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University of Richmond First Year Seminar

FYS 100: A Generation of Cynics Fall 2018

Course Times: Monday (M) & Wednesday (W) 12:00 – 1:15pm Regular Course Location: Weinstein 314

Course Instructors

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Pronouns: She/Her/Hers Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Introduction

Note from the Instructors:

We look forward to learning from you as much as sharing what we know. The subject matter of this seminar is close to our hearts. We will, at times, speak very passionately. We do not expect you will adopt all (or any!) of our views. Perhaps we will adopt some of yours. We're in this together and if you ever feel like we aren't, please do not hesitate to come speak to us.

During the coming weeks, we'll be grappling with sensitive and sometimes controversial subject matter. We will always do my best to fairly and sensitively moderate discussion, as well as make ourselves open to difference and opposition. We expect the same from you. We encourage you to share your varied positionalities in the spirit of community, learning, and growth, but also know that it is no one's responsibility to "teach" another about difference. We are all responsible for learning about each other and the world.

We are personally, pedagogically committed to equity and justice. These are the things that inform our practice. In this space, our expectation is that we all honor the experiences and lives of others. We will do our best to assume good intentions and ask that you do same. That means trusting one another as best we can. Welcome to your first year seminar!

¹ Language borrowed and altered from Courtnie N. Wolfgang, PhD- Assistant Professor of Art Education, VCUarts (2018) cnwolfgang@ycu.edu

Overview of Course

The purpose of this course is to explore the creation, consumption, and dissemination of information. The Internet has globalized and democratized access to information. Critical literacy has not kept up with that access, contributing to a generation that can be either too cynical or too accepting. Using a mix of scholarly and popular sources, students will explore their own information seeking behaviors, think about biases, and ultimately begin to place themselves as both consumers and creators of information.

FYS Objectives and Aims of First-Year Seminar

This course, as a First-Year Seminar (FYS), was created to enhance and sharpen your college level reading, writing, and analytical skills through the lens of information work. In class we will be wrestling with questions such as: How does the process of seeking information create networks? What are the implications of corporate control of information? How do we create, judge, and evaluate the "value" of information? Can information ever be unbiased?

Learning Objectives and Course Goals

All First-Year Seminars share the same five common goals:

- Expand and deepen students' understanding of the world and of themselves
- Enhance their ability to read and think critically
- Enhance their ability to communicate effectively, in writing, speech, and other appropriate forms
- Develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research
- Provide the opportunity for students to work closely with a faculty mentor

Blackboard

All course-related information will be available on Blackboard. That includes readings, copies of the syllabus, assignments, rubrics, and grades. If you have not already, please familiarize yourself with the Blackboard website and contact us immediately if you have any difficulties. We may also use Blackboard to post announcements and other communication.

Course Readings and Access

Required Text

danah boyd. 2014. It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens. New Haven,
 CT: Yale University Press.

This text is available for purchase in the campus bookstore. It is also freely available on Blackboard, but if you prefer to read on paper, it will be more efficient and eco-friendly to simply buy a copy of the printed book (rather than printing it out yourself).

A physical copy of the text is also available at Boatwright Library as a Course Reserve. It can be checked out for two hours at a time by asking at the front desk.

Additional readings will be required throughout the semester and are listed in the course schedule on the day when we will discuss them (that is, you should have read them PRIOR TO class on that day). All readings will be available through Blackboard. It is recommended that you print out copies of these readings and bring them with you to class. We will be providing reading guides for all of the assigned readings. Quizzes will be based upon the reading guides and will be open-note.

Course Work Expectations and Submitting Assignments

Your final grade will be based upon your performance on written assignments, class participation, discussion leadership, and your oral presentation. This is a seminar-based class. This means you **must** do the readings and participate during class discussions. Participation will be measured will be through pop quizzes, reading logs and in-class discussion engagement.

We will provide a rubric for all written assignments that clarify our expectations on your writing. All of your written assignments are scaffolded, meaning that they are created to build upon each other. To receive a passing grade for this course, you must hand in all written assignments and complete the required oral presentation. Failure to do will result in an F for the course.

