must be made available to instructor by the first day of class. Assignments whose due date has passed prior to instructor having been informed of CASS designated accommodations cannot be made up.

Foster Homeless Adopted Resources (FHAR):
If you or someone you know have aged out of foster care in Texas, were adopted, or find yourself homeless or with unstable/inadequate housing while at school, there may be resources available to you. See me or a FHAR advisor at the Academic Advising Center.

Electronic Devices:

Some assignments will require the use of a smartphone and/or laptop/tablet. You will always be notified ahead of time when you will need to bring these materials. If these items are not available to you arrangements can be made by speaking to me about it before the class we need to use them for.

Email account:

Communication for this course will include email to and from your @miners.utep.edu account. If you have a preferred email you would like to use instead of your MINERS account, you must change your email setting in Goldmine. I will send out test emails at the beginning of the semester to verify email is working. Afterwards, there will be no excuse for not having seen/read an email from me or your classmates.

Important Dates:

**Census Day:** September 13th

**Mid-term Grades E-mailed to Students:** October 30th

**Course Drop Deadline:** November 3rd

**Last day of classes and complete withdrawal from the University:** December 7th

**Dead Day:** December 8th

**Final Grades Posted:** December 21st

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>HW/Important Info</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>29-Aug</td>
<td>Introduction/ What is a Leader?/Airplane Design</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>31-Aug</td>
<td>Time management/Bring internet device next class</td>
<td>Time management/Study Skills/Note Taking</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>5-Sep</td>
<td>Bring news article next class</td>
<td>Oatmeal Comic Reflection/Cognitive Biases/Plane Rebuild</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>7-Sep</td>
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<td>Evaluating Sources/Project introduction/Conflict Resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>12-Sep</td>
<td>Research Plan</td>
<td>Group Contracts/ Research Plan/ Exam reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>14-Sep</td>
<td>Research Plan due</td>
<td>Revise Plan/Plagiarism/Paraphrasing/Citing Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>19-Sep</td>
<td>Create blog</td>
<td>Money Management/Stress Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>21-Sep</td>
<td>Exam 1 Review</td>
<td>Library Day - Identifying reputable sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>26-Sep</td>
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<td>Student-Professor Interaction Etiquette</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>28-Sep</td>
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<td>Campus Scavenger Hunt</td>
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<td>Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>3-Oct</td>
<td>Bring computer next class</td>
<td>OSCRR/FAHR Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>5-Oct</td>
<td>Styles of presenting information: Infographics</td>
<td>UTEP Edge</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>10-Oct</td>
<td>Infographic</td>
<td>Setting SMART Goals/GPA Calculation</td>
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<td>12-Oct</td>
<td>Mid Semester Reflection</td>
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<td>Exam 2 Review</td>
<td>Library Day - Source evaluation for Project</td>
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<td>19-Oct</td>
<td>Mine Tracker</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>24-Oct</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Styles of presenting information: Mine Tracker infographic</td>
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<td>Public Speaking Skills</td>
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<td>31-Oct</td>
<td>Public Speaking Skills pt 2</td>
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<td>R</td>
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<td>Invention PPT presentations pt 2</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>9-Nov</td>
<td>Exam 3 Review</td>
<td>Library Day- finding sources for article rewrite</td>
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<td>14-Nov</td>
<td>Consent/Healthy Living</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>16-Nov</td>
<td>Second Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Group work on Final Project</td>
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<td>Styles of presenting information: 5 min speech</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>23-Nov</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>28-Nov</td>
<td>Career Planning/Library/Choices</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>30-Nov</td>
<td>End of Semester Reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>5-Dec</td>
<td>Exam 4 Review</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>14-Dec</td>
<td>Final Exam Review</td>
<td>Final 10:00 am to 12:45 pm/ Article Presentation</td>
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Questions about syllabus:
Classmate Contact Info:

1. Name:
   a. Phone:
   b. Email:

2. Name:
   a. Phone:
   b. Email:

3. Name:
   a. Phone:
   b. Email: