



# MITCHELL

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## C O L L E G E

### Honors Program

### **Semester:** Spring 2022: Session I

**Course Title:** Honors Seminar II (HR202A)

**Credits:** 1

**ABE Abilities to be Assessed:** L2 ICT      **Ability:** Level 2: Information and Communication Technology

**Instructor:** Dr. O’Leary  
Associate Professor – Humanities Department

**Office Hours:** Monday and Thursday (10:30-11:30am) and Tuesday (9:30-11:30am)

**Office location:** 302 Bond House

**Office Phone:** 860-701-3512

**E-mail Address:** oleary\_j@mitchell.edu

**Class time and room:** Wednesday (9:00-10:05am)—108 Nathan Hale

**Catalog Course description:**

Honors Seminar II is the second in a series of six seminars designed for honors students. This course will help students continue their Honors Thesis project, which will be presented during their senior year. Additionally, this seminar will center around a unifying theme which will be incorporated into a common-read for all honors students. This semester, HR202 will focus on critical disinformation studies and myriad topics designed to better hone one’s ability to identify and analyze reliable information and sources.

**Prerequisites:** Sophomore honors student status

**Course Text:** All readings will be posted to Open LMS for the convenience of students

**Additional Readings:** As required by the instructor.

*Note: This syllabus is subject to change at any time as required by the instructor*

**Civility:** It is the right of every college student to be educated in an environment that is free of distraction from the educational activities being conducted in the classroom. To support a student's right to a distraction-free educational environment, **students engaged in any type of disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom and will be counted as absent from the class.**

**Communication:** Students are required to obtain and use a Mitchell College e-mail account for all departmental and College communications. All assignments/information will be posted as described by the instructor.

## **General College Policies**

**Attendance Policy:** The Faculty of the College believes that in order for a college student to derive the maximum benefits of a course, regular attendance is necessary as is the punctual and adequate preparation of assignments. Please reference the Course Catalog for more information. However, each instructor may also have his/her own attendance policy.

### **The College ADA Statement (updated August 2021):**

*Mitchell College complies with the mandates created by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In accordance with these laws, Mitchell College is committed to ensuring that no otherwise qualified student, on the basis of their disability, will be denied access to course content, materials or activities.*

A student who believes they need accommodations should contact the Office of Accessibility Services at 860-701-5790. Accommodations are not retroactive and cannot be provided by faculty based upon disability until the Letter of Accommodation has been issued by Accessibility Services. Letters of accommodation must be updated each semester. Should a student believe that they were discriminated against, they should follow the procedures defined by the Office of Accessibility Services. More information can be found in the Course Catalog and by visiting the Accessibility Services webpage at [www.mitchell.edu/access](http://www.mitchell.edu/access).

**Policy on Academic Honesty:** Penalties and procedures regarding academic dishonesty are defined in the College Catalog, see pages 35 and 36 for specifics. Academic dishonesty includes the following: using the work of another individual – including another student – as one's own, using non-approved resources during quizzes or exams or submitting the same essay assignment for multiple classes. Please refer to the College Catalog for the procedure required when an instructor has evidence of Academic Dishonesty.

As described in the Mitchell College policy manual, “students at Mitchell College are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct.” By enrolling in this course, students agree that they understand and swear to adhere to those rules. Failure to adhere to these rules will affect a student's grades. Cheating and/or plagiarism on any assessment will result in a score of zero for that assignment and the incident will be reported to the academic dean. Cheating on the final exam will result in course failure.

## **Departmental Policies**

### **Attendance Policy:**

Absence from class jeopardizes the student's academic standing. Absence also detracts from the value of the class for the instructor and for other students. Class absence, for whatever cause, is a handicap both to the instructor and to the student. Class absence is therefore strongly discouraged.

### **Make-up Policy:**

Make-ups for in-class exams will only be permitted if a student can provide proper documentation to the instructor. Examples of documentation can include a medical excuse or letter from an official/employee of Mitchell College explaining the reason for the student's absence.

### **Accommodations:**

Please inform the instructor of any accommodations required. See the **College ADA Statement (effective August 2021)** above for details.