We recognize that reading, researching, and writing are processes. To that end, we have built in time in class to revise, rewrite, and think. Our ultimate goal is to help you become a better reader, writer, and thinker who is prepared for—and excited about—future college-level work. We want you to produce products in this class that you are genuinely interested in and passionate about.

In this class

As social scientists, we are aware of the role unconscious bias can play in evaluation and so will attempt to remove as much of that bias as possible. To do so, we ask that you submit all of your writing assignments with your UR ID and word count in the upper left corner INSTEAD OF your name. We ask that you submit all of your written assignments through Blackboard (with the exception of your rough draft, which requires that you bring a paper

copy with you to class, and peer review forms, which you will complete on paper). All papers should be in 12-point font and in MS Word format. Please use the Sixth Edition of APA as the guide for writing and referencing your work. We will be reviewing APA several times during class. Please do not email assignments to us. When we finish grading your assignments, we will match them up to your name in Blackboard and return the graded assignment back to you via Blackboard.

Special Issues for this Team-Taught Course:

- 1. Communication: We (instructors) will work hard to communicate clearly and consistently with each other and with you (students), so we ask the same of you. Please communicate with us as much as possible and if you need to email us something urgent, please email both of us.
- 2. Grading: At the beginning of the semester, we will both review each piece of written work, will both provide comments, and then will work together to give you a grade. Later in the semester, you may receive comments and a grade from only one of us for a given assignment, but both of us will always read all of your writing and we will be careful to balance grading to avoid bias.

Assessments

Points
15
25
5
5
25
5
40
40
10
60
20
30
20
30
60
60

Throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to earn up to 450 points towards your final course grade. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. We will monitor your participation in class discussions and other forms of class participation and at the end of the semester we will provide you with a final score. Mid-semester, we will provide you with an estimate of your participation score and you will be required to complete a self-assessment.

Fractional grades may be rounded up at the discretion of the instructors. This will only occur when you have demonstrated sustained involvement and engagement with the course material. This sustained engagement can be demonstrated by consistent attendance, handing in all assignments on time and regular participation in class discussions.

You will also have several opportunities to earn extra credit points for things such as attending Academic Skills Center workshops, campus lectures, and events. These opportunities will be announced as they occur over the course of the semester and we will give specific instructions about what you must do to earn credit. All extra credit must be completed by November 26, 2018.

Once all assignments have been scored, we will calculate the final course grade.

The grade scale is as follows:

Attendance Policies and Student Safety

We will take attendance in every class. You are welcome to miss up to 2 classes without penalty. After missing more than 2 classes, we will subtract 3 percentage points from your final grade. If you miss more than two classes, we will be concerned with your ability to keep with the course work and discussions. We do however recognize that life is complicated and you may be sick or have familial obligations. If attendance becomes a problem, communicate with us. Credibility is earned and communicating clearly is one way to earn credibility.

Absences for Religious Observances and Holidays: The University is a secular institution that values a diversity of religious expression. Any student may be excused from class or other assignments because of religious observance. A student who will miss an academic obligation because of religious observance is responsible for contacting his or her professor

within the first two weeks of the semester. The student is responsible for completing missed work in a timely manner. The entire religious observance policy may be found at: http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/religiousobsv.html
Late Paper Policy

We expect all papers to be submitted on the day that they are due. If they are not submitted on time, you will be penalized 10% of your grade. i.e. if your paper was a B+, it will now be a C+. 10% will be taken for every day a paper is late. If there is an emergency or problem with submitting a paper, please let us know as soon as possible.

Cell Phone and Device Policies

This course is designed to be a collaborative and discussion based class. So we ask that you put away all laptops and cell phones during the class period. Please take notes on paper.

Exceptions to this rule may be made on a case-by-case basis. One of the books is available online and if you need to use the online version of the book, you may open your device.

