Course Description and Objectives. This course is an introduction to and critical evaluation of the concept of misinformation, how it is identified, what causes it, and proposals to correct it. The focus of the course will not be on whether any particular thing is misinformation or not, but rather on the process by which such determinations are made.

Upon satisfactory completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe and identify the challenges inherent in determining what constitutes misinformation.
- Identify common criteria for identifying misinformation and critically evaluate those criteria.
- Summarize and evaluate theory and research about both social and psychological explanations for belief in misinformation.
- Summarize and evaluate the relationship between misinformation and the media, especially the Internet.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of proposed remedies for misinformation.
- Apply the above skills and understandings to particular instances of misinformation.

Assignments and Grading. Student learning in the course will be evaluated by two elements that will assess the student's understanding of key issues covered in the course and encourage the student to think deeply about those issues:

1. Class participation (30%) comprised of contributions to the discussions in the classroom. This is a measure both of your preparation for class and your ability to contribute to the discussion. The course will not merely be lecture material, but will heavily emphasize debate and critical engagement. Therefore, active, lively participation in discussions is essential to student success in the class.

2. A misinformation case study. You will choose an area where you personally believe people are misinformed and, throughout the course, apply concepts and techniques of the course toward understanding your case study, in the following two ways:

   a. Case presentations (30%). During each class meeting, you will give a short, informal presentation about the applicability of that week’s material to your chosen case study, lead discussion about your case, and participate in discussion about other students’ cases. Depending on enrollment, this will either be class-wide or in smaller groups.
b. Final case study paper (40%). A final paper analyzing your chosen case in relation to the material presented in the course.

**Readings and Course Resources.** Students are expected to complete all assigned materials (listed below, under Weekly Topics and Required Materials) before class, and be prepared to summarize or comment on the assigned materials in class if called upon. All course materials are available via the course website, hosted at the UCLA Common Collaboration and Learning Environment (CCLE) website, https://ccle.ucla.edu/

The website and other class materials are password-protected and intended for the exclusive use of students participating in IS 97. Students may not forward or circulate any course materials outside of class without the instructor's express permission.

**Students with Disabilities.** Students with documented disabilities who wish to discuss academic accommodations should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at (310) 825-1501, and must notify the instructor at the start of the quarter so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged and coordinated with the OSD well in advance of course assignments and due dates.

**WEEKLY TOPICS AND REQUIRED MATERIALS**

**Week 1**

**Concepts**

*What is misinformation? What is truth? What is evidence?*


**Week 2**
Evaluating information quality


Week 3

Explanations for misinformation, part one


**Week 4**

**Explanations for misinformation, part two**

*Selective exposure. Diffusion.*


**Week 5**

**The Media**

*Mass media. The Internet.*


**Week 6**

**Correcting misinformation**

*Do corrections work? Can they be automated?*