### **Departmental E-Mail /Communications requirement:**

All students are required to use their Mitchell College email account when communicating with their instructor(s) electronically. Students are expected to engage in professional and thoughtful exchange of ideas, concepts, or concerns when emailing their instructor(s).

### **Classroom Participation:**

Classroom decorum during the instructional process is based on mutual respect: instructor for student, student for instructor, and student for other student. Respect for one another is shown in behavior: this includes listening attentively when another person (student or instructor) is speaking, as well as staying awake so that you may pay attention and contribute to class. Sleeping, talking inappropriately, or doing other work during a lecture, in-class discussion, or video is not permitted. At no time will headphones, Ipods, radios, or like devices be allowed in the classroom. Any student found using one may be asked to leave class. All cell phones **must be turned off or on silent mode**. Texting during class is not permitted. Do not consult your cell phone unless it is an emergency situation and the instructor is notified.

### **Grading Policy:**

Students can expect that all graded coursework (quizzes, exams, essays, etc.) will be returned to them by their instructor(s) in a timely manner.

### **Suggested Readings to supplement course content:**

When appropriate, additional readings for coursework will be provided to students.

*Note: This syllabus is subject to change at any time as required by the instructor*

## **Ability Based Education**

ABE partners the intellectual abilities cultivated by the liberal arts and sciences with the professional skills and personal development required to compete in the global economy. As students' progress through their programs of study, they will collect evidence (papers, videos, presentations, projects, etc.) that document their level of mastery. There are three levels of mastery:

1. Developing
2. Competent
3. Distinguished

Students must achieve at least Level 2, Competent, in 5 of 7 abilities. The seven abilities to be assessed prior to graduation from Mitchell College are:

1. Analysis and Problem Solving
2. Communication
3. Critical & Creative Thinking

4. Diversity and Global Perspectives
5. Information and Communication Technology Literacy (ICT Literacy)
6. Social Interaction
7. Values, Ethics & Social Responsibility

## Course-Specific Information

**ABE Abilities to be Assessed: ICT**

**Ability: Level 2**

### **ABE Stimulus to Assess:**

The ability to interpret a need for and determine where to locate information, consider conclusions from information originating from multiple sources by critically evaluating the source for credibility, construct an organizational scheme that enables one to use information for a specific purpose, and explain information ethically to various audiences. The ABE stimulus for this course is completion of a Critical Disinformation Studies Project Poster (instruction sheet posted to Open LMS).

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Convey an understanding of major topics presented throughout the course of the seminar.
2. Present alternative sides to major themes addressed within the context of the seminar.
3. Demonstrate the ability to be a contributing and productive leader of group discussions, while fostering a supportive environment of respect.

**In order to continue as an Honors Student within the Honors Program, each semester, Honors Students must:**

- Maintain a 3.2 cumulative GPA each year
- Successfully complete the Honors Seminar course with a minimum final grade of B or higher (see “Honors Courses of Study” for appropriate seminars)
- Maintain open lines of communication with your Seminar Instructor and your Faculty/Staff Mentor
- Engage in personal and academic conduct that continues to align with Mitchell College’s ideals and Code of Conduct
- Maintain good standing within the Mitchell College community by meeting or exceeding conduct standards

### **Course Requirements:**

As a college student, it is expected that you attend class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and recorded with the college; however, attendance will not be used to calculate any component of your final grade. In-class *participation* (asking questions, responding to questions, and providing your perspective on issues) and *professionalism* (arriving to class on time, being respectful to everyone in the classroom, and NOT using technology to "entertain" yourselves while in the classroom) will be used to calculate part of your final grade. **Student engagement** will account for 30% of your final grade. All students are expected to contribute to each class discussion.