Support for First Year Seminars

Counseling and Psychological Services: CAPS (http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps/ or (804) 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Writing Center: The Writing Center (http://writing.richmond.edu or (804) 289-8263) assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work. The Writing Center is located in Boatwright Library on the first floor in the Research Commons area and we have a Writing Consultant assigned to our course, Amanda Brosnan. Part of your grade will involve making appointments with Amanda after the completion of your annotated bibliography and after finishing the rough draft of your final paper.

Library: An important aspect of this First Year Seminar is the work you will do to build your information literacy and library research skills. These skills will be developed throughout the semester, but enhanced by our library research session with our FYS librarian, Natisha Harper (nharper@richmond.edu).

The library research session will introduce you to Natisha and to the resources available at the UR Libraries, including the library website, catalog and research databases. The session will also discuss ways to cite and evaluate your information.

Even though your instructors are also librarians and are available any time to help you with library research, we think it's important that you have the option to meet with a librarian

who is not your instructor and can model the role that librarians will play throughout your career at UR. Feel free to email Natisha any time for help or consultation about your research.

Getting help from our Writing Consultant and Librarian are authorized and encouraged!

Safe Zone

We are members of a Safe Zone Ally community network, and we are available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. As a Safe Zone Allies, we can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity. Our goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.

In accordance with Title IX, it is policy at UR that students, faculty, staff, and visitors may use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity. If you prefer the use of a single-stall or gender inclusive bathroom, here is a map to help you identify where they are!

Academic Integrity

Integrity is at the heart of scholarship and, you will likely find, many aspects of your life. We will discuss the specifics of what integrity means in an academic environment, but in short, you are expected to understand and uphold the <u>UR Honor Code</u> at all times, err on the side of caution, and ask questions if you are unsure.

WEEK 1

August 27

Syllabus Review, Classroom Expectations

August 29

boyd, preface, Introduction & Chapter 1 RT 30-35 min

WEEK 2

September 3

WIP ORIGINAL ARTICLE (STEP 1) due by 11:45am

- Wildemuth, "Developing a research question" RT 10-15 min
- Complete "What is a Research Question?" ASU Quiz RT 5-10 min

September 5

INFORMATION LOG due by 11:45am

- Irvin, "What is Academic-Writing?" RT 15-20 min
- Lettuca and Stark, excerpt from "Shaping the College Curriculum" RT 15-20 min
- Hjortshoj, "Rules and Errors" RT 15-20 min

WEEK 3

September 10

- White, "Authoring the self: Scholarly identity in Performative Times" RT 10 min
- Grollman, "Objectivity doesn't exist (and that's a good thing)" RT 10 min
- Sumerau, "What is me-search?" RT 10 min
- Jafar, "Fox News, Aslan and the Presumption of Bias" RT 5 min
- boyd, "what's in a name": http://www.danah.org/name.html RT 5 min

September 12

INFORMATION LOG RESPONSE PAPER due by 11:45am

- boyd, Ch. 2 RT 20 min
- Dash, "What is public" RT 10 min
- Find Twitter Trolls (Username/PW) (GenofCynicsUR@gmail.com/Fallof2018) RT
 25 min

WEEK 4

September 17

WIP FINDING A SCHOLARLY SOURCE (STEP 2) due by 11:45am

- King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" RT 20 min
- Review boyd, Ch. 2 RT 5 min

September 19

- Bloyd-Peshkin & Sivek, "Magazines find there's little time to fact-check online"
 RT 10-15 min
- Berry, "Why objectivity still matters" RT 10 min
- McPherson, "McPherson, "How editors choose which human rights news to cover: a case study of Mexican newspapers" RT 25 min
- TBD

WEEK 5

September 24

Discussion Leaders Group 1

- Bergstrom & West, "How do you know a paper is legit?" RT 10-15 min
- Kluger, "Why scientists should celebrate failed experiments." RT 5 min
- Podcast: "Adam Ruins Everything Episode 38: Professor Brian Nosek On Science's Reproducibility Crisis and Opportunity" (first 20 minutes) RT 20 min

September 26

WIP INITIAL REFLECTION PAPER (STEP 3) due by 11:45am

• Treem & Leonardi, "What is expertise? Who is an expert? Some definitive answers" **RT 10-15 min**