The format of this honors seminar will be discussion oriented. Each week, the class will examine a topic/case study and its linkage to disinformation studies with a focus on propaganda and persuasion within mass media. During weeks 3 and 4, the class will view a documentary titled *After Truth: Disinformation and the Cost of Fake News* and write a response essay that is due Saturday, February 12 by 5:00pm to the submission link via Open LMS. In this essay, students will reflect on the documentary and provide their perspective about it in a 350–450-word count response (instruction sheet posted to Open LMS). This essay accounts for 20% of the

final grade. During weeks 5 to 11, the class will discuss selected readings on various topics associated with disinformation studies. Students **must read the documents BEFORE each class to ensure thoughtful and robust discussion**. All readings are posted to Open LMS for student convenience. See Course Outline section below for specific information.

In addition to the documentary response essay mentioned above, students will submit three (3) response essays about topics of their choosing from the Course Outline section below for weeks 5 to 11. These essays will be submitted the day of the discussion (printed out) and be 250-300 words that provide your thoughts on the assigned reading. Each essay accounts for 10% of the final grade. Students should budget their time accordingly to ensure submission of these essays by the end of the semester.

The final project and ABE assessment for this class will be completion of an electronic poster project. The instruction sheet is posted to Open LMS. This assignment accounts for 20% of the final grade.

As honors students, it is expected that everyone will come to each class prepared, engage in appropriate classroom behavior, and submit all assignments by deadlines.

**Email policy:** Students can expect that I will respond to their email(s) within 24 hours during the work week. I do not respond to email(s) during the weekend.

## Course Outline

### Week 2

January 26  
Course Introduction

### Week 3

February 2  
Class views *After Truth: Disinformation and the Cost of Fake News* (part 1)—available via Open LMS

### Week 4

February 9  
Class views *After Truth: Disinformation and the Cost of Fake News* (part 2) – available via Open LMS

### Week 5

February 16  
Disinformation in a Global Context – class reads [Southeast Asia's Disinformation Crisis: Where the State is the Biggest Bad Actor and Regulation is a Bad Word – Items \(ssrc.org\)](#)

### Week 6

February 23  
Case Study: Crime and Anti-Black Disinformation (p. 1315-1339) – class reads [The Central Park Five, the Scottsboro Boys, and the Myth of the Bestial Black Man \(american.edu\)](#)

### Week 7

March 2  
Case Study: Crime and Anti-Black Disinformation (p. 1339-1365) – class reads [The Central Park Five, the Scottsboro Boys, and the Myth of the Bestial Black Man \(american.edu\)](#)

## Week 8

March 16

Case Study: Japanese Incarceration – class reads “Absent Images of Memory: Remembering and Reenacting the Japanese Internment” (PDF posted to Open LMS); students may review “Japanese-American Internment Camp Newspapers, 1942 to 1946” for additional context

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/japanese-american-internment-camp-newspapers/about-this-collection/>

## Week 9

March 23

Case Study: Media Activism and the AIDS Crisis – class reads Prologue and chapter 2 of *Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (PDFs posted to Open LMS)

## Week 10

March 30

Case Study: The Welfare Queen – class reads “Contemporary Welfare Reform and the Public Identity of the ‘Welfare Queen’” (PDF posted to Open LMS)

## Week 11

April 6

Disinformation and Differential Impact: COVID-19 – class reads “Canaries in the Coal Mine: Covid-19 Misinformation and Black Communities” (PDF posted to Open LMS)

### Important Dates:

- Response essay to *After Truth* due 5:00pm Saturday, February 12 to Open LMS submission link
- Three response essays (of student’s choosing) due between weeks 5 to 11
- Student topic selection for Critical Disinformation Studies Project Poster due Wednesday, February 23
- Critical Disinformation Studies Project Poster due via email by 5:00pm Saturday, April 9

**Last day to withdraw from a class:** Friday, March 25

## Class Policies

### Grading:

Your course grade will be calculated by averaging the following:

- Engagement – 30%
- Response essay to *After Truth* – 20%
- Response essays to three other topics (student choice) – 30%
- Critical Disinformation Studies Project Poster – 20% (ABE assessment)

### Grading System:

The final course grade will be based on the grading system delineated below.

A+	100-96	C	76-74
A	95-93	C-	73-70
A-	92-90	D+	69-67
B+	89-87	D	66-64
B	86-84	D-	63-60
B-	83-80	F	59-0
C+	79-77		

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