WEEK 6

October 1

• boyd, Ch. 6 **RT 25 min**

October 3

- Bizup, "An Alternative Vocabulary that Emphasizes Use" from BEAM: A rhetorical vocabulary for teaching research based writing. pp 75-77 ONLY RT 5 min
- Swales, "Create a Research Space" RT 10-15 min
- Booth, Colomb, & Williams, "Assembling Reasons and Evidence" RT 10-15 min

WEEK 7

October 8

Library Session: Meet in Boatwright Library (specific room TBA)

October 10

WIP SAMPLE ANNOTATION (STEP 4a) due by 11:45am

- Dvorsky, "The 12 cognitive biases that prevent you from being rational" RT 5-10
 min
- The Oatmeal, "You're Not Going to Believe What I'm About to Tell You" RT 10 min

WEEK 8

FALL BREAK: No class October 15

October 17

Discussion Leaders Group 2

- Wright, "The secret history of hypertext" RT 5-10 min
- Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" RT 25 min
- Groeger, "When the designer shows up in the design" RT 20 min

WEEK 9

October 22

WIP ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (STEP 4b) due by 11:45 am

October 24

• Jeffries, "Google's featured snippets are worse than fake news" RT 10-15 min

- Noble, "The Power of Algorithms"; "A Society, Searching"
- Benton, "The forces that drove this election's media failure are likely to get worse" RT 10-15 min

WEEK 10

October 29

- Best, "Thinking about Social Statistics" RT 10-15 min
- Levitin, "How Numbers are collected" RT 10-15 min

October 31

Discussion Leaders Group 3

- boyd & Crawford, "Six provocations for big data" RT 25 min
- O'Neil, "Introduction" & Ch. 1 "Bomb Parts, What is a Model?" RT 25 -30 min
 - o Optional "Ch. 3 "Arms Race, Going to College"

WEEK 11

November 5

Discussion Leaders Group 4

- Davies, "How Statistics lost their power" RT 10 -15 min
- Mooney, "The Science of why we don't believe science" RT 15 -20 min

November 7

WIP ROUGH DRAFT (STEP 5) due on Blackboard by 11:45am AND bring a copy with you to class

WEEK 12

November 12

Discussion Leaders Group 5

- Caulfield, "Yes, digital literacy. But which one?" RT 20-25 min
- boyd, "Did Media Literacy Backfire?" RT 10-15 min
- boyd, "Ch. 7" RT 20-25 min

November 14

WIP Peer Review Class Session (Step 6)

WEEK 13

November 19

Guest speaker: Race and Racism Project Archivist Irina Rogova

• Drake "Documenting dissent in the contemporary college archive; Finding our function within the liberal arts" **RT 15 -20 min**

THANKSGIVING BREAK: No class November 21

WEEK 14

November 26

• Excerpt from Quinn, "Introduction to Ethics"

November 28

• No formal class. Instead we'll have one-on-one paper review appointments – schedule will be posted on Bb.

WEEK 15

December 3

Jackson & Jamieson, "Was Clarence Darrow a Creationist? How to be sure." RT
 15 -20 min

December 5

WIP FINAL PAPER (STEP 7) due by 11:45am

• Skim ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education **RT 15 -20** min

Finals Period

Monday Dec 10th, 9am-12pm

WIP Final Presentations (Step 8)

Thursday Dec 13th

WIP FINAL REFLECTION PAPER (STEP 9) due on Blackboard by 9:00 AM

Course Bibliography: An APA-style list of all our course readings.

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- Davies, W. (2017, January 19). How statistics lost their power and why we should fear what comes next. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jan/19/crisis-of-statistics-big-data-democracy
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- Groeger, L. (2017, April 4). When the designer shows up in the design. *ProPublica*.

 Retrieved from https://www.propublica.org/article/when-the-designer-shows-up-in-the-design
- Grollman, E. (2014, April 10). Objectivity doesn't exist (and that's a good thing). Conditionally Accepted. Retrieved from https://conditionallyaccepted.com/2014/04/10/objectivity/
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